

Abraham Lincoln papers

From E. D. Miles to Abraham Lincoln, April 4, 1864

No 515 Chesnut St

Philada April 4/64

Dear Sir:

In behalf of the great Central Sanitary Fair, A lady of rare artistic skill, in working and grouping hair, especially into flower wreaths of exquisite beauty & taste, desires to procure portions of hair from our most eminent and distinguished men in our land; for the purpose of making a magnificent loyal National Hair Wreath; to be elegantly framed and placed as a free will offering — in the great Fair; — to be sold for One thousand dollars — drawn as a prize at five dollars a ticket—

Mrs Major the lady artist, belongs to private life; being the wife of a methodist clergyman now preaching in this city—

As the most prominent, she solicits a specimen of your own hair, your wife and children, with the names attached— Also the Cabinet, Genls Scott & Grant¹ and all other high officers in the esteem of the loyal public — together with such members of their respective families, as are easily attainable, are respectfully solicited— The wreath will be strictly limited to the exalted for some great service to our common country— No Copperhead affinity will be allowed a representation, in that sacred and charmed circle — no matter even if he be distinguished — (vide Vallandigham Wood, McClellan & Co)² Surely such a gem or galaxy of gems would be priceless to our appreciative loyal countrymen—

1 Winfield Scott and Ulysses S. Grant

2 Prominent Democrats Clement L. Vallandigham, Fernando Wood, and George B. McClellan.

Mrs Major gives too gladly all her own labor, which will require many weeks to perfect her work as she desires — as well the frame, which will not be inexpensive— It will probably occupy the space of some 24 by 30 inches—

Her husband glories in preaching the soundest and tallest loyalty to be found in the pulpit. And this work of Mrs M will be but a laudable monument of how well she “sympathizes” with those doctrines — Nothing in the Fair, will probably excel in beauty and interest what she proposes to offer—

Now therefore, in consideration of what it is presumed you regard all efforts in behalf of this great cause, of which the Fair is only an important adjunct — will it be asking too much for you, not only to contribute for yourself & family, what is desired by my client Mrs Major, but to call the attention at the first convenient and at as early a moment as may be, to allow all the time possible to use the precious specimens to the best advantage — to your Cabinet, that they may contribute their portion so as to make one bundle, if it may be, and forward by Express or still better perhaps, by some trusty person coming to the City—

Directed as follows:

Dr E D Miles

No 515 Chesnut

Philada— Pa.

P. S.

Mrs M informs me that it is desirable to obtain as much long hair, (although all lengths are worked in,) but that white are is great demand; the longer which is used in finishing up the borders of flowers, and making the more ornamental portions— Of course all Colors shades are desirable— Grandmothers of illustrious sons or daughters will be consistently represented—

If she gets these specimens early enough she hopes to make a wreath that will sell for \$2000. or even more instead of one—

Very Truly

E D Miles MD.

April 8.

We have just seen that yourself and other distinguished gentlemen contributed to a magnificent attraction, the Bird of liberty & a wreath, for the New york Fair—

Nevertheless we must not relax, because a similar good is already in process of developement. Please therefore not to tire in this second application, although not originating with the Governor's wife— She is humble, but exceedingly artistic— M.

[Endorsement:]

At the instance of Dr Miles we cheerfully append our guaranty that he acts in good faith for Mrs Major in this matter and that the specimens solicited will be promptly appropriated for the purposes indicated in this letter. It will undoubtedly be a success and a fine affair

very truly

M McMichael

Morton McMichael is the name signed above— He says you will recognize it— I would not, did I not know for whom it was intended—

Dr Miles—