

Abraham Lincoln papers

From Mary Todd Lincoln to Abraham Lincoln¹, [November 3, 1862]

1 The following was written during a month-long trip that Mrs. Lincoln and Tad took to New York and Boston in the fall of 1862.

My Dear Husband.

I wrote you on yesterday, yet omitted a very important item.² Elizabeth Keckley,³ who is with me and is working for the Contraband Association, at Wash— is authorised by the White part of the concern by a written document — to collect any thing for them — here that, she can— She has been very unsuccessful— She says the immense number of Contrabands in W— are suffering intensely, many without bed covering & having to use any bits of carpeting to cover themselves— Many dying of want— Out of the \$1000 fund deposited with you by Gen Corcoran, I have given her the privelege of investing \$200 her, in bed covering— She is the most deeply grateful being, I ever saw, & this sum, I am sure, you will not object to being used in this way— The cause of humanity requires it — and there will be \$800 left of the fund— I am sure, this will meet your approbation— The soldiers are well supplied with comfort Please send check for \$200 — out of that fund — she will bring you on the bill.

2 See Mary Todd Lincoln to Abraham Lincoln, November 2, [1862].

3 Elizabeth Keckley was a former slave whom Mrs. Lincoln employed as a dressmaker. Mrs. Keckley became a close friend and confidante of Mrs. Lincoln and was perhaps the person most responsible for introducing Mrs. Lincoln to spiritualism. In 1862, Mrs. Keckley helped found the Contraband Relief Association in Washington. For more on the relationship between Keckley and Mary Lincoln, see Jean H. Baker, *Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography* (New York: W. W. & Company, 1987); and Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes, or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House* (New York: G. W. Carlton, 1868).