

May 2018

Truth Sojourner, 1800-1883, Letter.

Follow this and additional works at: http://dh.howard.edu/og_corres

Recommended Citation

"Truth Sojourner, 1800-1883, Letter." (2018). *Correspondence*. 22.
http://dh.howard.edu/og_corres/22

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the OG Series at Digital Howard @ Howard University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Correspondence by an authorized administrator of Digital Howard @ Howard University. For more information, please contact lopez.matthews@howard.edu.

LETTER FROM SOJOURNER TRUTH.

The following, from the remarkable coloured woman, Sojourner Truth, will be read with interest:

"Orange, N.Y., Dec. 10, 1864.

"I send you herewith a letter recently received from Sojourner Truth, giving an account of her interview with President Lincoln, in which, no doubt, many of her friends will be interested. Accompanying her letter was a very interesting one from Capt. Geo. B. Carse, commanding Dept. V.R.C., Govnt. Farms, Virginia, in which he speaks of the great service rendered to the freedmen and their families by Sojourner Truth, who visits them in their cabins, takes her knitting, and instructs them how to sew and knit, make bread, and perform all the various household duties of which those who have been field hands are very ignorant. I will cheerfully take charge and forward any thing Sojourner's friends may wish to send her.

"Rowland Johnson.

'''Freedman's Village, Va.,
Nov. 17, 1864.

" 'Dear Friend, - I am at Freedman's village. After my visit to the President, I went to Mrs. Swisshelm's, and remained there three weeks, and held two meetings in Washington, in Mr. Garnet's Presbyterian church, for the benefit of the Coloured Soldier's Aid Society, both of which were largely attended. I then spent a week on Mason's Island with the freedmen there; held several meetings, and was present at the celebration of the emancipation of the slaves in Maryland, and spoke upon that occasion.

" 'It was about eight o'clock in the morning when I called upon the President, in company with Mrs. C. On entering his reception room, we found about a dozen persons waiting to see him; amongst them were two coloured women, some white women also. One of the gentlemen present knew me, and I was introduced to several others, and had a pleasant time while waiting, and enjoyed the conversation between the President and his auditors very much. He showed as much respect and kindness to the coloured persons present as to the whites. One case was a coloured woman who was sick, and likely to be turned out of her house, on account of her inability to pay her rent. The President listened to her with much attention, and replied with kindness and tenderness that he had given so much, he could give no more, but told her where she could get the needed aid, and asked Mrs. C. to direct and assist her, which she did.

" He was seated at his desk. Mrs. C. and myself walked up to him, Mrs. C said to him. 'This is Sojourner Truth, who has come all the way from Michigan to see you.' He then arose, gave me his hand, and said, 'I am glad to see you.' I said to him. 'Mr. President, when you first took your seat, I feared you would be torn to pieces: for I likened you unto Daniel, who was thrown into the lion's den; for if the lions did not tear you to pieces, I knew it would be God that had saved you; and I said if He spared me, I would see you before the four years had expired. And He has done so, and I am now here to see you for myself.' He congratulated me on my having been spared. I then said, 'I appreciate you, for you are the best President who has ever taken seat.' He replied thus: 'I expect you have reference to my having emancipated the slaves in my Proclamation; but,' said he, mentioning the names of several of his predecessors, and particularly Washington, 'they were just as good, and would have done just as I have, if the time had come. And if the people over the river,' pointing across the Potomac, 'had behaved themselves, I could not have done what I have.' I replied, 'I thank

God you were the instrument selected by Him and the people to do these things.' I presented him with one of my shadows and songs, for which he thanked me, and said he would keep them as a remembrance. He then showed me the splendid Bible presented to him by the coloured people. You doubtless have seen a description of it. I have seen it for myself, and can say it is beautiful beyond description. After I looked it over, I said to him, 'This is beautiful; and to think that the coloured people have given this to the head of the Government, and to think that Government ones sanctioned laws that would not permit its people to learn enough to be able to read that book.' And for what? Let them answer who can.' I am proud to say that I never was treated with more kindness and cordiality than I was by the great and good man Abraham Lincoln, by the grace of God President of the United States for four years more. He took my little book, and with the same hand that signed the death-warrant of Slavery, he wrote as follows:

'For Auntie Sojourner Truth.'

'October 29, 1864.

'A. Lincoln.'

" 'I then took my leave of him, and thanked God from the bottom of my heart that I always have advocated this cause, and done it openly and boldly; and now I shall feel more in duty bound to do so. May God assist me! I have obtained a little house here, through the kindness of the Captain of the Guard, and think I will remain, and do all I can in the way of instructing the people in habits of industry and economy. Many of them are entirely ignorant of housekeeping. Any favours in the way of nourishment, and some sheets and pillows, will be very acceptable, and may be forwarded to Washington, addressed

to me, care of Captain George B. Carse, Freedman's village, V. Give
my love to all who inquire after me.

" 'Sammy and I are both well and happy, and feel that we are in good
employment, and find plenty of friends.

"Your friend,

"Sojourner Truth." "

The Anti-Slavery Reporter

Vol. 13, No. 3, New Series, March 1, 1865.

pg. 59.