

Supreme Court of the United States,

Washington Feb'y 24 1878

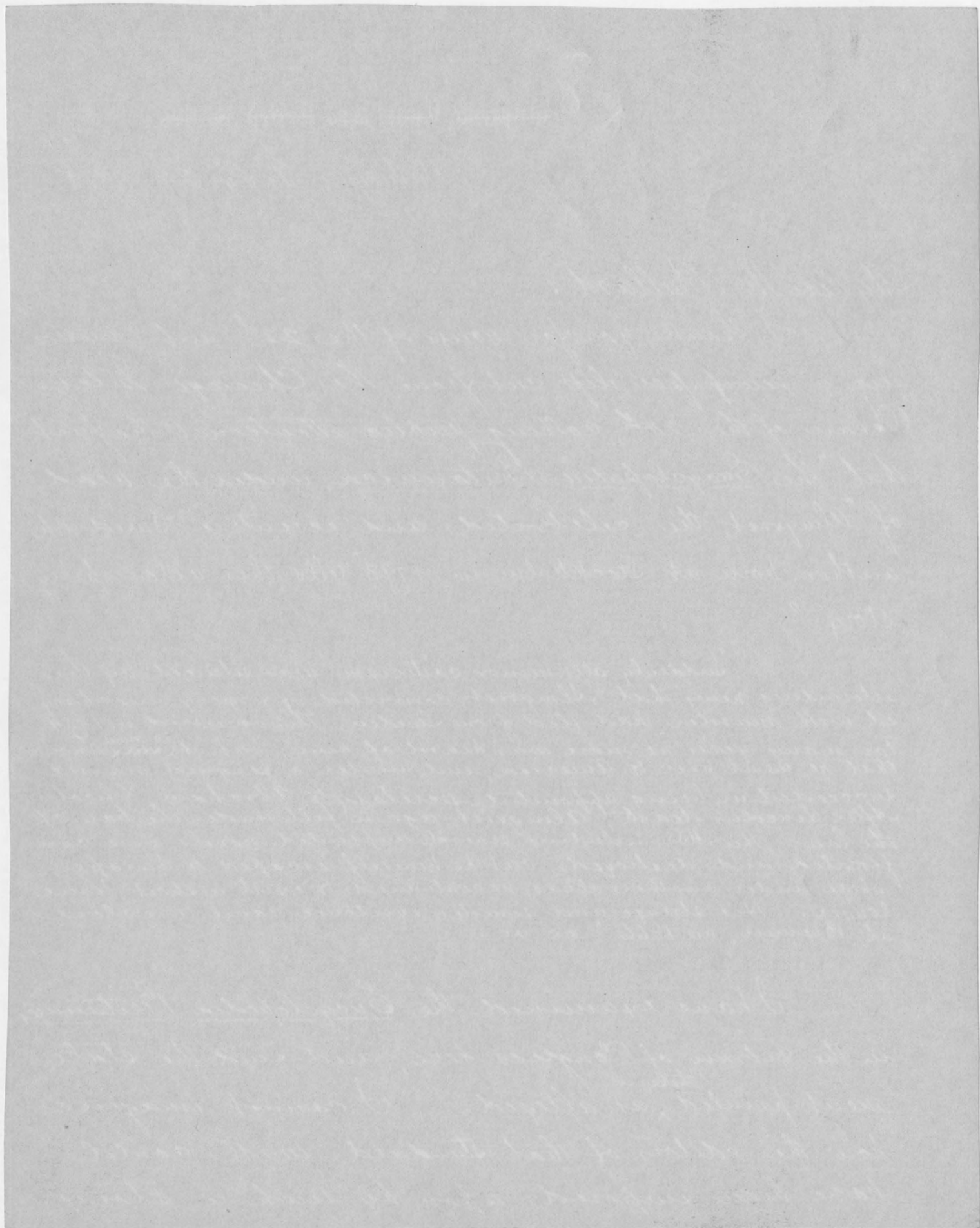
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My dear Mr. Ballard:

I thank you for yours of the 22<sup>d</sup> inst, enclosing a newspaper slip cut from the Chicago Inter-Ocean of the 20<sup>th</sup>, calling public attention to the fact that "the Encyclopedia Britannica, under the head of 'Almqvist, the celebrated and eccentric Swedish author, born at Stockholm in 1793' tells this astonishing story: "

"Suddenly all minor criticism was silenced by the astounding news that Almqvist, convicted of forgery, and charged with murder, had fled from Sweden. This occurred in 1851. For many years no more was heard of him; but it <sup>is now</sup> ~~is~~ known that he went over to America, and under a feigned name succeeded in being appointed secretary to Abraham Lincoln. After Lincoln's death, Almqvist again fell under the ban of the law. His MSS., including several unprinted novels, were confiscated and destroyed, but he himself escaped to Europe, where, under another alias, he continued to exist a short time longer. His strange and sinister existence came to a close at Bremen, in 1866." &c &c.

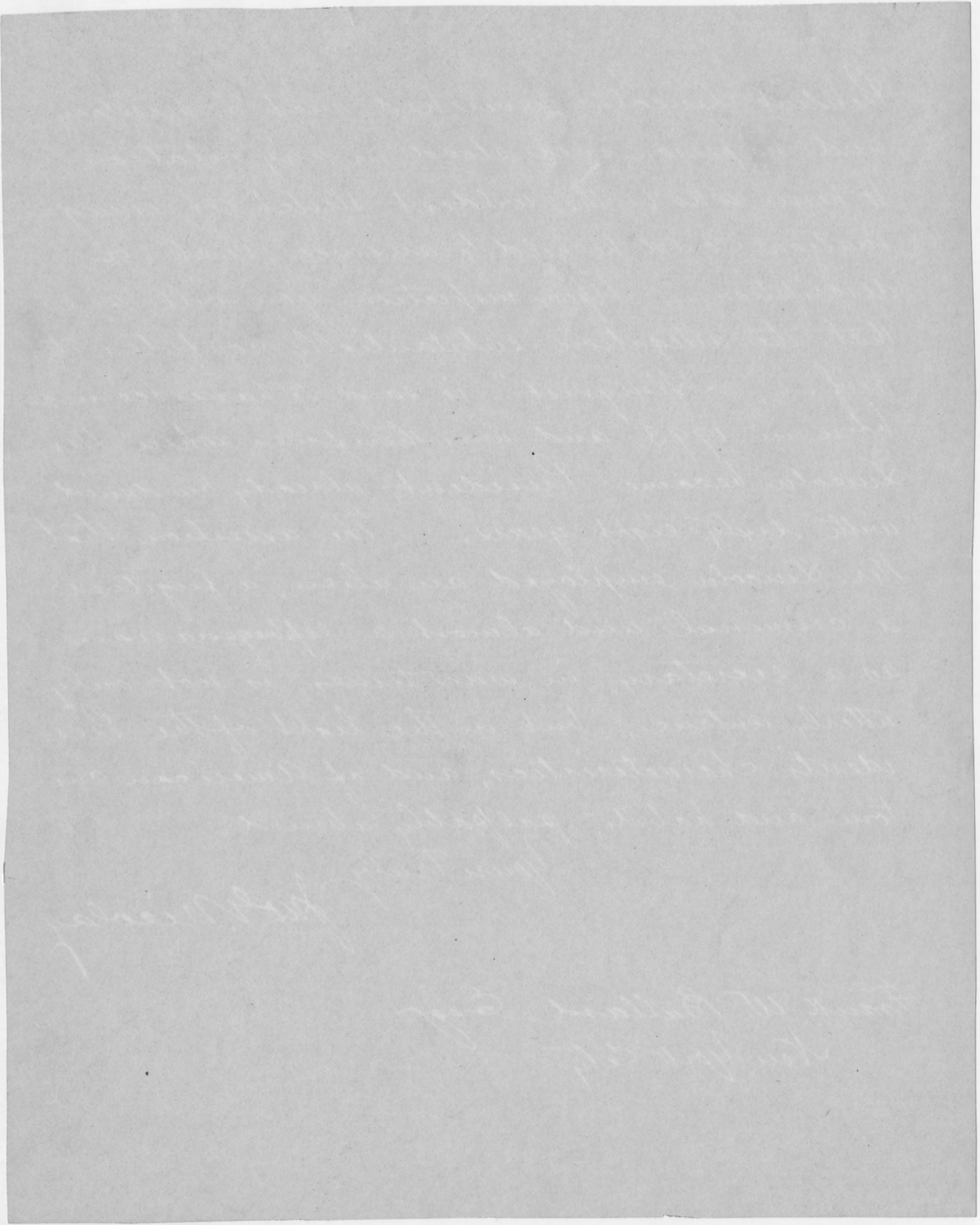
I have examined the Encyclopedia Britannica in the Library of Congress here, and find the statement printed <sup>therein</sup> as alleged. I cannot imagine how the editors of that standard work could have been imposed upon by such a story.



President Lincoln never had such a secretary, and no person ever stood in any relation to him who by the wildest stretch of imagination could be held to answer such a description. Upon inspection you will see that the allegation substantially confutes itself. "Almgvist" is said to have been born in 1793, and was therefore when Mr. Lincoln became President, already burdened with sixty-eight years. The assertion that Mr. Lincoln employed an alien, a fugitive, a criminal and almost a septuagenarian as a secretary, in war times, is not only utterly untrue, but in the light of the Presidents' characteristics, and of American custom and habits, palpably absurd.

Yours truly  
Jno. V. Nicolay

Frank W. Ballard Esq  
New York City.



Supreme Court of the United States,



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Care of "The Evening Mail"

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*Gro. W. Nicolay  
Lincoln's Private Secy & Biographer*



*Faint, illegible handwritten text, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the envelope.*