7-4-1833

Letter to Lemuel Shaw from Charles Folsom, July 4, 1833

Charles Folsom

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Cambridge, 4 July, 1833.

Dear Sir,

The Committee of the Phi Beta Kappa Society for appointing an Orator for the next anniv-ersary, made choice, last autumn, of the Hon. John Quincy Adams, who accepted the appoint-ment conditionally, i.e., if the state of his health this summer should enable him to perform the office. This summer should enable him to perform the office. The Committee, at the same time, that they appointed him, designated four other gentlemen, whom I was to invite successively in case of his failure, viz. Rev. Dr. Channing, Hon. Peter Schuyler, William Sullivan, and John Pickering. They have been invited by me, as the organ of the committee, one after another, and have successively declined the appointment in terms manifesting a strong interest in the Society. We are now therefore without any desig-nate Orator. I have this apprized Mr. Everett (Edward), the Chairman of the Committee, of this state of things, that further measures may be taken.

The Committee voted that their acts should
not be communicated beyond their own number, till near the anniversary, when the names of the Senior Officers should be announced in the newspapers. This vote of course was not intended to exclude the priority of the President of the Society, and I ought doubtless to have made it known to you at the time. The propriety of this, however, did not then occur to me; but if you will have the goodness to excuse my omission, nor can arise, as evil has arisen from some deficiency. I could now mention, that Professor Longfellow of Bowdoin college has accepted the office of Poet, I will doubtless be paid with something more than usually worthy of the occasion: at least if he is true to himself, for he has singular aptitude for the task.

With great respect,
I am, dear Sir,
Mr. Chief Justice Shaw.

Charles Folsom
Cor. Sec'y.

Hon. Chief Justice Shaw.
Hon. Chief Justice Shaw

Boston
Mass.
Dear Sir,

The Committee of the Phi Beta Kappa Society for appointing an Orator for the next anniversary, made choice, last autumn, of the Hon. John Quincy Adams, who accepted the appointment conditionally, i.e. if the state of his health this summer should enable him to perform the office. A few weeks ago Mr. Adams apprized me that it would not be in his power to perform. The Committee, at the same time that they appointed him, designated four other gentlemen, whom I was to invite successively in case of his failure, viz. Rev. Dr. Channing, Hon. Peleg Sprague, William Sullivan, and John Pickering. They have been invited by me, as the organ of the committee, one after another, & have successively declined the appointment, in terms manifesting a strong interest in the Society. We are now therefore without any designated Orator. I have this day apprized Mr. Everett (Edward), the Chairman of the Committee, of this state of things, that further measures may be taken.

The Committee voted that their acts should
not be communicated beyond their own number, till near
the anniversary, when the names of the Orator & Poet should
be announced in the newspapers. This vote, of course,
was not intended to exclude the privity of the Presi-
dent of the Society, and I might doubtless to have
made it known to you at the time. The propriety
of this, however, did not then occur to me; but
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Longfellow of Bowdoin College has accepted
the office of Poet, & will doubtless be pre-
pared with something more than usually worthy
of the occasion; -- at least if he is true to himself,
for he has singular aptitude for the task.

With great respect
I am, dear Sir,
Yr. obed't Serv't
Charles Folsom,
Cor. Sec'y

Hon. Chief Justice Shaw.

[back of letter]

Hon. Chief Justice Shaw,
Boston,
Mass.

Charles Folsom Esq.
[P.B.K.]
4 July 1833