

**William Lincolne in London to his 9 year old son William in Witham,  
November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1798**

Dear William

Mr Bayley gives me an opportunity of writing & sending you the Account of the Tower of London which you left behind you in the summer & hope will bring to your recollection some of the curiosities with which you were entertained.

I have told Mr Bayley that you will introduce him to Mr Haffenden when I hope he will receive a good order.

I should like very much to see your handwriting that I may judge if it is improved remember some Months are passed since we had a letter from you & tho' we are frequently hearing of you it would give us pleasure to be oftener informed of your health & happiness under your own sign (*word crossed out*) manual, this word you may not understand but some kind friend will have the goodness to explain it & I trust you will comply with our wishes.

I am sorry to inform you Mr. Thos. Kesteven is now a Prisoner in the Temple at Paris. He was arrested within a few hours after his arrival in that City on the charge of being a spy. We trust no worse consequence will follow than a tedious confinement. We hear today he is not kept so close as was at first & has 2 hours every day allowed to play Tennis etc. This is a great alleviation but doubt not that he had rather be sitting in York Street altho' he had no other company than Mr. W. L. Senr.

Your mother is well & did not forget to charge me with her love to you. My own health is I hope not worse tho' cannot flatter myself with being better than for a few months past. The Physician says the Country Air would be more beneficial than any Medicine he can prescribe but this is a recipe not in my power.

(*large tear here*) see Mr Phenn? ask him how long (*page torn*) barefoot? This would indeed have been the case had my dependence been altogether upon his punctuality, when he is at leisure to execute the order he may send me 2 pairs.

I request you will give our united Duty to Father and Mother with Love to Uncle & Aunt. I shall be happy to hear the fifth of November is over without any Accident & I must think once a year is quite often enough to play with such a dangerous thing as Gunpowder.

Hoping soon to hear from you  
I am my dear Boy Yrs. Truly  
Afft. Father  
W Lincolne

*William Lincolne 1765-1799 was a son of the Presbyterian minister at Bury St Edmunds and had married Mary Isaac, daughter of Thomas Isaac of Witham, a successful grocer. They had one child, William, born in 1789.*

*William Lincolne had run a draper's business in Bocking which had failed by 1793, so he had gone to London to work for a firm of mercers in York Street, Covent Garden; Messrs. Kesteven & Co. His wife and child went to live in Witham with Thomas Isaac, but Mary was clearly with him in London when he wrote this letter. His health was very poor and he returned to Witham to die only 2 months later in January 1799.*

*It is remarkable that he asked his 9 year old son to undertake some business tasks for him and introduce Mr Bayley to Mr Haffenden and remonstrate with Mr Phenn about his tardiness. How long Mr Thomas Kesteven was in the Revolutionary Paris jail is unknown, but he and his brothers went bankrupt in 1812.*

*His son William was brought up by his mother and grandfather, Thomas Isaac, and entered the Isaac grocery business with his uncles, before buying a business in Halesworth after his grandfather's death in 1816. He married Mary Napier and had 11 children.*

*Transcribed from the original letter by Helen Wolvey, 4 x great granddaughter of William Lincolne and Mary Isaac, 2017.*