

Simon P. Hanscom

(1820 – 23 Nov 1876)

The Evening Star, November 27, 1876

Mr. Simon P. Hanscom, who from 1863 to 1866 was the editor and one of the proprietors of the National Republican, died in this city on Friday last. Mr. Hanscom was a native of Maine, where he commenced his newspaper career, and in early life was employed as a reporter on the Boston Chronotype. He came to Washington in 1855, was a clerk to the special committee of the House on Kansas affairs, and for several years subsequently corresponded with the Tribune and Herald.

Forman, Stephen M., A Guide to Civil War Washington, Washington, DC: Elliott & Clark Publishing, 1995.

Hanscom was the editor of the Daily National Republican. This liberal, gossipy newspaper tried to be the president's unofficial paper. Hanscom irritated other editors and reporters by being very ingratiating in his dealings with Lincoln. He was permitted to walk into the president's office without an appointment at any hour, and after small talk with Lincoln, Hanscom would go back to his office and write an entire column on the state of the Union and the conduct of the war. Hanscom also delivered a telegraph message from the War Department to the president's box at Ford's Theater prior to the assassination. The president's valet, Charles Forbes, was sitting against the wall, and Hanscom told him about the sealed message. Forbes waved him inside. The message turned out to be of little importance; it asked for a permit for two former Confederate officials to visit Washington and have a meeting with Lincoln.