

The Charger

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

P.O. BOX 5028 • CLEVELAND, OHIO 44101

FEBRUARY, 1980

VOLUME 23 NUMBER 24

195th Meeting

DATE: FEBRUARY 12th
 SPEAKER: Donald A. Heckaman
 SUBJECT: "Uniforms and Equipment of the Individual
 Soldier, U.S. Army, 1855-1950"
 PLACE: The Hermit Club
 PRELIMINARIES: 6:00 P.M. Dinner: 7:00 P.M.

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Our speaker joined the Cleveland Civil War Round Table in 1959, is a Past President, and Member and Fellow of The Company of Military Historians. He is also a member of the Ohio Gun Collectors' Ass'n., Ohio Military Society, and an Honorary Member of The First Cleveland Cavalry Ass'n. (formerly Troops A & B, 107th Cavalry Regiment, Ohio National Guard.)

Don is an Architect, an Associate Partner in the firm of Dalton, van Dijk, Johnson & Partners. He is a Corporate Member, American Institute of Architects, Member Architects Society of Ohio, a Certified Member of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards, and serves as the City Architect for the City of South Euclid.

We've been treated to Don's talks before, and we all recognize him as a real expert in his field (s). This should be a most interesting evening.

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The program will be a narrated color slide program showing the evolution of the regular enlisted soldier, U.S. Army from just prior to the Civil War to the end of the Korean conflict. It will cover dress, field uniforms, and individual equipment.

Development of uniforms and equipment will be related to the westward movement of the frontier and finally our emergence as a World Power - following the War with Spain in 1898 and on to the great conflicts of World Wars I and II including Korea. We will also look at the significance of the total army strength as it rapidly decreased following the Civil War and then increased about 1900 and again decreased during the great depression.

We will relate the highlights of the various Boards of Equipment appointed by the Secretaries of War and the general reactions, later, by the troops in the field.

Note: The entire slide series was photographed from specimens of Don's extensive collection.

* * * *

My great concern is not whether you have failed, but whether you are content with your failure.

— Abraham Lincoln

CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUND-TABLE

Founded Nov. 19, 1957

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NEW

BEN BUTLER SUBJECT OF LAST MONTH MEETING

Bit More of Same

Early in his administration of the City of New Orleans, General Butler had one William Mumford arrested and sentenced to be hanged because of his acts of tearing down the U.S. flag from the top of the United States Mint, dragging it through the mud and then cutting it up into little pieces and distributing them to be pinned to the seat of the pants of the unruly mob that dominated the City. He frequently bragged about the feat, hurled insults at the officers and soldiers as he daily stood in front of the U.S. Headquarters, defying them to arrest him. He was a small-time gambler, but quite a hero to the mob. There was much speculation as to whether Butler would go through with the execution, and a riot was predicted if he backed down.

Using an old Spanish custom of executing a prisoner at the scene of

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THE MYSTERY OF LINCOLN'S TEETH

As I may have mentioned in these pages before, for months I have been trying to find out what kind of teeth Lincoln had! Could find no mention of them in various biographies; dozens of dentists when asked either never heard, read or gave any thought to the subject; and only one of three institutions to whom I addressed the problem so much as answered. This was the librarian of the Cleveland Health Science Library of Case Western Reserve and Cleveland Medical Library Ass'n. Ms. Kathleer A. Casteel kindly wrote that their search did not reveal anything and that Dr. Daniel Verne, an oral surgeon and enthusiast of the history of dentistry could not recall ever having seen Lincoln's teeth and could not provide any solid leads.

The reason for this search? I wanted to present a composite caricature in this issue of a LAUGHING LINCOLN. So I gave up and decided to give him a nice even set of choppers. You will find this picture with the covering story elsewhere in this Lincoln Charger.

Several members and friends have been on the look-out for pictures of other Civil War celebrities laughing or smiling. They are almost non-existent. As it has been pointed out, they didn't have much to smile about. Then too, the photography of that day required a long exposure; so it would have been rather difficult to hold a smile or laugh.

The photograph of Lincoln with his son Tad standing beside him at a table definitely shows a smile, and there is a hint of a smile in the painting by Wilson, for whom Lincoln sat for the portrait after Lee's surrender. (After Lincoln's death, Wilson painted two more duplicates, one of which was sold in great quantities by L. Prang & Co. of Boston. This info supplied by reader Clem Frank.)



FRED GILL'S BOOK REVIEW

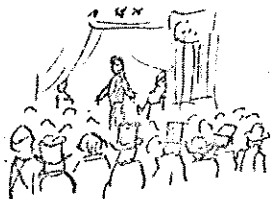
WAS THIS LINCOLN?

WITH MALICE TOWARD NONE: THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN. By Stephen B. Oates. Harper and Row. New York, 1977

It is risky to read a book after first reading a favorable review of it, especially if the reviewer has good credentials on the book's subject. Because of a good review by a historian of note I read this book, the first full length biography of Lincoln in nearly sixty years, and, historian of note or not, I found it flawed - flawed, too, in an odd way.



While a biographer must have room to interpret a subject's acts and his life and times, Professor Oates just takes too much room. He speculates over-much. He tells with almost bumptious professorial authority what Lincoln actually thought, not what he might have thought but what really was going on in Lincoln's head. In one place he infers that Lincoln did not write much



about his parents because he did not want his political opponents to exaggerate and use facts against him. This seems doubtful. It is surely more likely Lincoln wrote only what he knew about his parents. At too many points I was compelled to stop and say to myself, "Oh come now, professor, how do you know Lincoln was thinking that? Couldn't he have simply been wondering what's for dinner?"

In his preface the author indicates he wanted to portray... "the Lincoln who actually lived, not the figure coming to us in the mists of legend." An admirable aim but I wonder if the good professor wasn't looking for something, some attribute, some quality in Lincoln that wasn't there.

Except for a few gargantuan paragraphs the writing is good and pleasurable to read. (See the about-600-word-paragraph on pages 181-183 which is informative, I suppose, but is about as eloquent as a handbook on motorcycle repair.) The author has published eight other books, teaches Civil War history and, as a note on him says, "courses in art and technique of biography." Well qualified, but in this book I think he has pushed his specialty too far and too hard.

* * * * *

Also from Fred:

"One day a stranger came to Lincoln with a barrel full of odds and ends. He said he had need of money and would be much obliged if Lincoln would help him out by giving him a dollar for the barrel. The contents, he said, were not of much value; they were some old newspapers and things of that sort. But the stranger needed the dollar very badly. Lincoln, with characteristic kindness, gave the man a dollar for the barrel even though he could not imagine any use he would have for the contents. Some time later, when he went to clear out the barrel, he found that it contained almost a complete edition of Blackstone's Commentaries. It was chance, or synchronistic acquisition of these books that enabled Lincoln to become a lawyer and to embark on his career in politics.



from Jung, Synchronicity and Human Destiny by Dr. Ira Progoff: Julian Press. New York, 1973

his crime, Butler had a scaffold erected out of the second story of the U.S. Mint and proceeded to hang Mumford. It had the effect of subduing the mob, which quietly dispersed without incident. Where anarchy had reigned before he arrived, Butler restored order.

Butler's act moved Jefferson Davis to make the following proclamation, revealing his vituperative nature:

Now therefore, I, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, in their name, do pronounce and declare said Benjamin F. Butler to be a felon, deserving of capital punishment. I do order that he shall no longer be considered or treated simply as a public enemy of the Confederate States of America, but as an outlaw and common enemy of mankind, and that, in the event of his capture, the officer in charge of the capturing force do cause him to be executed by hanging.....I ..do..order..That all commissioned officers in the command of said Benjamin F. Butler be declared not entitled to be considered as soldiers engaged in honorable warfare, but as robbers and criminals, deserving of death; and that they and each of them, whenever captured, reserved for execution.

Can you imagine Lincoln uttering such bombast? At one time the President joshed Butler, telling him to make sure that Jeff Davis didn't catch him, to which Butler replied that Jeff wouldn't last very long if HE were caught.

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ABOUT THOSE SPOONS

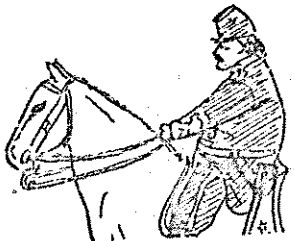
After General Butler had left New Orleans in Dec., 1862, an old canard was circulated that he had run off with the spoons of the St. Charles Hotel, where he had first made his headquarters. This was pure fiction. Another case involved a Mrs. Ferguson, who was traveling to Baton Rouge on a pass issued by the Butler administration (a common courtesy extended to citizens of the city for visiting relatives), but customs officers discovered some silverware she was smuggling out which she claimed she was innocently delivering as a favor to a friend. The items were confiscated, and the affair was reported to General Banks, who had taken over as Butler's relief. Banks ignored it. (As a matter of fact, during his short administration, Banks undid a lot of the improvements made by Butler, and there is evidence that his officers were involved in many shady dealings.)



Major Gen. Benj. Franklin Butler

After the Fort Fisher fiasco, where Butler had failed to capture the fort the spoons story came up in Congress, and an investigation was made. Eventually the trail of the lost silverware was traced to one Captain McClure, who had sold them. Butler was completely exonerated in any complicity in the affair. The legends that grew up about him persisted, even to the time years later, when he was campaigning for the presidency, some wag on the side of his opponent dumped a whole box-load of tin spoons on the stage where he was speaking. The spoons legend has become a part of the folklore of the country.

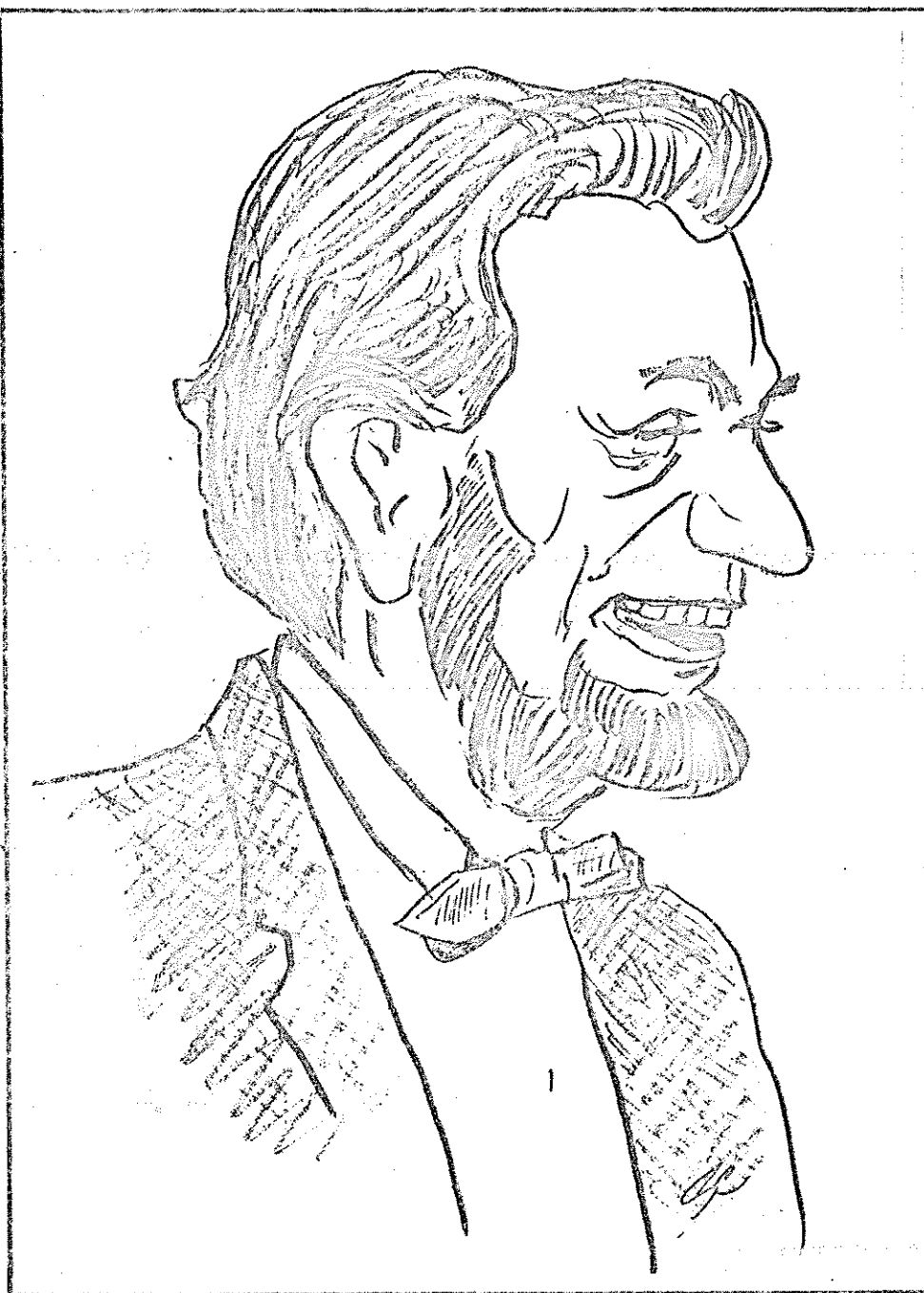
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Bill Chamberlin wanted to know how you could tell that a horse was cross-eyed (in the January Charger I said that the subject of the coming talk rode a cross-eyed horse.) I used a bit of literary license there; Bill is right, of course, because a horse has protruding eyeballs to give it a wide range of periphery vision. However, Gen.

Continued on page 7

A LAUGHING LINCOLN*-HIS HUMOR AND STORIES



It is common knowledge that Abraham Lincoln loved a joke. There is no doubt that he frequently "laughed aloud." Humorists George Ade and Irving S. Cobb wrote about this, and artist Julian Rayford once cartooned what he called the great humorists of the 19th Century, which included Bret Harte, Mark Twain, James Whitcomb Riley, Josh Billings, Bill Nye, Artemus Ward and Abraham Lincoln. This is why I have been at such pains to present a laughing Lincoln.

He once said, "If I did not laugh I should die," and at another time, "Laughter is my antidote for tears."

It is significant that Lincoln was witnessing a comedy at Ford's Theatre at the time he was struck by the assassin's bullet. In his last conscious moments he must have been smiling.

A study of Lincoln's stories do not reveal any side-splitting yarns, other than those of a ribald nature hinted at by the journalists of the day who dared not put them into print...no more than to say that his humour

was of the "frontier earthy" type.

As a matter of fact, Lincoln himself explained why he was such a story teller: They say I tell a great many stories; I reckon I do, but I have found in the course of long experience that common people, take them as they run, are more easily informed through the medium of broad illustration than any other way, and as to what the hypercritical few may think, I don't care

A cold-blooded analysis of Lincoln stories can be broken down in categories of objectives:

1. Pure entertainment...stories and anecdotes going back to his circuit-riding days, when fellow lawyers gathered around the fire in a hotel to while away the evening hours.

*This concept of Lincoln
Laughing was done in pencil, S.C.

(continued on next page)

2. Ridicule... a devastating instrument he used in political speeches
3. Illustrations...an easy substitute for definitions and explanations.
4. Diplomacy...to relieve tensions, dismiss applicants, evade decisions, and forestall demands.
5. Sociability...to put people at ease.
6. Emotional...to arouse the inert and cheer the discouraged.
7. Ad lib...occasional flashes of native wit arising from a situation of the moment.

The following stories are merely examples, picked at random and not purporting to illustrate the categories set forth above.

Lincoln very seldom invented a story. He once said, "You speak of Lincoln stories. I don't think that is a correct phrase. I don't make the stories mine by telling them. I'm only a retail dealer."

He once received a letter from a lady asking for a "sentiment" and autograph. He replied, "Dear Madame, - when you as a stranger, ask for that which is of interest only to yourself, always enclose a stamp." A. Lincoln.

Meeting General Sheridan for the first time, Lincoln said, "General Sheridan, when this peculiar war began I thought a cavalryman should be at least 6' 4" high." But still holding Sheridan's hand in his earnest grasp, and looking down at the little general, he added, "I have changed my mind - 5' 4" will do in a pinch." Sheridan measured 5' 4" tall.

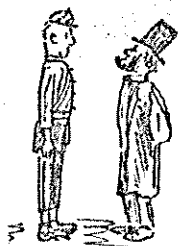


Riding at one time through a Virginia woods, he made the following observation about a luxuriant vine which wrapped itself around a tree: Yes, that is very beautiful; but that vine is like certain habits of men; it decorates the ruin it makes. Speaking of the difference between character and reputation, he said, "Character is like a tree, and reputation its shadow. The shadow is what we think of it, the tree is the real thing."

Lincoln was asked by a friend how he felt when the returns came in that insured his defeat for the Senate, and he replied that he felt, he supposed, very much like the stripling who had stubbed his toe - too badly to laugh, and too big to cry.

"I am slow to learn," he once said, "and slow to forget that which I have learned. My mind is like a piece of steel - very hard to scratch anything on it, and almost impossible, after you get it there, to rub it out."

Speaking to General Butler about the historical fact that every place General Grant had ever taken had been held, never yielding up, Lincoln said, "When General Grant gets possession of a place he seems to hang on to it as if he had inherited it."



Lincoln was six feet four inches tall. Meeting a soldier considerably taller than himself, he looked him over with wondering admiration. "Say, friend, does your head know when your feet are cold?"

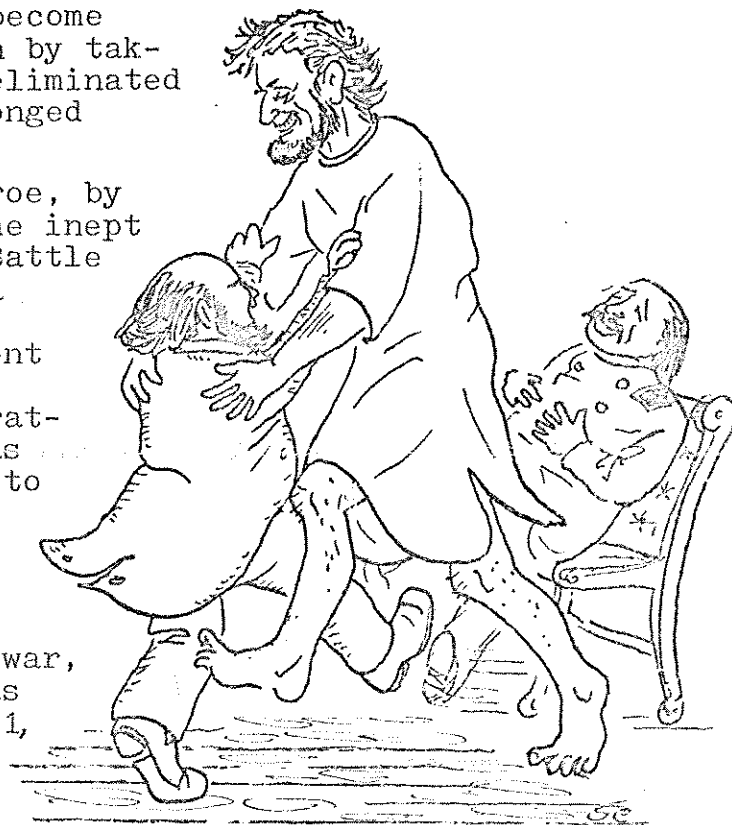
One time he listened to a driver taking him to a review in a four-mule ambulance wagon over a very rough road, cut up by artillery and army trains. As the driver had more difficulty staying out of the ruts, his swearing got worse and the worse the road got the greater the temper and profanity. At last the President said in his pleasant manner, "Driver, are you an Episcopalian?" Greatly astonished, the man replied, "No sir, I ain't much of anything. But if I do go to church at all I go to the Methodist Church." "Oh, excuse me," Lincoln said with a smile and a twinkle in his eye, "I thought you must be an Episcopalian, for you swear just like Secretary Seward, and he is a church warden."

The above excerpts came from a precious little book entitled, Lincoln's Own Stories by Anthony Cross: Harper & Bros., New York, 1912.

SCENES I LIKE TO HAVE SEEN

When General Winfield Scott in anger banished Ben Butler to Fortress Monroe, he had no intention of launching him on the high road to military fame, but meant to tie him down to local action. The old general's anger stemmed from the fact that Butler had become a national hero in relieving Washington by taking Baltimore in a bold move that had eliminated Scott's plans for an elaborate four-pronged attack on the city.

After a brilliant start at Fort Monroe, by taking Newport News, Butler, through the inept bungling of his subordinates lost the Battle of Big Bethel, which was no more than a skirmish (one Confederate dead), Scott pulled old General Wool out of retirement and sent him to Ft. Monroe to relieve Butler. But wily Ben stayed on and ingratiated himself with General Wool, who was only too happy to turn the action over to the energetic politico-general, and so it was that Butler was able to initiate another bold move.



With a dramatic suddenness unlike anything that had yet been done in the war, Major General Butler and Commodore Silas Stringham sailed south on August 9, 1861, with six naval ships and a convoy of 860 troops, including Hawkins' Zouaves. The next day they turned into Hattaras Inlet, the entrance to Pamlico Sound. Two Confederate forts engaged the ships, and with an amphibious landing, Butler's men took the forts with a total of 615 prisoners.

Remember, the Union at this time was still smarting from the humiliation of First Bull Run.

Butler hastened to Washington that night, commandeering a railroad train, and, with his friend Gustavus Fox, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, hurried to the darkened White House. President Lincoln received them in his nightshirt. The good news caused the demonstrative Lincoln to grab the portly little Fox and swing him around the Cabinet room - "his nightshirt considerably agitated," while General Butler rolled back on a sofa in merriment. It was the first Union victory, though insignificant, since Bull Run; but even more important, it proved the value of a joint army-navy operation.

BUTLER CONT'D *from page 4*

Butler's favorite horse was named "Old Almond Eye," because of the "peculiar formation of the horse's eyes." I should have said that the subject of the talk had a left eye that looked permanently to the right.

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Exasperated by McClellan's waiting game, Lincoln once wired the reluctant General, "If you don't want to use the army I should like to borrow it for awhile."

Another time, McClellan, irked by Lincoln's frequent requests for a report on his activities, wired, "Have captured six cows, what shall we do with them?" His sarcasm was not lost on the patient President, who replied, "As to the six cows captured - milk them."

Our first naval battle with the Japanese was not in World War II but was on July 16th, 1863. The sloop-of-war "Wyoming," searching for the Confederate raider "Alabama," put in at Yokahama and found the foreign colony on the dock having been ordered by the Japanese to get out. The Japanese had also closed the entrance to the bay, the usual passage out of the harbor. Captain MacDougal of the "Wyoming" thereupon sailed over and walloped the Japanese fleet and silenced the shore guns. An International fleet soon forced the Japanese to rescind the order.

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In that same July 1863 there was a draft riot, of all places, in Wooster, Ohio.

* * * *

David E. Twiggs, a brevet major general in the regular U.S. Army, surrendered all Federal posts and supplies under his command in Texas to the Confederates before he resigned his commission to take one in the Confederate Army. His was the only case of treason among the Federal officers who defected to the South. - Civil War Dictionary

The above little nuggets were dug up by Fred Gill.

* * * *

The opera glasses Abraham Lincoln used at Ford's Theatre the night he was assassinated sold for \$25,000.00 recently at an auction of the President's relics in New York. The glasses, fewer than four inches long, were bought by a representative of the Forbes Magazine Collection. (Thanks to reader Betty Johnson.)

* * * *



After the death of their son, Mrs. Lincoln became a believer in Spiritualism, and it is a matter of record that the President attended some of the seances that were held in the White House. Contrary to the claims of modern spiritualists, Lincoln never expressed a positive belief, and at least one of the mediums who held seances for the Lincolns was found to be the usual fraud and told to get out of Washington. Down through the years there has persisted the hushed story that the sad President haunts the executive mansion, and that some claim to have seen his ghost. Would that this ghost could communicate some guidance to the current tenant!

* * * *

Abe Lincoln, according to the St. Louis CWRT Bushwhacker, loved oysters and turkey, had a great fondness for apples and generally had cake or ice cream for dessert.

From the same source:

A sentry challenged a uniformed figure entering the camp.

"Major Jones," came the reply.

"Sorry, sir," said the sentry, "'fraid I can't let you proceed without the password."

"Dammit man, I've forgotten it, but you know me well enough."

The sentry persisted in doing his duty: Can't help it, sir, I must have the password.

"Don't stand there arguin' all night," came a voice from the guard tent.

"Shoot 'im."

I'll bet most of us didn't know there are still 90 widows and 134 helpless children of Civil War veterans still on Veterans Administration compensation and pension rolls. The last Civil War veteran died in 1959.

ITHACA JOURNAL - THANKS TO HAZEE CRAMER