

The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Physicians

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 627

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

April 14, 1941

PHYSICIANS AT LINCOLN'S BEDSIDE

Seventy-six years ago today, on the fourteenth of April, 1865, Abraham Lincoln was assassinated while attending a theatrical performance at Ford's Theatre in Washington. During the period between the time he was shot and the hour when the autopsy was performed the next morning, several physicians visited the bedside of the President.

It seems appropriate on this anniversary day to compile the names of such physicians as were known to be present and to note such service as they were able to render. It would not have been possible to present such a complete list of physicians had not Dr. Milton H. Shutes, author of *Lincoln and the Doctors* made some contributions in this field.

The Three Emergency Surgeons

There were three doctors at the theatre that evening who immediately responded to the call for a doctor which is said to have come from the Lincoln box. These three men, Dr. Leale, Dr. Taft, and Dr. King, will always be closely associated with the story of Lincoln's last hours.

Certainly no young surgeon but a short time out of medical college was ever called upon for professional service in a more dramatic situation than was Dr. Charles A. Leale who was the first to render medical assistance to the stricken President. Dr. Leale was but twenty-three years of age and was an assistant surgeon of United States Volunteers located at Army Square Hospital.

Upon reaching the President's side he immediately ordered that he be removed from the chair and allowed to recline on the floor. Upon finding the wound, he removed a clot which had formed which relieved intra-cranial pressure. Dr. Leale then attempted to stimulate respiration by certain pressure on the throat to free the larynx of secretion. By pressure on the diaphragm with the assistance of others, he stimulated the heart action and an improvement in pulse and breathing followed. Further stimulation was attempted by forcible in-and-out breathing into the President's mouth which brought about heart and lung action without further artificial help.

Dr. Leale then ordered that Lincoln be moved to the nearest bed which proved to be just across the street from the theatre. He supported the President's head while the body was being carried. Later a probing of the wound by Dr. Leale failed to discover the bullet.

The second surgeon to reach the box in which Lincoln had been shot was Dr. Charles S. Taft, assistant surgeon, United States Volunteers, who was stationed at the Signal Camp of Instruction at Georgetown. When the call for medical assistance came, he leaped from the top of the orchestra railing to the stage and was then lifted up to the President's box.

Dr. Taft assisted Dr. Leale in attempting to stimulate heart action, and he also helped to carry the body of Mr. Lincoln across the street to the Petersen House.

A letter written to Mr. Oldroyd by Dr. Taft on March 1, 1900, states that Lincoln was laid diagonally across the bed because it was too short for his long body. Taft wrote, "I then administered a small glass of brandy and he swallowed it without much difficulty. Twenty minutes afterward I gave him another teaspoonful, but it was not swallowed."

Dr. Taft recalled that most of the night he was engaged in supporting the President's head so "that the wound should not press upon the pillow and the flow of blood be obstructed." The last moments are described by Dr. Taft in these words, "The heart did not cease to beat until 22 minutes and 10 seconds after 7 o'clock. My hand was upon the President's heart, and my eye on the watch of the Surgeon-General who was standing by my side."

The third physician to come immediately to the box after the attack on Lincoln was Dr. Albert F. A. King. He also assisted Dr. Leale in helping to stimulate Lincoln's heart action. When the body of the President was moved across the street, Dr. King placed himself at the stricken man's left shoulder and helped to prevent any unnecessary movements of the head and shoulders. He had also assisted Dr. Leale and Dr. Taft in divesting Lincoln of his clothing and then covering his body with mustard plasters.

The Three Official Physicians

Nearly half an hour elapsed after the President had been placed on a bed before the Lincoln family physician, Dr. Stone, arrived. With him came Dr. Barnes and shortly after followed Dr. Abbott.

Just as soon as messengers could be secured after the shooting of Mr. Lincoln, word was sent to the family physician, Dr. Robert King Stone. Although of different political faith, he was a great admirer of Mr. Lincoln and once said to Carpenter, the artist, "It is the province of a physician to probe deeply the inner lives of men, and I affirm that Mr. Lincoln is the purest hearted man with whom I ever came in contact."

It is not known that Dr. Stone did more than that fatal night than suggest that another teaspoonful of brandy might be needed. His suggestion was followed out but Mr. Lincoln was not able to retain it. Stone was seated on the edge

of the bed when Lincoln passed away.

Apparently viewed from the military aspect of the situation, Surgeon-General Joseph K. Barnes was the ranking medical adviser present. At about 2 A. M. he searched for the bullet but the ordinary silver probe was too short. He then secured a longer probe and discovered the bullet but did not try to remove it. Passing the bullet he was confronted with broken segments of the right orbital plate of the frontal bone, but no further attempts were made to explore the injury.

The task seems to have fallen to Dr. Ezra W. Abbott to keep the chart of the condition of the President during the night. Thirty-three different times he made notations. His first entry was made at 11:00 when he noted that the pulse rate was 41. Other notations follow: 12:00, pulse 45, respiration 22; 1:00, pulse 86, respiration 30; 4:15, pulse 60, respiration 25; 6:00, pulse failing, respiration 28; 7:00, symptoms of immediate dissolution; 7:22, death.

Dr. Abbott also noted that Mrs. Lincoln, who occupied a room just across the hall, came to the bedside of the President with Robert Lincoln at 1:45 and remained until 2:10, returning again at 3:00.

Altogether there were at least sixteen physicians who were at Lincoln's bedside at some time during the fateful night, and their names are to be found alphabetically arranged on this page.

Abbott, Dr. Ezra W.
Barnes, Dr. Joseph K.
Crane, Dr. Charles H.
Curtis, Dr. Edward
Ford, Dr. William Henry
Gatch, Dr. C. D.
Hall, Dr. Neal (J. C.)
King, Dr. Albert F. A.
Leale, Dr. Charles Augustus
Lieberman, Dr. Charles Henry
May, Dr. J. F.
Notson, Dr. W. M.
Stone, Dr. Robert King
Taft, Dr. Charles S.
Todd, Dr. Lyman Beecher
Woodward, Dr. Ashbel

DR. LEALE IS DEAD; ATTENDED LINCOLN

6-14-32

First Physician to Reach
Wounded President in
Ford's Theatre Was 90

ALSO CARED FOR GARFIELD

New York, June 13.—(AP)—The first physician to reach the side of the mortally wounded President Lincoln died today at the age of 90. He was Dr. Charles A. Leale.

He was consulting physician, also, when President Garfield succumbed to an assassin's bullet.

At the time of Lincoln's assassination Dr. Leale was executive officer of the United States Army General Hospital in Washington. When he reached Ford's Theatre he found the President crouched in a sitting posture, pulseless in a profound collapse. He stretched the wounded Executive out on the floor to cause recurrence of pulsation and then ordered him removed to the nearest house. At the same time he announced the wound would be fatal.

He then remained at the bedside of the dying President throughout the night and was holding his hand when the end came.

Dr. Leale was born in New York. He had five children, Lillian, Marion, Dr. Medwin, Loyal and Mrs. James Harper. His wife died in 1923.

He received his medical education at Bellevue Hospital Medical College and was appointed a medical cadet in the army in 1864. After special instruction in New York he received his M. D. degree from Bellevue and was assigned to the Washington hospital. He was honorably discharged in 1866 after contracting a severe illness.

Subsequent to his discharge he investigated Asiatic cholera in Europe and America and gave his services to the poor in the epidemic of 1866. He was the author of several technical books and papers and he contributed to New York a system by which thousands of mothers and sick children were given salt water baths on floating hospitals.

Philadelphia

Phil 6/14/32
Dunbar THE PHILA

LINCOLN'S DOCTOR DIES AT 90 YEARS

Charles A. Leale First to
Reach President When
He Was Shot

NEW YORK, June 13 (A. P.).—Dr. Charles A. Leale, the first surgeon to reach the side of President Lincoln after the president was shot and who remained at his side until his death, died today at his home, 1261 Madison avenue.

Dr. Leale was born in New York City March 26, 1842, and March 26 last celebrated his ninetieth birthday surrounded by his five children, Lillian, Marion, Dr. Medwin, Loyal and Mrs. James Harper. Mrs. Leale, his wife, died in 1923.

He was executive officer of the U. S. Army general hospital in Washington at the time of Lincoln's assassination. He was placed in charge of the wounded President by Mrs. Lincoln and remained continuously with Lincoln until his death. He also was consulting physician in the last illness of President Garfield, also the victim of an assassin.

Became Doctor in 1865

He was appointed a medical cadet, U. S. Army, and in September 1864, the Surgeon General transferred him to New York for special instruction. He received his M. D. degree from Bellevue hospital medical college in February, 1865, and was commissioned an assistant surgeon, and assigned to U. S. A. general hospital, Washington.

When Dr. Leale reached Ford's theatre after Lincoln was shot, he found the President crouched down in his chair. He was in a collapse, and pulseless at the wrist. Dr. Leale stretched the President out on the floor, which caused pulsation to be resumed. He announced that recovery of the President, even to consciousness, was impossible and that the wound was positively fatal. He directed the removal of Lincoln to the nearest house and placed him in the position and in the bed in which he died.

The painting of the "death of President Lincoln" by Littlefield, represents Dr. Leale as he stood at the right of the president during the entire night. He held Lincoln's hand at the moment of death.

He investigated Asiatic cholera in Europe and America, giving his services to the poor in the epidemic of 1866. Funeral services will be held Wednesday morning.

LINCOLN'S DOCTOR DIES IN NEW YORK

Dr. Charles A. Leale Found President at Ford's Theatre and
Placed Him on Death-Bed

ALSO WAS WITH GARFIELD

New York, June 13--(AP)--Dr. Charles A. Leale, the first surgeon to reach the side of President Lincoln after he was shot and who remained at Lincoln's side until his death, died today at his home, 1261 Madison av. He was 90 years old.

Dr. Leale was born in New York city in 1842, and March 28 last celebrated his 90th birthday, surrounded by his five children, Lillian, Marion, Dr. Medwin, Loyal and Mrs. James Harper. His wife died in 1923.

The physician was executive officer of the U. S. Army General Hospital in Washington at the time of Lincoln's assassination. He was placed in charge of the wounded President by Mrs. Lincoln and remained continuously with Lincoln until his death. Dr. Leale also was consulting physician in the last illness of President Garfield, also the victim of an assassin.

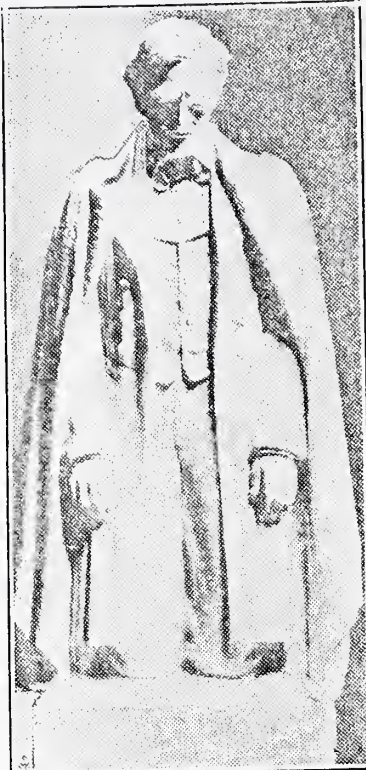
When Dr. Leale reached Ford's Theatre after Lincoln was shot, he found the President crouched in his chair. He was in a profound collapse, and pulseless at the wrist. Dr. Leale immediately stretched the President out on the floor, which caused pulsation to be resumed. After an examination he announced that recovery of the President, even to consciousness, was impossible and that the wound was fatal.

Dr. Leale resorted to forced respiration and directed the removal of Lincoln to the nearest house. It was he who placed Lincoln in the position and on the bed in which he died. The painting of the "Death of President Lincoln" by Littlefield, represents Dr. Leale as he stood at the right of the President during the entire night. He held Lincoln's hand at the moment of death.

*Philadelphia
Bulletin*

6-13-32

LINCOLN AT PRAYER



This striking bronze tribute to President Lincoln, showing him kneeling, was presented to the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral at Washington, D. C., by Mrs. William T. Hildrup, Jr., of New York city. The statue was executed by Mrs. Hildrup's late brother, Herbert Houck, of Harrisburg. The memorial has been placed temporarily in the North Transept.

SURGEON RELATES LINCOLN'S DEATH

Notebook of Dr. Charles Taft,
Witness of Assassination, Ac-
quired by Dr. Rosenbach

WRITER AT DEATHBED

Dr. Charles Taft, who was present that fateful night in Ford's Theatre in Washington when President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated detailed in his notebook the shooting and the subsequent death of the martyred President in the house across the street.

Recently the notebook came into the possession of Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach, Philadelphia bibliophile.

In part the account reads:

"Notes of the circumstances attending the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, on the evening of April 14, 1865, as witnessed by me; also the medical notes of my attendance on the President up to the time of his death, and of the post-mortem examination five hours after death...."

"At about 10.30 my attention was directed toward the President's box by the report of a pistol, and I saw a man jump from the stage box, shouting as he did so: 'Sic semper tyrannis!' As he struck the stage he partly fell, sinking down until his knees touched the floor.... a few moments of great confusion then followed.... I heard several shouts for a surgeon; this was the first information I had that anyone had been wounded; I sprang upon the stage, calling out that I was a surgeon, when I was seized by several men and lifted up to the stage box; when I entered the President was lying upon the floor, surrounded by a number of men, who were lifting him to remove him...."

Dr. Taft described in detail the removal of the President to the nearby house, and the attempts made to save his life. He then continues:

"The wound ceased to bleed or discharge about 5.30 A. M. and from that time on the breathing was stertorous but gradually increased in frequency and decreased in strength up to the last breath which was drawn at 21 minutes and 55 seconds after 7; the heart did not cease to beat until 22 minutes, 10 seconds past 7; my hand was upon the President's heart and my eye upon the watch of the Surgeon General, who was standing by my side."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN MEMENTO IS CHERISHED

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Grandfather Attended Martyred President After Fatal Shooting

Physician's Book Relates Experiences On Murder Night

By THORNTON BOULTER

A chilly, early-spring fog enveloped the city.

There was a spirit of murder in the air. Wild rumors were prevalent.

A pistol barked!

"... our belief is that death was a happy one. Suddenly stricken down by the hand of an assassin, as he was, there was no expression of pain on that placid face."

In one hand S. Reyburn Siebert, 2904 B st., yesterday held a thin book. In the other, he grasped a tiny gold locket which was weighted down by a heavy, old-fashioned chain.

Each—locket and book—turned time back to the night of April 14, 1865. For—

The locket contained hair that had been snipped from President Lincoln's head.

The book, "Fifty Years in the Practice of Medicine and Surgery, 1856 to 1906," was an autobiography of Robert Reyburn, A.M., M.D., Siebert's grandfather, who—

"About 11 p. m. on the above date ... was hastily summoned by Gen. Hardin to the headquarters of the defenses, Nineteenth st. and Pennsylvania ave. with the news that President Lincoln had been assassinated at Ford's theater."

But the hair?

Well does Siebert know the story. Granddad told it to him when the San Diegoan, now 44 but then a boy in short trousers, used to climb up on his lap and tug at chain and locket which the retired army surgeon carried attached to his heavy watch.

For accuracy's sake, however, let's again quote from the autobiography:

"We may say that we possess as one of our choicest treasures some of President Lincoln's hair, which was secured that day in a somewhat irregular manner. Many locks of the President's hair had been cut off for his family, and we had very urgently pleaded for one of them, but to no avail.

"One of the generals who was present, however, noticed that in cutting off the hair one of the locks had dropped on the floor and had remained unnoticed. He said to us: 'Doctor, I can't give you any of the president's hair, but I see a lock of it has dropped upon the floor, and if you capture it I shall make no objection.' You may be sure the writer seized upon the precious relic



S. REYBURN SIEBERT

... the trustees left him a "precious relic."

at once, and if he committed larceny on that occasion it is one sin that has never burdened his conscience."

Death, in 1909, claimed Dr. Reyburn.

The trustees of his estate gave the "precious relic" to Siebert, son of John S. Siebert, councilman, who carries the massive watch that once held the other end of the locket chain in Dr. Reyburn's vest pocket.

The black hair, carefully incased behind a small glass window, has been exposed only to time, and chain, locket and hairs are kept in a safe deposit vault.

Assistant surgeon with the rank of captain ...

One of the six surgeons who had charge of the case of President James A. Garfield from the time he was wounded until his death, Sept. 19, 1881 ...

A prolific writer on medical subjects ...

A distinguished teacher of medicine ...

That was Dr. Reyburn, who looked back on "the night of April 14, 1865," which "was a chilly, misty, foggy evening of early spring ..."

and wrote:

dreary was the time we passed at headquarters that night. The

spirit of murder seemed to be in the very air and the wildest rumors were prevalent. At one time we heard that Vice President Johnson, Secretary Stanton and Gen. Grant had been murdered. Then rumors came that other members of the cabinet had been attacked, followed by the news, which we speedily authenticated, of the wounding of Secretary Seward and the members of his household ...

And—

"The writer had often seen the tall and ungainly figure of President Lincoln during life and gazed upon his homely, quaint, and quizzical face, but had the opportunity for the first time to carefully examine the contour of his head and body. There was a massiveness and grandeur in the proportions of the head and face, and, indeed, of all the parts of his body, which was very striking on close examination. In our opinion, all the busts and statues of him that we have ever seen, in this respect fail to do him justice.

"The writer examined the wound of President Lincoln carefully. The pistol ball fired by the assassin entered the left side of the head and, passing forward in an oblique direction toward the right side of the brain, lodged immediately behind the ball of the right eye. Of course this wound was necessarily

mortal, and no human skill could do more than slightly delay the inevitable death."

A foggy night ...

A pistol barked ...

A nation stunned by its reverberation ...

A lock of hair in a safe deposit box from the head of a national hero.

My dear Wth Darwin
I understand from
Wth Hutton of California,
who wrote a most
interesting book on
President Lincoln that
you are interested in
rare Lincoln documents.
I recently found the
six page account of

for the benefit of security - If
you are interested you can
let me know - There are
no copies, but I can arrange
for an accredited person
to see the papers in Washington
after Dec. 1st -

Very truly yours
W. P. Dickson H. Coker

December 15 1937 -

Washington address
1773 Massachusetts Avenue

the President's death
written by my grandfather
W^h Robert King Stone, and
the original autopsy.
The paper is the one
read by my grandfather
before the Washington
Medical Society - witnessed
by W^h Stokes in his
book. So I am told
by W^h Putnam of the
Library of Congress. I am
going to see these papers

Stone

November 22, 1937

Mr. V. P. H. Cooke
Cartersville, Virginia

Dear Sir:

Thank you very much for calling to our attention the availability of the interesting manuscript with reference to President Lincoln's death.

While we would be greatly interested in seeing it, I doubt seriously whether we would make the acquisition, although when you come to some decision as to what you will ask for it, you might advise us of the price at which you are holding it.

Very truly yours,

LAW:EB

Director

[1940?]

Writer Claims Even Modern Medical Technique Could Not Have Spared Lincoln's Life

Modern medical science, despite the remarkable advances it has made in the last seventy-five years, could not have saved Abraham Lincoln even if all its present day methods had been immediately available when the Emancipator was shot, Otto Eisenschiml, prominent Chicago chemist and Lincoln authority, declares in an article appearing in the April issue of *Coronet*.

Eisenschiml, whose two books on the Civil war president published since 1937, "Why Was Lincoln Murdered?" and "In the Shadow of Lincoln's Death," have been best sellers, has high praise for the young army surgeon, Dr. Charles A. Leale, who attended Lincoln immediately after the shooting.

"It is a compliment to Lincoln's bedside attendants that, if modern scientists had been in charge, they would have proceeded in principle much as did their colleague of seventy-six years ago," he writes.

If some miracle had prevented Lincoln's death in spite of the serious wound, Eisenschiml says, "he would not have been the man whose picture is now alive in the minds and hearts of the American nation.

"Meningitis and brain abscesses would have threatened him; a form of convulsive seizures known as Jacksonian epilepsy or other forms of organize nervous disturbances might have been his lot; most likely he would have been

paralyzed, partially or on both sides; moreover, he would have been totally blind. Worst of all, he would have been a man without an active brain, a mere hulk, a sorry semblance of his former brilliant self."

Eisenschiml describes the nature of the wound in Lincoln's head and tells of the steps taken by young Doctor Leale to revive the patient. Treatment today would differ only in that the technique would be vastly improved, he says. The fact that Lincoln lived for about ten hours after being shot he attributes primarily to the man's extraordinary vitality. It is still the opinion of surgeons today that under like conditions most patients would have died within two or three hours.

Doctor Leale was assisted, after his immediate first aid attentions

to the dying president, by Dr. Charles S. Taft and Dr. Albert F. A. King. Later they stepped aside for the Lincoln family physician, Dr. Robert K. Stone, and Surgeon General Joseph K. Barnes of the U. S. army.

Eisenschiml prepared his article in consultation with a number of medical authorities. It was emended by Dr. Max Thorek, Dr. C. W. Muehlberger and Dr. Hans L. Popper.

Physicians at Lincoln Bedside

(Lincoln Lore)

When President Abraham Lincoln was assassinated at Ford's Theatre, Washington, April 14, 1865, there were three doctors in the audience and who immediately responded to a call from the Lincoln box. Dr. Charles A. Leale, 23, and an assistant surgeon of United States Volunteers was the first to render medical assistance and ordered that Lincoln be moved to the nearest bed which proved to be just across the street from the theatre. Dr. Charles S. Taft and Dr. Albert F. A. King also volunteered their services. Altogether there were at least 16 doctors at Lincoln's bedside at some time during the fateful night including his family physician, Dr. Robert King Stone.

Collector's Guide

Sept. 1941

Doubt Modern Doctors Could Have Saved Abe

BY ARTHUR J. SNIDER

Could President Lincoln have been saved if the doctors of his time had present-day medical knowledge and surgical equipment?

Dr. Otto Eisenschiml, a Chicago chemist and Lincoln scholar, says most medical belief indicates not.

Based on his study of research materials and consultations with leading Chicago doctors, Dr. Eisenschiml says:

"It is a compliment to Lincoln's bedside attendants that, if modern scientists had been in charge, they would have proceeded in principle much as did their colleagues of 87 years ago."

* * *

LINCOLN WAS shot in Ford's theater on April 14, 1865, about 10:13 p.m.

John Wilkes Booth, the assassin, fired a round bullet, a half-inch in diameter, from probably no farther than two feet away.

It made a cleanly cut hole as if done with a punch. It entered the skull on the left side.

A young Army surgeon, Dr. Charles A. Leale, who had strolled into the theater that night, was the first doctor at his side.

* * *

SEEING NO blood, he removed the President's upper garments. He then had the good sense, says Dr. Eisenschiml, to lift his eyelids and note unmistakable signs of brain damage.

He first tried artificial respiration by breathing into Lincoln's mouth. A small amount of diluted brandy brought a fluttering pulse to the President, indicating heart and lung action.

Leale vetoed as too dangerous a suggestion that the Chief Executive be moved to the White House. He feared the jarring over the cobblestone streets.

* * *

THE PRESIDENT was taken to Petersen's boarding house across the street and undressed to make sure there was no other injury.

Hot water bottles and mustard plaster were applied to help increase circulation.

Brandy was again tried but the President could not swallow. No

drugs of any kind were administered.

* * *

BY THIS TIME, Dr. Robert K. Stone, the Lincoln family physician, and Dr. Joseph K. Barnes, surgeon-general of the U.S. Army, were on the scene.

But Leale was left nominally in charge, in accordance with time honored medical ethics.

About 2 a.m., a fruitless finger probe was made for the bullet, Dr. Eisenschiml finds. About 4:30 a.m., breathing became painful and pulse irregular. Lincoln died at 7:22 a.m.

* * *

TODAY, Dr. Eisenschiml says, doctors would not have inserted unwashed fingers in the wound. Antiseptic principles were not understood then.

But the principle of keeping the patient quiet would have been followed today. Sedatives would now be given and blood clots would be removed by irrigation.

Efforts would be made now to ease pressure on the brain, possibly give sugar solution by vein.

But doctors would not probe for the bullet for at least 48 hours.

Many believe, says Dr. Eisenschiml, that even if Lincoln had survived, he would have been at least partly paralyzed, totally blind and possibly without an active brain.

CHICAGO DAILY NEWS
Tues., Feb. 12, 1952 ★ 15

MIGHT LINCOLN'S LIFE HAVE BEEN SAVED?

From the Narrative of William H. Crook, Lincoln's Personal Body-guard



HAT the assassination of Lincoln might easily have been prevented is a fact which is not generally known. How the inexcusable negligence of John Parker, Lincoln's guard on that occasion, gave Booth an opportunity to enter the President's box was related for the first time by William H. Crook, Lincoln's personal body-guard, in the issue of HARPER'S MAGAZINE for September, 1907. Recounting the circumstances, Mr. Crook says:

"I have often wondered why the negligence of the guard who accompanied the President to the theatre on the night of the 14th has never been divulged. So far as I know, it was never even investigated by the police department. Yet, had he done his duty, I believe President Lincoln might not have been murdered by Booth. The man was John Parker. He was a native of the District, and had volunteered, as I believe each of the other guards had done, in response to the President's first call for troops from the District. He is dead now and, as far as I have been able to discover, all of his family.

"It was the custom for the guard who accompanied the President to the theatre to remain in the little passageway through which Booth entered. Mr. Buckingham, who was the doorkeeper at Ford's Theatre, remembers that a chair was placed there for the guard on the evening of the 14th. Whether Parker occupied it at all I do not know—Mr. Buckingham is of the impression that he did. If he did, he left it almost immediately; for he confessed to me the next day that he went to a seat at the front of the first gallery so that he could see the play. The door of the President's box was shut; probably Mr. Lincoln never knew that the guard had left his post.

"Mr. Buckingham tells that Booth was in and out of the house five times before he finally shot the President. Each time he looked about the theatre in a restless, excited manner. I think there can be no doubt that he was studying the scene of his intended crime, and that he observed that Parker, whom he must have been watching, was not at his post. To me it is very probable that the fact that there was no one on guard may have determined the time of his attack. Booth had found it necessary to stimulate himself with whiskey in order to reach the proper pitch of fanaticism. Had he found a man at the door of the President's box armed with a Colt's revolver, his alcohol courage might have evaporated.

"Had Parker been at his post at the back of the box—Booth still being determined to make the attempt that night—he would have been stabbed, probably killed. The noise of the struggle—Parker could surely have managed to make some outcry—would have given the alarm. Major Rathbone was a brave man, and the President was a brave man and of enormous muscular strength. It would have been an easy thing for the two men to have disarmed Booth, who was not a man of great physical strength. It was the suddenness of his attack on the President that made him devilishly successful. It makes me feel rather bitter when I remember that the President had said just a few hours before, that he knew he could trust all his guards. And then to think that in that one moment of test one of us should have utterly failed him!"

APR 16, 1961

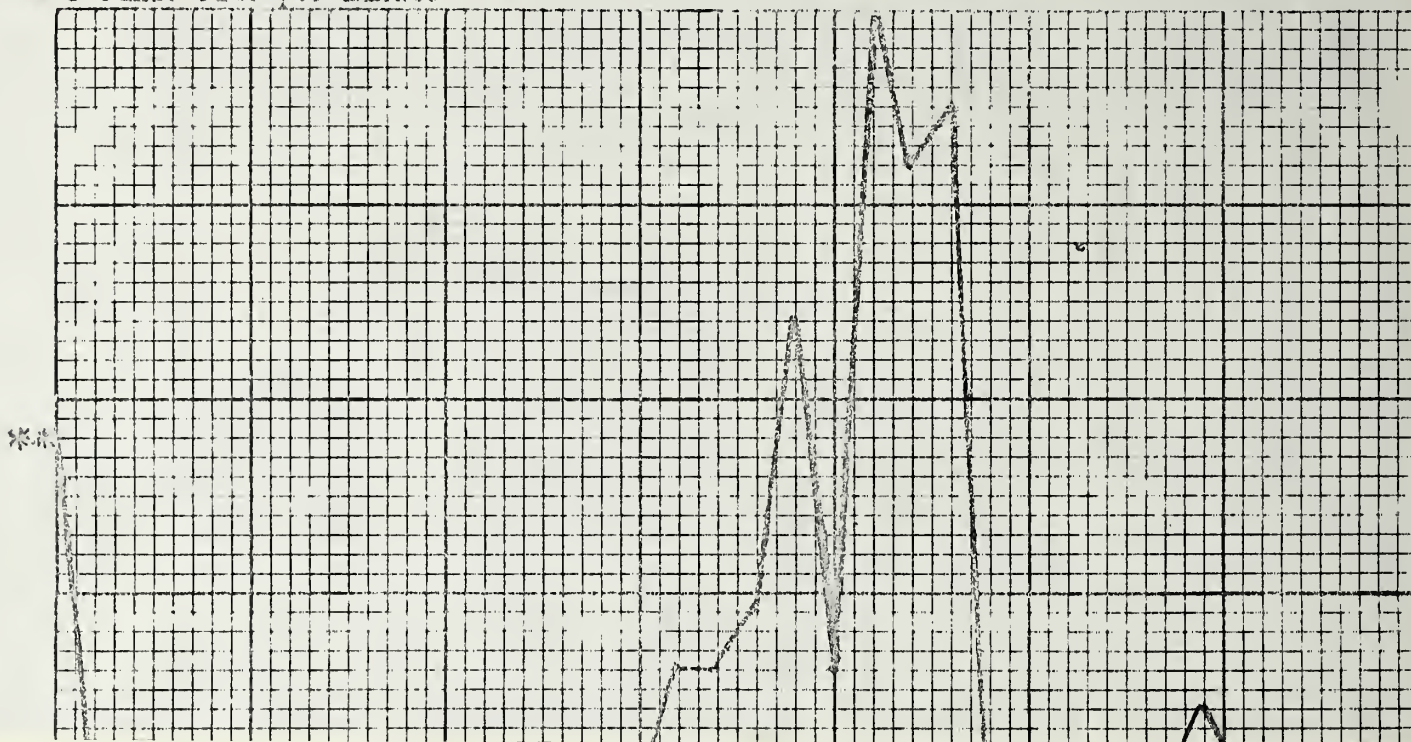
CLINICAL RECORD

PLOTTING CHART

TITLE OR PURPOSE OF GRAPH

GRAPHIC CLINICAL RECORD OF THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

- * R Respirations per minute
- ** P Pulse rate per minute



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11-24-1972

IMPORTANT
LINCOLN ITEMS
DISCOVERED!
FOR SALE!

IMPORTANT NEWS FOR ALL SERIOUS ABRAHAM LINCOLN COLLECTORS

WE ARE NEGOTIATING THE SALE OF ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LINCOLN ITEMS TO COME ON THE MARKET IN RECENT YEARS. WE WILL SOON BE IN A POSITION TO OFFER FOR SALE THE SYRINGE AND NEEDLES IN A LEATHER CASE USED BY DR. STONE, THE LINCOLN FAMILY DOCTOR, THE NIGHT HE TREATED LINCOLN, AFTER THE PRESIDENT WAS SHOT BY JOHN WILKES BOOTH. ACCOMPANYING THE MEDICAL SYRINGE AND NEEDLES IS A LETTER OF AUTHENTICATION BY DR. STONE TO HIS SON, WHO HE LEFT HIS MEDICAL KIT TO. ALSO PRESENT IS A ENGRAVING PLATE AND A FOXED ENGRAVING OF DR. STONE. SEE THE INDEX OF THE BOOK: " THE DAY LINCOLN WAS SHOT" BY JIM BISHOP, FOR REFERENCES TO DR. STONE'S ACTIVITIES IN TREATING LINCOLN AFTER HE WAS SHOT. OTHER MANUSCRIPT LETTERS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE RELATING TO DR. STONE'S MEDICAL PRACTICE AND A PRINTED CIRCULAR ON HIS SON.

AS A LINCOLN COLLECTOR INTERESTED IN PRESERVING OUR COUNTRIES HERITAGE WE KNOW YOU WILL BE INTERESTED IN POSSIBLY ACQUIRING THESE IMPORTANT ITEMS RELATING TO THE LINCOLN FAMILY DOCTOR AND THE ASSASSINATION OF THE PRESIDENT. MORE DETAILED INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST. WRITE, PHONE OR WIRE IF INTERESTED.

P.S. WE ARE ALWAYS INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING AUTOGRAPHS, MANUSCRIPTS, AMERICAN PAINTINGS ON THE WEST, INDIANS, NEGROES OR BY FAMOUS AMERICAN PAINTERS OR GOOD PRIMITIVE PAINTINGS, PRINTS ETC.

WE ARE ALSO INTERESTED IN PRESIDENTIAL AMERICANA, BUTTONS AND POLITICAL ITEMS.

[APRIL 8, 1961?]

CLINICAL RECORD

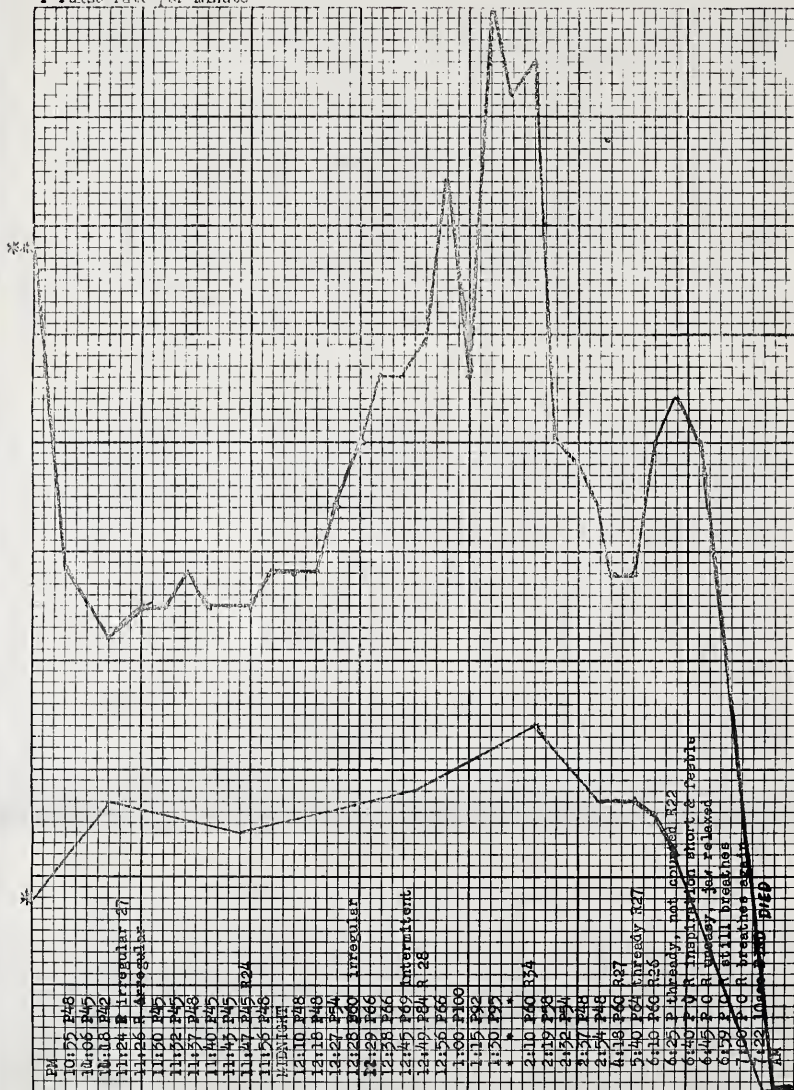
PLOTTING CHART

TITLE OR PURPOSE OF GRAPH

GRAPHIC CLINICAL RECORD OF THE DEATH OF PRESIDENT LINCOLN

* R Respirations per minute

** P Pulse rate per minute



LINCOLN, ABRAHAM

APRIL 14-15th 1865

PATIENT'S IDENTIFICATION (For typed or written entries give: Name-last, first, middle, grade, date, hospital or medical facility)

REGISTER NO.

WARD NO.

JAMA

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Col. USAR MC Ret.

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11-24-1972

IMPORTANT
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IMPORTANT NEWS FOR ALL SERIOUS ABRAHAM LINCOLN COLLECTORS

WE ARE NEGOTIATING THE SALE OF ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LINCOLN ITEMS TO COME ON THE MARKET IN RECENT YEARS. WE WILL SOON BE IN A POSITION TO OFFER FOR SALE THE SYRINGE AND NEEDLES IN A LEATHER CASE USED BY DR. STONE, THE LINCOLN FAMILY DOCTOR, THE NIGHT HE TREATED LINCOLN, AFTER THE PRESIDENT WAS SHOT BY JOHN WILKES BOOTH. ACCOMPANYING THE MEDICAL SYRINGE AND NEEDLES IS A LETTER OF AUTHENTICATION BY DR. STONE TO HIS SON, WHO HE LEFT HIS MEDICAL KIT TO. ALSO PRESENT IS A ENGRAVING PLATE AND A FOXED ENGRAVING OF DR. STONE. SEE THE INDEX OF THE BOOK: " THE DAY LINCOLN WAS SHOT" BY JIM BISHOP, FOR REFERENCES TO DR. STONE'S ACTIVITIES IN TREATING LINCOLN AFTER HE WAS SHOT. OTHER MANUSCRIPT LETTERS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE RELATING TO DR. STONE'S MEDICAL PRACTICE AND A PRINTED CIRCULAR ON HIS SON.

AS A LINCOLN COLLECTOR INTERESTED IN PRESERVING OUR COUNTRIES HERITAGE WE KNOW YOU WILL BE INTERESTED IN POSSIBLY ACQUIRING THESE IMPORTANT ITEMS RELATING TO THE LINCOLN FAMILY DOCTOR AND THE ASSASSINATION OF THE PRESIDENT. MORE DETAILED INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST. WRITE, PHONE OR WIRE IF INTERESTED.

P.S. WE ARE ALWAYS INTERESTED IN ACQUIRING AUTOGRAPHS, MANUSCRIPTS, AMERICAN PAINTINGS ON THE WEST, INDIANS, NEGROES OR BY FAMOUS AMERICAN PAINTERS OR GOOD PRIMITIVE PAINTINGS, PRINTS ETC.

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July 25, 1983

Mr. Bertram O'Nassis SHELDON
Author of autobiographical out-of-print and illustrated
Mandibles, Animals, and Cannibals
5480 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W. #838
Washington, D. C. 20815

Dear Bert:

You and I discussed on the telephone the identification of the Dr. Hall who, according to an account in Lincoln Lore, visited the Peterson House while President Lincoln lay dying.

One Dr. James C. Hall (1805-1880) is buried in Congressional Cemetery under an ostentatious, resurrection-proof, marble spire, with an epitaph reading:

Erected by the Washington City Orphans' Asylum and
the Children's Hospital of the District of Columbia
jointly to mark the grave of Doctor James C. Hall.
Born at Alexandria, Va. Jan. 10, 1805
Died at Washington, D.C., June 7, 1880.

Dr. James C. Hall was the alienist (psychiatrist) who elicited from Lewis Thornton Powell Payne the justification for his, and presumably Booth's, savageries; i.e., in war a person is entitled to take life. It is barely possible that Dr. James C. Hall made a house call to the Petersen House the evening of April 14, 1865 -- not to prescribe for the President, but to try to quiet things down a bit.

George S. Bryan, in his The Great American Myth, p. 318, cites Maunsell B. Field's Memories of Many Men as his source for saying that he (then Assistant Secretary of the Treasury) "brought Dr. Hall, one of the most distinguished surgeons in the District, to the Petersen House."

Better yet is the information furnished us by the now-deceased Richard H. Luthin, whom you well knew; the following quote is from Luthin's The Real Abraham Lincoln, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N.J. (1960), p. 649:

During that horrible night Dr. Neal Hall, with whom Dr. Stone had consulted during the last illness of Lincoln's son, Willie, more than three years before, came in, as did other prominent Washington physicians, including Dr. J. F. May [Booth's surgeon] and Dr. C. H. Lieberman [Rock Creek Cemetery]. A cousin of Mrs. Lincoln, Dr. Beecher Todd of

B. O'Nassis Sheldon

2

Lexington, Kentucky, was present most of the night. Other medical men there were Acting Surgeon Ford /Dr. C.M. Ford, Congressional Cemetery/ and Dr. E. W. Abbott /buried in New Hampshire, Roger Hunt says/. Abbott kept a detailed record of the President's pulse and respirations, which was released to the press nearly hourly, as a grief-stricken nation waited for the latest "extra" edition of their town newspapers.

I have read somewhere that Dr. Charles K. Stone, the Lincolns' family physician, was a Southern sympathizer -- which bothered the president not a whit. I had suspected Dr. Stone of being a Disunionist, because under his name on the monument in Rock Creek Cemetery, followed by that of his wife, we see the names of his son-in-law and daughter:

Geo. Byrd Harrison, MD, C.S.A.
Jane Stone Harrison.

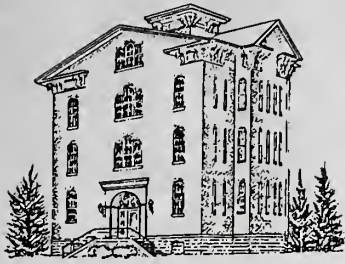
Trusting that this note will partially satisfy your voracious appetite for extraneous detail, I remain

Your friendly friend,

"Caud"

No Enclosures.

T. LaMarr Caudle



The Lincoln Newsletter

A PUBLICATION OF THE LINCOLN COLLEGE MUSEUM

Volume XX, Number 1

Lincoln, Illinois

Spring 2001

A Statement From Lincoln's Deathbed Physician

By Barbara Hughett

In the last issue, we announced the generous gift of valuable Abraham Lincoln assassination memorabilia that the Lincoln College Museum received from Lincoln College Trustee John Gelbach. Among the many items in the Gelbach Collection is a copy of an eyewitness account of the sixteenth president's last hours, composed and signed some years after the tragic event by Dr. Charles A. Leale, a physician who treated the slain leader on his deathbed. Leale, was a 23-year old U.S. Army surgeon who happened to be in the audience when Lincoln was shot. In the account that follows, he explains "how the wounded president was cared for."

"I was the first to be admitted to the theater box after President Lincoln was shot, and, by request of Mrs. Lincoln, I took charge of him and remained with him until he died. I arrived at Ford's Theatre about eight-fifteen p.m. and procured a seat in the dress circle, about forty feet from the President's box, and soon afterward saw the President, Mrs. Lincoln, Major Rathbone, and Miss Harris enter, preceded by an attendant, who, after opening the door of the box and then closing it, after the party entered, took a seat outside.



Dr. Charles A. Leale

Photo: Ford's Theatre National Historic Site

"The play was continued for some time, when the report of a pistol was heard, and about a minute afterward a man leaped to the stage, holding in his hand a dagger. I heard cries that the President had been murdered, and immediately vaulted over the seats to the rear of the box, and as soon as the door was opened and I was admitted, Mrs. Lincoln exclaimed, 'Oh, doctor, what can you do for my dear husband?'

"I replied that we would do all we possibly could. When I reached the President, his head had fallen forward and he was being held upright in his chair by Mrs. Lincoln. As we removed him to a recumbent position, my hand came in contact with a clot of blood on his left shoulder. Supposing he had been stabbed there, I asked a gentleman in the box to cut his coat and shirt off from that part; but on examination no wound was found there. Meanwhile, in my examination my fingers passed over a lot of blood on the left side of his head, the removal of which disclosed the wound, and I found the bullet had entered the brain. In response to anxious inquiries, I said, 'The wound is mortal; it is impossible for him to recover.' Laura Keane appealed to me to allow her to hold his head and I granted the request.

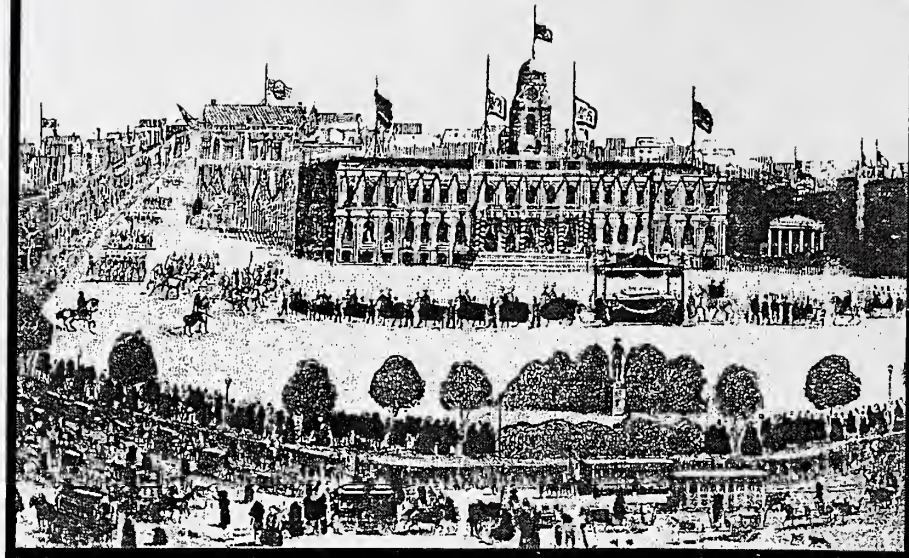
"Meantime, Dr. Charles Sabin Taft—since deceased—and Dr. Albert F. A. King, now of Washington, arrived, and we decided to remove the President to a house where he could be placed on a bed. Dr. Taft, Dr. King, and I carried his head and shoulders and others his body, to the street, where there was a dense crowd; but a free passage was made, and we took him

(continued on page 8)

to the Petersen House opposite the theatre, where I made a thorough examination to see if he had been injured in any other place. I requested all except surgeons to leave the room. I examined the body from head to feet, but found no other injury.

"Messengers were dispatched for the President's son Robert, and for Surgeon-General Barnes, Surgeon Bliss, in charge of Armory Square Hospital; Dr. Stone, the family physician; Dr. Gurley, the President's pastor; and for all members of the Cabinet. On the arrival of Surgeon-General Barnes, Assistant Surgeon-General Crane, and Dr. Stone, I reported what we had done. Robert Lincoln soon came and remained with his father and mother all night. Secretary of War Stanton occupied the adjoining room for official business.

"During President Lincoln's dying moments the surgeon-general occupied a chair by the bed and occasionally held his finger over the carotid artery, and I held the President's right hand with my forefinger on his pulse. The protracted struggle ceased at seven-twenty-two a.m., April 15th, when those in the room bowed or knelt while Dr. Gurley supplicated to God in behalf of the bereaved family and our afflicted country. I gently smoothed his contracted facial muscles, drew a sheet over the martyr's face, and departed to continue to care for the suffering and wounded soldiers at the Armory Square Hospital." ❏



The 25th of April 1865 in New York

New York mourns Lincoln

Photo: Gelbach Collection, Lincoln College Museum



Painter Lectures at the Lincoln Home Site

Continued from page 3

Elizabeth Waters is a private consultant, based in Charlottesville, Virginia, with twenty years of experience in planning and consensus building activities related to community and economic development, environmental protection, and historic preservation. She is writing the Special Resource Study for the Soldiers' Home project and has co-authored *America's Downtowns: Growth, Politics, and Preservation*.

For additional information about the program, which is open to the public and free of charge, contact the Lincoln Home National Historic Site at 217-492-4242, extension 241, or via e-mail at liho_historian@nps.gov. ❏

The Lincoln Newsletter
PUBLICATION OF THE LINCOLN COLLEGE MUSEUM

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If only ... Modern ER might have saved Abe



Lincoln

By David Brown
Washington Post

If Ford's Theatre had been in Baltimore, if the patient had been taken to the state Shock Trauma Center and if 1865 were 2007 ... Abraham Lincoln might have survived the gunshot wound to his head.

If he had lived, he would at the least have been partly blind, unsteady on his feet, numb in certain regions of his body and inarticulate. Nevertheless, he might have been able to think and, after much rehabilitation, communicate.

What that might have meant to the United States at the dawn of reunification after the Civil War – well, the

► See **Lincoln**/Page 6A

Lincoln

► From Page 1A

string of imaginary events can be unspooled forever.

In their annual examination with the flexible retrospectroscope, medical experts last week took on the case of Abraham Lincoln at the 13th Historical Clinicopathological Conference, sponsored by the University of Maryland School of Medicine and the Veterans Affairs hospital.

Previous exercises have sought to diagnose illness or determine cause of death of famous people with incomplete medical records. They include Alexander the Great (typhoid fever complicated by Guillain-Barre syndrome), Ludwig van Beethoven (syphilis) and Edgar Allan Poe (rabies, a diagnosis now generally discredited). This year's attempted not to solve a mystery but rather to address an extreme hypothetical – what might have happened to one of the country's greatest presidents if time travel were possible.

"We probably see a dozen gunshot wounds to the head each year where people survive. He had a non-fatal injury by 2007 standards," said Thomas Scalea, a surgeon and the director of the Shock Trauma Center.

Though almost all previous analyses have called Lincoln's wound unsurvivable under any circumstance, Scalea believes evidence to the contrary is in plain view. Lincoln survived for nine hours.

Lincoln was shot about 10:25 p.m. on April 14, 1865. He lived long past the "golden hour" when stabilization of vital functions – principally, respiration and blood pressure – is essential. Throughout the night his condition waxed and waned, until brain swelling and blood loss tipped him inevitably toward death, which occurred at 7:22 a.m. the next day.

During that night, which ended with Secretary of War Edwin Stanton's memorable comment "Now he belongs to the ages," definitive medical care would have been possible if Lincoln had lived in another age.

"For him to have lived today would not be an extraordinary thing," Scalea said.



Washington Post

President Lincoln's deathbed was photographed after his body was removed on April 15, 1865. Experts speculate that, with modern medical techniques, Lincoln might have survived being shot in the head.

John Wilkes Booth, the assassin, shot the 16th president with a muzzle-loading derringer pistol. The bullet – apparently a .41-caliber slug fired from the .44-caliber weapon – pierced the lower rear part of the skull, called the occipital bone, and traveled roughly straight forward.

It tore a path through the left side of the brain, including through the fluid-filled lateral ventricle. But it did not hit the brainstem, which controls such essential functions as breathing, did not cross the midline, and stopped before entering the frontal lobes, the seat of reason and emotional control.

What is more extraordinary than what might have happened to Lincoln if he were treated in the 21st century is what did happen to him in the middle of the 19th.

Lincoln received a version of cardiopulmonary resuscitation that is eerily similar to what is standard today. His medical care – first in the theater, then at a boardinghouse across the street – focused largely on brain decompression, one of the chief therapeutic goals in modern treatment of head trauma.

The first physician to attend Lin-

coln was Charles Augustus Leale, a 23-year-old Army surgeon sitting 40 feet from the presidential box, assigned to attend the performance in case of a threat to the president's health.

CPR protocol calls for an "ABC" assessment of the patient – airway, breathing, circulation. Leale reported that when he arrived, Lincoln's breathing "was intermittently and exceedingly stertorous" (snore-like). He could feel no pulse in the president's wrist. He explored the head wound, probing it with a pinkie finger and dislodging a clot – after which Lincoln's breathing "became more regular."

Over the next 20 minutes, with the help of two other physicians, Leale resuscitated Lincoln.

They placed him on his back. Leale straddled him on his knees, opened Lincoln's mouth, depressed the tongue "and made a free passage for air to enter the lungs." They manipulated his arms in a version of artificial respiration. At one point Leale "forcibly breathed directly into his mouth and nostrils ... and improved his respirations."

Incredibly, at one point Leale applied "intermittent sliding pressure under and beneath the ribs" and "stimulated the apex of the heart." That was an early form of "external cardiac massage," although its purpose was not to circulate blood directly but to spur the heart to do so.

After Lincoln was moved to his deathbed (which he fit in only diagonally because of his height), his pulse and breathing periodically slowed, a consequence of bleeding and swelling of the brain.

High "intracerebral pressure" causes an automatic slowing of the heartbeat called the Cushing reflex, named after the 20th-century neurosurgeon Harvey Cushing. It also pushes the brainstem, which controls respiration, against the hole at the base of the skull where the spinal cord connects to the brain. Lincoln's dilated left pupil, noted by Leale in the theater, was also evidence of this threatened "brainstem herniation."

The doctors relieved the pressure by taking clots out of the wound and probing it with a metal instrument. But those temporizing measures eventually failed.

Today, paramedics would "scoop and run" with Lincoln. Studies have shown that almost nothing done in the field, other than driving fast, increases survival of victims of head trauma. Doctors would put a breathing tube down his trachea as soon as he arrived at the hospital. He would be given intravenous fluid that is far saltier than blood, which would slightly shrink his brain, relieving pressure. He would get a quick physical exam and a CAT scan of his head – all in 10 minutes.

In Lincoln's case, the images would have revealed large pools of blood that surgeons could have taken out. They would probably remove much of one side of the skull and leave it open but covered. The piece of bone would be "banked" for replacement if he survived.

Surgeons could try other maneuvers. Two used at the Shock Trauma Center, and largely developed there, are opening the abdominal cavity – which, curiously, lowers intracerebral pressure – and standing the unconscious patient's bed vertical, which enlists gravity to the task.

