PLOT TO STEAL BODY

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BURIAL

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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Plot to Steal Lincoln's Body

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

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ROBBERY.

Dastardly Attempt to Despoil the Lincoln Monument.

Thieves Trying to Steal the Bones of the Martyr President.

Warning Given, and Steps Taken to Arrest Them.

Elmer Washburn and His Assistants Waiting in the Dark.

The Robbers Interrupted by Accident, and Contrive to Escape.

Special Dispatch to The Tribune.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill., Nov. 7.—An attempt was made this evening to perpetrate one of the most infamous outrages which the mind of man can conceive of—that of stealing the bones and ashes of Abraham Lincoln. Unfortunately the perpetrators escaped, leaving, however, the evidences of their crime behind them, and though the clews are next to nothing, if human ingenuity can track them it will be done. Somehow or other, no one exactly knows how, J. C. Power, the custodian of the Lincoln monument, became impressed with the idea that there were designs upon the remains, and he communicated his suspicions to Leonard Swett and Robert Lincoln. They could hardly believe that any one, even the meanest and lowest scoundrel in the land, could conceive such a thing. However, to prevent the horse from getting out of the stable, they concluded, to lock the door—to adopt precautions even should there be nothing in the feeling. Accordingly, Swett wrote Col. Stewart, of this city, about two weeks ago, requesting him to station a guard at the monument. This was done, but no one came to disturb the corpse. Detective Tyrrell, of the United States Secret Service, whose headquarters are in Chicago, having business here, was requested by Swett and Lincoln to see Mr. Power, and to look around town, and watch for suspicious characters. He arrived here three or four days ago, and at once commenced a vigorous shadowing of several of the small hotels, but he saw no one whom he recognized. This afternoon Mr. Power came into town in a hurry and hunted up Tyrrell and informed him that two very hard-looking cases had been out to the cemetery looking around, and he felt assured that they were there for no good purpose. One registered as from Racine, and the other from Kenosha, Wis. Their names are suppressed, since they have had nothing to do with what occurred later. An effort will of course be made to find out who they are, and should they prove to be innocent injustice would be done them by telling now who they are. Mr. Power, not being used to detective work, could give but meager descriptions of them. The result of the interview with Tyrrell is unknown, but he must have concluded that election night was an excellent one in which to rob the tomb.

The evening's train brought from Chicago ex-Chief of the Secret Service Elmer Washburn, who, it seems, had been requested by Swett and Lincoln to come here and aid Tyrrell. About half-past 6 Washburn, Tyrrell, and three other men went out to Oakwood and concealed themselves in Memorial Hall to aide the monument to await developments. One man was posted in the labyrinth in the rear, so called because of the walls running in all wild directions and making numerous passage-ways, these walls supporting the terrace. His object was to hear the noise made in the vault if any were made. After patiently waiting for nearly three hours, and when about tired out from standing still, the utmost silence being imperative, one heard grating noise which lasted perhaps five minutes. Then, in a little while, came several successive thuds, as if some one was hammering. The time having arrived for action, Washburn and his men slipped out of the door, with cocked revolvers in their hands, determined to shoot to kill if any resistance was made. Just as they were turning the corner to the left one of the men accidentally exploded his revolver. The noise was very loud, so still were the surroundings, and unfortunately it was too loud, for, though there were but about 120 feet to go over, when the officers got to the door of the vault the dastardly villains were gone. They must have had some one watching to give them the signal of danger or else had come outside for a breath of fresh air and heard the snapping of the cap and ran into the woods which surrounded the monument. It is but a short distance, and a man could get within shelter and be unobservable in a quarter of a minute. The men at once scattered, and went in the direction the thieves had gone, and, while dodging behind the trees, two of them exchanged shots, each mistaking the other for one of the fugitives. After shooting at each other, they cried "Wash," "Wash," indicative of a friend in such an emergency, and then they found out their mistake. The bullets whizzed close to both, and it was miraculous that they escaped injury.

No traces of the thieves being discovered, the party returned to the catacomb, and there beheld a sight which made them sad. The body, as is known perhaps, is inclosed in a lead casket. This is surrounded by a cedar case, and the receptacle of these is a marble sarcophagus. The latter had a double lid, the upper one not being as large as the other. Both had been pried off with a chisel or an ax, and somewhat chipped in the operation. The under lid was laid crosswise on the casket, the head-piece on the floor, and the upper one standing against the wall. The casket itself was pulled out about a foot from the body of the sarcophagus, and a small piece had been taken off on the floor, where an ax with the edge full of marble-dust, an ordinary chisel, and a pair of nippers. The other tools had evidently been taken away since the lock on the iron-grated door had been sawed off.

It should perhaps be stated that the sarcophagus was in the catacomb and not in the crypt, being thus placed in order that visitors might see it. The damage done is comparatively little.

The officers of course were disappointed at not catching the vandals, but they think it is only a question of a little time when they will be apprehended.

Only one motive can be attributed to these despoilers of the grave, and that is the hope of a reward for the restoration of the remains. If they had succeeded in carrying them off, it certainly could not have been their intention to take away the casket, for it must weigh from 500 to 600 pounds, and half a dozen men could not have carried it to the fence for transfer to a wagon in the road. It is more than likely that they intended to cut open the casket and gather up the bones and dust of the martyr-President and put them in a bag. What would have been the humiliation of the country had this been done! The scheme contrived by these men is certainly unparalleled in the history of crime, and, now that the evidence of minds so abased, it is certain that measures will be taken to guard the movement and prevent future attempts. The facts given above did not come out early this morning, and are known to only a few, otherwise the outrage would have secured as great a share of the attention of the community as the election. Words cannot express the feelings of those who do know it, and it is earnestly hoped that the double dia[illegible] perpetrators of this attempted robbery of the remains of America's most loved President will soon be brought to justice.

THE LINCOLN TOMB PLOT.

Memories Revived by the Death of Elmer Washburn.

To the Editor of The Sun—*Sir:* The recent death of Elmer Washburn, former chief of police of Chicago, caused a newspaper revival of the story of the attempt to steal the body of Abraham Lincoln from the Lincoln tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Ill. The story, as revived, was inaccurate in almost every detail. It carried a Chicago date line and should have been accurate. The attempt was not made in the fall of 1879, but on the night of the Presidential election November 7, 1876. Readers will readily understand why that night was chosen.

The plotters were Chicago and St. Louis criminals, two of them being notorious counterfeiters. Their plan was not to take the body to Canada, but to bury the casket containing the body in the Kankakee swamp and hold it for ransom. One of the gang confessed the plot several days before the night fixed for executing it. Robert T. Lincoln, son of the Emancipator, and yet living, was notified. Plans were laid to capture the gang while at work in the tomb. Armed men, mostly citizens of Springfield, hid in the tomb early in the day chosen for the attempted robbery. The gang came into the cemetery in a spring wagon after dark and not suspecting a trap. Without much trouble they entered the tomb. Lincoln's body was in a heavy metallic casket that rested in a marble sarcophagus in the centre of the tomb.

The robbers opened the sarcophagus and had pulled the casket out about eighteen inches when one of the citizens lying in wait to capture them made a noise that frightened the gang and they ran from the tomb with the citizens in pursuit. There was a running fight, but the robbers escaped. Later two of them were caught and imprisoned for short terms. For six months after that the casket, with Lincoln's remains, lay covered with boards in a corridor of the tomb, between what is now the memorial room of the tomb and the room containing the sarcophagus. It was guarded day and night. Then the casket, with that containing the remains of Mrs. Lincoln, was buried in six feet of cement immediately under the spot from which the robbers had attempted to steal it.

Before the reburial, however, an undertaker, in the presence of a committee of Springfield citizens, removed the metal plate of the casket over the face of Lincoln, and eleven years after his death it was revealed that no apparent change had taken place. The remains appeared as natural as they were on the day of their interment in April, 1865.

This is the story told me by Major E. S. Johnson, custodian of the Lincoln tomb at Springfield, civil war veteran, intimate friend of the Lincoln family, one of the men who attempted to capture the robbers, and one of the Lincoln guard of honor from the night of November 7, 1876, when the attempt was made to steal the body, until it was again interred, surrounded on every side by six feet of cement. Major Johnson was also a member of the committee that viewed Lincoln's remains after they had been in the tomb eleven years. He was a schoolmate of Robert T. Lincoln, only survivor of the martyred President's family.

David C. Baker.

New York, November 30. 1918

STORY OF PLOT TO STEAL LINCOLN'S BODY REVIVED.

Chicago, Nov. 26 (by A. P.)—The story of the plot to steal the body of Abraham Lincoln from Oak Ridge cemetery at Springfield was revived to-day, following the announcement of the death of Elmer Washburn, former Chief of Police of Chicago. According to the story, suppressed on request of relatives, the attempt was made in the fall of 1879 and the plan was to convey the body of the martyred President to Canada from where negotiations for its return would be conducted. Mr. Washburn was head of the Government secret service here at the time and with eight Federal agents was hidden in the cemetery when the four ghouls pried open the iron door of the mausoleum. Alarmed by the accidental discharge of a revolver, the four fled, but were arrested three days later. They were convicted and sent to prison for a year

Story of Plot to Steal Lincoln's Body Is A Feature of Masonic Library Collection

By John R. Batten

IT WAS FORTY-SIX years ago Nov. 7 that the last and most daring of a series of dastardly attempts was made to steal the body of President Abraham Lincoln from where it lay in the Lincoln monument at Oak Ridge cemetery near Springfield, Ill.

So declares Col. J. F. McNeill, of Oskaloosa, last survivor of the famous Lincoln Guard of Honor, in his manuscript on the historic events of nearly half a century ago which is only one of the many interesting papers, books and pictures on the nation's martyred president, to be found in the Alcove of Lincolniana, one of the noteworthy features of the Iowa Masonic library in First avenue. Outside of the Congressional library, this collection on Lincoln is said to be the largest in the country.

Though established only a year, the Lincoln collection of books and papers now totals nearly 200 volumes, a huge scrap book of newspaper and magazine clippings of Lincoln and many pictures. Many of the books are gifts from folk who are great admirers of Lincoln or who have in their home libraries books and papers that were published during his lifetime or shortly afterward.

The Lincolniana alcove was started by Crescent lodge No. 25, A. F. and A. M., which made a liberal contribution for the purpose of obtaining everything possible pertaining to the life of Lincoln. The lodge also appointed a committee of which Joseph B. Miller, a past master, was chairman, to solicit money for the enlargement of the library with the above indicated result.

Many Different Biographies

Included in the books in the alcove are many different biographies of Lincoln. An effort has been made to obtain copies of nearly every class of writing on him, as his life and work have been dealt with from so many different angles and by so many different authors.

There are books on his boyhood, on his paternity, on his home, on his relation to slavery, on the Civil war, on Lincoln as a leader, as a statesman, as a man, as a lawyer; his family, Lincoln at Gettysburg, personal recollections, anecdotes and incidents; the poet's Lincoln, Lincoln compared with Washington, Lincoln and the Black Hawk war, Lincoln and Douglas, and scores of others.

There is a collection of post card views showing places of interest in a study of Lincoln's life and the events of the Civil war time. The faded newspaper clippings bring a touch of greater reality and a keen remembrance to older visitors at the library of those Lincoln days more than half a century ago. One man has reported to the library that he has a collection of nearly 2,000 pictures of Lincoln ranging all the way from news prints to engravings, which he intends presenting to the Lincolniana alcove.

A portrait of President Lincoln and a copy of the Lincoln classic, the address at Gettysburg, have been framed and hang on the walls of the alcove.

Dramatic Story of Plot

Included in the alcove collection is a book by John C. Power, secretary of the Lincoln Guard of Honor and custodian of the National Lincoln monument, on "The Attempt to Steal Lincoln's Body." The book was presented to Col. McNeill of Oskaloosa but his own manuscript which he included with the gift proves even more interesting.

The tragic story of President Lincoln's death is too well known to need repeating. He was shot the evening of April 14, 1865, by John Wilkes Booth at Ford's theater, Washington, and died at 7:22 a. m. the following day.

On May 4, his body was placed in the receiving vault of the Oak Ridge cemetery and on Dec. 1 of the same year was placed in a temporary vault in the ground of the National Lincoln monument association to remain until the catacomb of the monument was in a condition to receive it. Then on Sept. 17, 1874, the body was placed in Crypt No. 1 and on Oct. 19, of that year, was enclosed in a marble sarcophagus, resting on the floor of the catacomb, according to McNeill's account.

This, however, proved to be far from a safe place. In the fall of 1876, Dr. Power was informed of a plot being concocted in Chicago among alleged counterfeiters and others, to steal the body of the martyred president and hold it for a high ransom. United States secret service men and Chicago detectives went to work on the case immediately and it was learned an attempt was to be made by the tomb robbers the night of Nov. 7, 1876.

Thieves Escape in Dark

Soon after it was dark that night, Col. McNeill relates, Mr. Power and the detectives hid in Memorial hall, which was separated from the catacomb by a wall, through which sound carried easily. They heard the robbers at work and ran out into the hallway and around the monument, hoping to catch them red-handed. They had not dared a light in the catacomb, however, and in the darkness the ghoulish gang escaped although a number of pistol shots were exchanged.

Three weeks later the robbers were arrested in Chicago, but because of no law in Illinois then which made grave robbing a felony, they were sentenced to only one year in prison on some minor charge.

Realizing the danger of leaving Lincoln's body in such an unsecure place, Dr. Power and a few other faithfuls removed the coffin and placed it in what apparently was a much more dangerous location and much less dignified, according to Col. McNeill. For they left, he said, on the jutting foundation walls of the Memorial hall, covering it only with loose boards intending to return later and take it to some safe locality.

McNeill declares, however, that the coffin remained in this unprotected and undignified manner for nearly two years, when the necessity of making extensive repairs to the hall caused the monument association to instruct Dr. Power and his associates to remove it to some secret and secure place.

Secrete Body

On the Night of Nov. 18, 1878, they accepted this sacred and patriotic trust and moved the body. Robert T. Lincoln and members of the national association knew what was being done but only the members of the Lincoln Guard of Honor knew where the body was concealed, McNeill says.

The Lincoln Guard of Honor was organized soon afterward and incorporated under the laws of Illinois to guard, protect and make sacred Lincoln's body, and in every other way conserve and enshrine those things which were connected with his life and service.

The first memorial exercises for President Lincoln were held April 16, 1880, at the Lincoln monument, under the auspices of the guard. They began at 7:22 a. m. to correspond with the hour of his death.

After the death and burial of Mrs. Lincoln in July, 1882, continues Mr. McNeill, the members of the guard met again at the request of Robert Lincoln, and transferred her body to the side of Lincoln's in the secret place they had provided. There they remained until April 15, 1887, twenty years after the president's death, when the guard, its membership depleted, feeling that its trust had been fulfilled, exhumed the bodies and brought them back to the catacomb, turning them over to the care of the members of the monument association.

After the body of the martyred president had been properly identified to forestall the possibility of a hoax, it, with that of Mrs. Lincoln, was placed in a pit dug through the floor of the catacomb. They remained there until March, 1900, when they were removed to a temporary tomb built outside, while the larger structure was being remodeled. On April 24, 1901, the bodies were again placed in the catacomb, but on Sept. 26 of that year, at the request of Robert Lincoln, the body of his father was placed in a concrete vault beneath the floor of the catacomb with the sarcophagus directly over it.

"In this place," Mr. McNeill writes, "it would seem that the public mind may rest in the confident hope that through all the coming years, these sacred remains may rest quietly, unvexed by either friendly or vandal hands."

ANN ARBOR MICH NEWS
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 1930.

Lincoln Sarcophagus Prey of Despoilers

Souvenir hunters have been carrying away the white marble sarcophagus in which Abraham Lincoln reposed from 1874 to 1876, according to reports from Springfield, Ill.

The sarcophagus was convenient to the despoilers, it appears, because it was left upon the lawn of the Lincoln Memorial when the work of rebuilding the first tomb of the martyred president recently was begun. It was to have been preserved for its historical associations, though not being incorporated in the restored tomb. A misunderstanding upon the part of the workmen is blamed for leaving it where it could become the prey of the souvenir hunters.

The misunderstanding is certainly regrettable. But once it occurred, why was it not corrected in time to save the sacred relic? Surely someone deserves a reprimand for permitting it to be tossed aside like so much rubbish.

Something ought to be done about it, even at this late date.

COUNTERFEITERS MAKE EFFORT TO STEAL BODY OF LINCOLN IN 1876

Intended to Hold Remains to Secure Release and Pardon For Leader of Their Gang

(This is the sixth of a series of articles written by Raymond H. Sellers, editor of The Star, concerning a recent visit to the old home and burial place of Abraham Lincoln, in Springfield, Ill.)

Indianapolis Star - 11-12-50

It was more than twenty-one years following the death and burial of Abraham Lincoln that the attempt was made to steal his body from the tomb at Oak Ridge cemetery, Springfield. That anyone should have thought of such a weird scheme had never occurred to any of those who had been in charge of the Lincoln Memorial, although the body was securely sealed in its crypt in the tomb and entrance to the chambers underneath the plane of the tomb was guarded by strong steel doors that were locked each night.

On the night of Nov. 7, 1876, the effort, carefully planned for many weeks previously, as it was afterward learned, was made to remove the body of Lincoln from its last resting place.

Col. Herbert Wells Fay, custodian of the tomb, describes the dastardly plot as probably bred in the mind of some reader of "blood and thunder literature" so common in that day, but that there was method back of the plot was divulged later when the miscreants were captured.

A band of counterfeiters had been working in the Middle West in the early seventies, according to the story of Col. Fay. Their successes had made them bold, and in their efforts to put into circulation more and more worthless money, they did not cover up their trails as carefully as they had done earlier, with the result that the United States secret service operatives learned the identity of the entire gang and finally rounded up and arrested the leader.

Had Become Powerful.

Flushed with success and very wealthy from their spurious money operations, the members of the gang naturally resented the arrest of their leader and seemed to feel that Uncle Sam was interfering with a business that he had no right to break up. This was the conclusion produced by their crooked reasoning and they began to plan and plot to effect the release of their leader, without at the same time endangering their own freedom.

Efforts to influence the court were unavailing and then it was that the plan was suggested by one of them that they should steal the body of Abraham Lincoln and hold it as a hostage until they should effect the release of their leader and should secure a promise from the Federal government that pardons should be granted all of them.

The surprising thing about their reasoning is that the plot might have been successful. One can partly imagine the furor that would have been created when the word was flashed over the wires that the body of Abraham Lincoln had been stolen from the tomb at Springfield. One may guess that after the matter had remained a mystery for a few days or weeks, the nation as a whole would have been in a proper frame of mind to deal with the vandals on their own terms, if the remains of the Martyred President should be returned.

It was the plan of the counterfeiters to steal the body, carry it by night to the sand dunes of northern Indiana, about where the Dunes State Park is now located, and bury the body in some lonely spot known only to themselves. There, marking the spot for their own guidance, they would allow the winds to sweep the drifting sands over the grave until all traces of the burial were removed. Then, and only then, would they open negotiations with the government for the release of their leader and for the pardoning of the entire band in exchange for the return of the body of Abraham Lincoln.

Might Have Worked.

Had they succeeded in their first program, the stealing of the body, the remainder of their plan might have succeeded also. One can picture the state of mind of the people of the United States, even today, if they should learn that Lincoln's remains had been stolen away and hidden in a place where the body would never be found unless the perpetrators of the deed chose to tell. Courageous men of the daring criminal type, which these men were, would no doubt have gone to their deaths with their lips sealed. Third degree methods or the threat of death would, in the opinion of Col. Fay, present custodian of the tomb, have been unavailing. Those in charge of the tomb in those days trembled for years afterward whenever they thought of what might have been the result if the criminals had been successful in their efforts to force their way into the tomb and remove the body.

The counterfeiters had all of their arrangements completed and decided to make their attempt on the night of Nov. 7, 1876, fifty-four years ago this month. They came to the tomb in the dead of night and had succeeded in breaking the lock on the outside door leading to the inner corridors when they were frightened away. In their flight, they left their tools and enough clews to permit the U. S. secret service operatives to figure out the perpetrators of the deed, and within a few days the entire band was rounded up and placed behind bars.

Housebreaking Charge.

The tragedy (or comedy might perhaps be a better word) of the entire transaction was that after the grave robbers had been caught and placed behind the bars, it was found that the state of Illinois did not have a single statute to fit their case except the statute against housebreaking, and that was the only charge of which they were guilty. They had broken the lock of a door, the courts decided, and, regardless of the fact that it was in their minds to steal Lincoln's body, they had not done so, and, as a result, they escaped with a very light sentence.

It is hardly necessary to state that this weakness in the criminal law of the state of Illinois was greatly strengthened at the next session of the state legislature so that the intent of those breaking locks was to be taken into consideration, should future events of the kind transpire.

The day following the attempted robbery, an organization was formed known as "The Lincoln Guard of Honor." This organization was made up of friends of Mr. Lincoln and they pledged themselves to the task of guarding the tomb of the Martyred President against future marauders. This was the principal purpose of the organization, although its duties and purposes were later broadened so that they included the planning of a proper observance of Lincoln's birthday and for celebrations of other occasions having a patriotic significance.

Plans were also made at once, and were carried out, for the placing of the body of Lincoln in a vault so that it would be impossible for anyone in the future to form the opinion that the body might be stolen. A great deal of publicity was given to the manner in which the body was securely placed in a vault far down underneath the tomb. At the present time, the body reposes beneath a block of steel and concrete several feet thick. It was the purpose of those who planned this burial to make it the last. It was their hope that there the body of Lincoln might lie, "undisturbed forever."

Not Difficult Task.

According to Col. Fay, present custodian of the tomb, it would not have been a very difficult task to have stolen the body on that November night back in 1876. After the locks to the outer doors of the tomb were broken, it would not have required a great deal of effort to break the locks and mortar that held the metal casket in the crypt of the tomb. The work was but a matter of a half hour or more with some heavy tools. Getting the body to the sand dunes of northern Indiana would have been a more difficult task than the actual theft of the body.

In those days, there were no paved roads and no automobiles. They could not have taken the body by train, for every train and every highway, too, would have been guarded. The vandals had planned to travel by night and had mapped their route with great care. They felt very certain that if they should get a start of a few hours they would be successful in reaching

their destination. After that, they were to send a letter to the government officials setting forth the terms under which the body would be returned or its hiding place revealed. They had every reason to believe they would have their plans crowned with success.

Reading of these plans in this era makes it hard to realize that such an act of depravity could even be conceived, but there are things almost as bad, or even worse, happening today. In fact, it would be much easier to carry out such a plan now than it was a half century or more ago, but it is not at all possible that anyone will ever succeed in stealing the body of Abraham Lincoln. One trembles yet, however, in the thought that such a plot was once almost successful.

We in America are a civilized nation. We realize that the body is but the residence in which the soul resides. When the spirit moves out, the body returns to dust. We can accept that doctrine with regard to our own bodies, but there is something sacred about the dust of our loved ones. We like to know where repose their mortal remains. We like to go to their graves and place there our tributes to their memories. We like to go there and commune in memory with them once more.

It was the realization of this very human feeling that caused our own government to send the mothers and wives of our boys who were buried in France back there across the hundreds and thousands of miles of water that they might visit the graves of their loved ones. No wife or mother who has made that sacred pilgrimage has failed to say on her return that she "feels better now that I have visited his grave."

It would have made no difference to Abraham Lincoln's spirit what might have been done with his body, but it would have made a great deal of difference to the hundreds of thousands of people who revere his memory. One stands in awe at the tomb of Lincoln as the realization comes that here lies the body of the man who is described as "humanity's friend." One may have a feeling of reverence as he stands in the great Lincoln Memorial in the Nation's capital. You may feel that you should bare your head at the shrine of his birth or at the grave of his mother down in southern Indiana, but it is a different feeling from all of these that you have as you stand at his last resting place.

We would have a far different feeling, we are quite sure, at the tomb in Oak Ridge cemetery, had those vandals been successful in their efforts on that November night in 1876.

PLAN TO STEAL LINCOLN BODY TOLD IN DETAIL

Secret Service Operative Surmises Plan and Take Steps Accordingly

By WILLIAM DODD CHENERY

Restless in life, the massive frame that templed the matchless soul of Abraham Lincoln found not surcease from strife in death. During the 36 years that elapsed from the day he was placed in the receiving vault in Oak Ridge cemetery till the vaulted grave in the sepulchre of the tomb was dug at the insistence of his son, Robert T. Lincoln, so deep and so securely barred by iron, steel and cement that never again will it be opened, he was moved far more than twenty times, not counting the many times the casket was opened on the cortege procession from Washington to Springfield.

No tale of the imagination of the dramatist could be more thrilling than the attempted abduction of the remains in 1876. The chief operator of the United States secret service for the district including Chicago had suspicions aroused that a certain saloon was the rendezvous for counterfeiters and sent a young man, not before known in these parts, to try to gain their confidence. By gradual approaches he worked his way so skillfully that he was admitted to their plans. They intended to steal Lincoln's remains, bury them in some secure place, leave the country for a while and await a favorable time to return and claim a reward. They hoped to obtain $200,000 in cash and also the release of a confederate who had been arrested and was serving a ten-year sentence in Joliet penitentiary for making counterfeit money. They proposed to their new acquaintance, the secret service agent, that he accompany them and share in the profit. He reported to his superior officer, who instructed him to agree to their proposal and report daily.

Plan to Steal Body

It was decided to steal the body Tuesday night, November 7, 1876, the night following a presidential election day, as it was thought so many people would be out late seeking election news that no suspicion would attach to their movements. The two conspirators and the young secret service man left Chicago on the Chicago and Alton road at 1 p.m. November 6; the chief secret service operator and two assistants boarding the rear of the same train. All arrived in Springfield at 6 a.m. November 7, the train being two hours late. Balloting for president and vice president was going on all over the nation. At five o'clock that afternoon two additional secret service men arrived, one of them an ex-chief of the United States secret service. It was a very cloudy day and it turned dark early. At six o'clock the head of the secret service and four men, including the ex-chief, were admitted to the Memorial hall at the south door of the tomb by James Carroll Power, the custodian of the tomb. The outer door was then locked and the party conducted through the north door of the hall to a place where lights could not be seen through the door grating from the outside. Lamps were lighted and one man placed inside against the solid wall separating the hall from the sepulchre on the north, where he could hear noises of any persons attempting to break into the sepulchre. He was instructed to remain there till he heard sounds, in which event he was to return to Memorial hall, guided by lamps placed as guides, and report.

Await Thieves

The custodian of the tomb, Mr. Power, and the five officers kept watch in darkness so intense that "it could almost be felt" for more than two and a half hours, when footsteps were heard approaching the outer south door, which was closed by two shutters, one of wood and glass and the other of iron rods. Two men appeared, one carrying a dark lantern. Finding both doors locked, they seemed satisfied and went to the north door, 120 feet distant, and by sawing and filing, broke the padlock to the grated door of the sepulchre.

They began taking the stone sarcophagus apart, and the sentinel placed inside reported that the men were at work. Mr. Power writes that there was for some minutes excited whispering between the officers and he wondered why they did not at once try to capture the conspirators. It developed later that they did not depend alone upon the sentinel inside. The young man from Chicago who was in the confidence of the conspirators had been instructed to leave them as soon as they entered the sepulchre, go around outside and signal to the five officers inside the Memorial hall. Therefore, the officers waited for his signal. Later it was learned that after breaking the lock of the sepulchre, and before starting to force the lid of the sarcophagus, they pushed the young man into the room and gave him a lantern to hold. He realized they would shoot him if he attempted to dispose of the light and pass out the door. There was nothing for him to do but hold the light till they had the wooden and lead coffin drawn from the sarcophagus. When it was about half way out the conspirators stepped outside the sepulchre and instructed the young man to bring a horse and wagon they thought was hidden near by to haul away the body, they agreeing to await his return. He had not really secured the horse and wagon but made them believe he had one at the east gate. He started in that direction as though going for the team and then, in the darkness, turned and ran to the door of Memorial hall and gave the prepared signal.

Capture Conspirators

The officers quickly hurried around the tomb to the north door, expecting to capture the conspirators, but they, shrewdly, had withdrawn about 35 yards from the tomb and lay down by a small oak tree, from where they saw the officers enter the sepulchre and heard their exclamations of disappointment. For ten days they could not be found. At the end of that time the young man, who had managed to retain their confidence, informed the officers that they were together in the same drinking place in Chicago where he had first entered into the scheme with them. The officers entered the saloon, one or two at a time, till enough were present to enable them to overpower and handcuff them. They were brought to Springfield, tried and sent to the penitentiary for one year—the fullest extent of punishment for stealing a dead body at that time in effect. On May 21, 1879, a law was enacted under which a party convicted of that crime is subject to a penalty of not less than one and not more than ten years in the penitentiary.

Following this attempt to steal the remains of Lincoln "The Lincoln Guard of Honor" was formed for the purpose of protecting the body. It was legally organized on February 13, 1880, with G. S. Dana, president; N. J. Reece, vice president; J. F. McNeill, treasurer; J. C. Power, secretary; J. P. Lindley, Edward S. Johnson, Horace Chapin, N. B. Wiggins and Clinton L. Conkling.

Other objects of the organization were the raising of a fund to purchase the home of Lincoln, repair it and open it to the public, and to hold memorial services upon suitable anniversary occasions The first memorial service ever held at the tomb was at 7:22 a.m. on the morning of April 15, 1880, to correspond with the moment that Lincoln had breathed his last.

THE PLOT TO STEAL LINCOLN'S BODY

Condensed From The Records.

HERBERT WELLS FAY, Custodian Lincoln's Tomb.

In 1876 Benj. Boyd, an expert engraver, was caught in the act of making a plate of counterfeit money at Fulton, Illinois, and was sent to the penitentiary at Joliet. Mullen and Hughes were passers of the counterfieit money in Chicago and they laid plans to get this engraver out, realizing that they would soon be out of money. The plan was to steal Mr. Lincoln's body and hold it for ransom, and at the proper time agree to return it for the pardon of the engraver from the penitentiary and $200,000 cash ransom. It failed as they had taken a government detective into their confidence and they and the whole secret service force came down from Chicago on the same train. While the detective and Mullin and Hughes were tearing the sarcophagus apart in the tomb proper, the secret service and local assistants were in the room at the tomb where you now register. At the last moment orders were changed and the detective could not give the alarm as planned but did a little later. Mullens and Hughes were tried and sent to the penitentiary for one year, there being no law until later that gave a penalty for the stealing of a human body. The attempted theft was on Nov. 7, 1876, the night that Hayes was elected President. The general impression that the attempt was made from the Oak Ridge receiving vault, but this is not sustained by the records.

Emancipator's Casket Cost Sum of $75

Editor Everybody's Corner: Was there ever an attempt made to steal the body of Lincoln? Please give an account of it.

C. L. B.

AS COMPARATIVELY recently as 1901 the coffin of Abraham Lincoln was opened in Springfield, Illinois, to set at rest rumors that ghouls had carried away the body. Then, in the presence of M. O. Williamson, one-time State Treasurer of Illinois, and fifteen others, the coffin was opened, the body of the Great Emancipator was seen, and the coffin was closed, sealed and imbedded in solid concrete. At that time the Board of Trustees of the Lincoln monument in Springfield decided, with the consent of Robert Todd Lincoln, the son, to open the coffin before it would be sealed forever.

Early in the year of 1876 a private detective discovered a plot of a Chicago gang to steal the body of Lincoln. The plot was not carried into execution until election night in the following November. Robert Lincoln, meanwhile, had been notified and the conspirators were continuously watched by private detectives. On election night the would-be robbers arrived in the Springfield cemetery while detectives watched from behind Memorial Hall, a few yards away from the tomb. Accidentally one of the detectives dropped his pistol and it was discharged and the ghouls made their escape, but not before they had drawn the heavy casket halfway out of its sarcophagus.

Two weeks later the robbers were captured by the United States Secret Service men. Curiously enough, grave robbing at that time was not a crime in Illinois, and the prisoners were indicted for conspiracy to steal a coffin, the property of the Lincoln Monument Association. They were convicted and sentenced to one year's imprisonment. The undertaker who had sold the coffin testified that it was worth $75.

Fearing another attempted grave robbery, the Monument Association had stone masons replace the casket in the sarcophagus and repave the marblework the morning after the attempted robbery. Still fearful, they had the body hidden beneath Memorial Hall where it remained for ten years until a strong tomb of brick and mortar, more secure than the old sarcophagus, was completed on April 14, 1887, and the coffin was removed to it. It was in 1901 that Robert Todd Lincoln provided the funds for an absolutely robber-proof vault, consisting of armorplate and concrete, ten feet below ground within the base of the new monument. Here on September 26, 1901, after identification was made which was mentioned in the first paragraph, Abraham Lincoln was interred for the "last" time.

PHILADELPHIA

The Attempt to Steal Lincoln's Body

By Herbert Wells Fay, *Custodian*
Lincoln's Tomb, Springfield, Ill.

THE question of the place of his burial is the one most frequently asked at Lincoln's Tomb. This is quite generally followed by the inquiry, "Why should any one wish to steal his body?" The story is this: A group of counterfeiters had been located in northern Illinois in 1876, and Benjamin Boyd, an expert engraver had been caught in the act of making a plate in a deserted stone house along the Mississippi river at Fulton, Ill., and had been sent to the penitentiary at Joliet.

The passing of counterfeit bills in Chicago had been traced to Mullens and Hughes; and Lewis Sweigles, a Pinkerton detective had been sent by the U.S. officials to shadow them. After the detective had gained their confidence, they said they were getting short of counterfeit bills, and disclosed the plot to steal Mr. Lincoln's body from his tomb at Springfield, take it to the sand dunes of Indiana, hide it between two trees, where the winds of the night would cover all traces of recent movement, and when the excitement of the loss of Mr. Lincoln's body had reached fever heat, to again return it for the pardon of their engraver from the penitentiary and a payment of $200,000 in cash besides.

But it all failed, because the detective in whom they confided disclosed the whole plot. He pretended to them that he was an expert body snatcher, and had furnished many bodies for the medical students, and for alleged skill and valor, they proposed that he accompany them to Springfield on their ghoulish mission.

They all came on the same train. The detective and the two thieves occupied the smoking car, while Captain P. A. Tyrell of the secret service force and his men, slipped into the sleeping car as the train was pulling out. They kept out of sight during the trip.

When in the yards at Springfield they had the train crew let them off on the wrong side, and made their way to the Lincoln Tomb and joined the custodian and local officers in the registration room.

In their original plans Hughes was to visit the tomb and get the lay of the land. Mullens was assigned to get the tools, and the detective was to get a horse and wagon, which he told them he had secreted at the bottom of the hill near the receiving vault.

In all their plans, the Pinkerton detective was to remain on the outside, and he had planned with the secret service men, that when they had entered the tomb proper, he was to dash around to the south door, the entrance of the registrar room, and as an alarm, was to strike a match and light a cigar in front of the window in the door. This was the signal for the whole force to proceed to the north room and catch the thieves in the act.

But at the last moment the thieves changed their plans, they placed the detective on the inside to hold the lamp. The officers had a relay of men stationed around the hallway and they reported the tearing of the sarcophagus apart but they could get no signal.

They tore off the end and drew out, about 16 or 18 inches, the casket holding Mr. Lincoln's body, being ready to load it and take it away when they told the detective to go for his wagon.

It was the night of the election of Rutherford B. Hayes, to the presidency of the United States, and people interested in election returns were constantly passing through the cemetery. The two thieves hid behind some bushes north of the tomb to await developments.

The detective started down the steps as if after his wagon, but when out into the darkness proceeded to the south end of the tomb and gave the signal. The secret service men rushed to the tomb proper and found it empty.

When the thieves saw a force of men approaching striking matches instead of the man and wagon, as they had expected, they fled in the darkness, got away and started on foot for Chicago. They were arrested in a few days, brought back to Springfield and tried. There being no penalty at the time for such an offense, they were charged with breaking the lock and sentenced to one year in the penitentiary. The next legislature placed a penalty at from one to ten years for like offenses of stealing bodies.

EED

THE ATTEMPT TO STEAL LINCOLN'S BODY

Compiled by HERBERT WELLS FAY, *Custodian Lincoln's Tomb*

As about 100 tourists in the past few days have asked where they could get the thrilling story of the attempt to steal Mr. Lincoln's body, and as Power's account of the crime is out of print, we republish the outline of the story.

In 1886 a group of counterfeiters had been run down by the United States secret service, and Benjamin Boyd, an expert engraver, was apprehended at Fulton, Illinois, where he had rented a deserted house and on trial was sent to the penitentiary at Joliet.

Terrence Mullens and Jack Hughes were under suspicion as confederates in Chicago and Lewis S. Swegles, a Pinkerton detective was detailed to shadow these men. After gaining their confidence they told him that they were getting short of counterfeit bills and that they must get their engraver released.

One of their plans was the wild scheme, that is, to steal Lincoln's body carry it to the sand dunes of Indiana and bury it between two trees, where the winds of the night would cover all traces of recent movement and at the proper time agree to return it for the pardon of their engraver from the penitentiary and $200,000 in cash as a ransom fee.

But it all failed because "murder will out." The Pinkerton man pretended to be one of the four famed body snatchers of his community and with the record they wished him to come along and take part in the goulish night raid.

They all came down from Chicago on the same train. Swengles, the detective, and the two body thieves occupied the smoking car, while the secret service men slipped into the sleeper at the rear of the train and kept out of sight during the trip. When in the Springfield yards they had the trainmen let them off on the wrong side and they proceeded to the Lincoln tomb and had in the space back of Memorial Hall at the south entrance of the tomb.

On arriving at Springfield, Mullens was to get the tools, which he did. Hughes was to get the lay of the land, which he did, and Swengles, the detective, was to have ready a horse and wagon, but he did not, but told them he had.

In all the plans the detective was to remain on the outside and Hughes to hold the light while Mullen pried the sarcophagus apart. But at the last moment they ordered the detective on the inside to hold the light.

This prevented him from going to the south door and lighting a cigar which was the agreed signal.

When Lincoln's casket was drawn out of the sarcophagus about twenty inches, Mullens ordered the detective to go for his horse and wagon. When out into the darkness he proceeded to the south door of the tomb and gave the signal. As Mullens and Hughes had their work at the tomb completed, they hid under the bushes beneath a big tree just north of the tomb.

When they saw several men approach instead of a man and a wagon they fled for Chicago, getting away that night, but they were traced to their city haunts and captured in a few days.

This was the night that Hayes was elected President, Nov. 7, 1876. They selected election night for their crime believing that their activities would not be so apt to attract attention.

They were tried and sent to the penitentiary for one year, there being no law on the statute books providing a penalty for attempting to steal a human body. Later an act was passed and now in Illinois one could be sent for from one to ten years for the same offense.

This attempt to steal Mr. Lincoln's body caused Robert Lincoln in 1901 to place it where it now remains six feet from the inner north wall ten feet below the floor, protected by $700 worth of steel, stone and cement, or 30 inches north of the 1930 cenotaph and ten feet below the floor.

Be careful to note that it requires two sets of figures to locate the body, and everyone interested wants to know the facts.

Springfield, 1850.

R. Lloyd, Esqr.

You see the purport of the within letter. I can do no more in the case. I think you had better employ another—either Judge Logan here, or Judge Purple at Peoria, and let him correspond with Grimshaw at once.

Your truly,
A. LINCOLN.

(Not in standard works.)

Springfield Cafeteria
508 E. MONROE ST.
29c—39c—49c
Noon and Evening
Breakfast 6-11:30

The Attempt to Steal Mr. Lincoln's Body

The most appalling incident in the story of Abraham Lincoln excepting his murder was the attempt to steal his body. In 1875 a group of counterfeiters was located in northern Illinois. They were chased from city to city. Benjamin Boyd an expert engraver was caught in the upper story of a deserted stone house along the Mississippi river at Fulton, Ill. The U. S. secret service men of this division watched his maneuvers there for some time, hoping to arrest at the same time Dr. Driggs, whose printing outfit was in the freight house at Clinton, Ill., and afterward moved and set up and in working order in a secret room on the top story of a building at Centralia, Ill. Leaving Capt. Patrick D. Tyrrell and John McDonald at Fulton, Chief Elmer Washburn left for Centralia to pick up Driggs. When Boyd was arrested they telegraphed Washburn that the "bird had been captured" which was the signal for him to get Driggs. They were tried Oct. 21, 1875, convicted and sent to the penitentiary. A little later Terrence Mullen and Jack Hughes, who were passing counterfeit bills in Chicago, became alarmed, their stock was getting low and they commenced a campaign to get Boyd out of Joliet. One of their schemes was to steal Mr. Lincoln's body, carry it to the sand-dunes of Indiana, bury it between two trees and when the excitement was at its height to agree to return the body for the pardon of their engraver from the penitentiary and $200,000 cash.

It all failed because the two body snatchers had taken a detective into their confidence. Capt. P. D. Tyrrell, John McDonald and a few detectives and Swegles and the two body thieves came from Chicago to Springfield on the same train. The official kept out of sight all the way down and the trainmen let them off on the wrong side of the train in the Springfield yards and they came out to the tomb and were hidden in the register rooms and the hallway. One of the thieves was to get the tools, the other to get the lay of the land and the detective was to bring a horse and wagon, which he did not do but told them he had secreted at the bottom of the hill. In all the plans the detective was to remain on the outside and he planned as soon as they commenced to work on the sarcophagus to come around to the front door of the tomb and strike a match before the window as if he was lighting a cigar. But at the last minute they switched plans and put the detective on the inside to hold the lamp. After the end of the sarcophagus was torn away, the double tops removed and the casket drawn out about 15 or 18 inches they told the detective to get his horse and wagon. He went down the steps until they could not see him and then swung around to the south door and gave the alarm as planned. Chief Patrick Tyrrell and men rushed around to the north end found the sarcophagus as above described, but no one was present. Mullens and Hughes after they had finished their work, hid behind some bushes by a large tree at the north end and when they saw several men appearing instead of horse and wagon, they fled to Chicago and were not captured for several days.

This was Nov. 7, 1876, the night Rotherford Hayes was elected President. In due time Mullens and Hughes were tried and given a sentence of one year in the penitentiary, there being no law providing a penalty for the stealing of a human body.

Mullens and Hughes had planned a clever ruse. They took uncommon newspapers and wrapped their tools in some and dropped it on the floor. They had conceived that this paper would be sought as evidence. They tore off a part of the front page through the label and address. This they expected to send to Mr. Boyd in the penitentiary and he could show to the authorities showing that he was connected with the thieves and could produce the body. The detectives spoiled all this.

The remains of Mr. Lincoln were on September 26, 1901, viewed by a delegation of citizens who declared that except for being a little dark did not look as if he had been buried except for a few weeks, and authorities say if it was that well preserved after 36 years it will remain practically the same for centuries.

An excavation was made six feet from the north opening, twelve feet into the ground, this was filled two feet by cement, upon which a steel cage is placed holding Mr. Lincoln's casket. Thin cement was poured over this and masonry built over that to the top of the ground. It is four feet from the top of the earth to the floor. It was not necessary to disturb his body in the 1931 construction. The centopah was placed six feet and 30 inches from the north opening or window. This would leave Mr. Lincoln's body located as follows: Six feet south of the north window or 30 inches north of the centopah and ten feet below the floor, with head to the west. There is nothing over the body to mark the burial spot.

CONSPIRATORS TRY TO STEAL LINCOLN BODY

Secret Service Men Frustrate Scheme on Election Night

The time is 6 a.m. November 7, 1876.

The day is cloudy and gray, a somber harbinger of a crime-premeditated night.

A puffing Chicago and Alton train pulls into the Springfield station, and thunderously unloads its human cargo. Three disembarking male passengers look furtively about them, then make a bee-line for town. After them, prosaicly enough, follow another trio.

It is a presidential election day. Even at this early hour there is a smattering crowd. Rigs and horses are tied to the halter-posts around the square, and enthusiastic balloting, already underway, continues through the hours.

Early dark descends upon the city. Out at Oak Ridge cemetery a death-like pall envelopes the white tomb-stones pointing heavenward, and the pretentious Lincoln Memorial tomb.

U. S. Agents Admitted

Five men, three of whom were passengers on the morning train, knock at the south door of the tomb. Secret service agents, they are admitted by the custodian, James Carroll Power. Locking the outer door, the party goes through the north door of the hall to a spot where lights cannot be seen through the grated door on the outside.

Lamps are lighted and a man is stationed inside near the solid wall separating the hall from the sepulchre on the north. Instructed to remain there until he hears any sounds, in which event he is to make his way to Memorial hall, the rest of the party leave him.

Intense darkness cloaking them, the five officers and Mr. Power keep watch for several hours before they hear footsteps approaching the outer south door which is closed by two shutters, one of wood and glass and the other of iron rods.

Break Lock

Two men appear cautiously carrying a lantern. They too had been passengers of the morning train. Finding both doors locked to their satisfaction, they go to the north door a little more than a hundred feet distant and start sawing and filing the sepulchres padlock.

Except for their furtive movements, silence reigns. While the rest of the nation is wondering who's going to be the next president, historical drama is being enacted almost beneath their very nose. Within several hundred feet of each other the would-be desecrators of Lincoln's remains and the vigilant officials are quickly moving to the final denoument.

The lock broken, the thieves begin taking the stone sarcophagus apart, but still the federal agents wait. Mr. Power is confusedly beginning to Wonder why they don't spring into action. He learns that his companions are not making any moves until they receive a pre-arranged signal from one of the vandals!

In amazement he discovers that one of the conspirators is in reality a secret service man detailed by the chief operator of the federal secret service for the Chicago district to gain the criminals' confidence. How well he succeeded was shown by his working hand in glove with the gang.

Coffin Drawn Up

Almost incredibly soon the wooden and lead coffin of the martyred president is drawn from the sarcophagus. Still the spy has not given the signal. Has something happened to him? Should they continue to wait. The agents nervously wonder.

There it is at last. Rushing around the tomb to the north door they burst into the sepulchre—only to find it empty! The body is intact but the conspirators are gone.

And so ended one of the most eerie of the Lincolnian chapters.

Conspirators Captured

As a perfect finishing touch the conspirators were finally captured through the efforts of the spy who had managed to regain their confidence. They were caught in their Chicago hide-out—a saloon.

They had escaped the agents the first time only because they had cunningly withdrawn from the tomb after the agent-spy ostensibly went for a horse and wagon with which to haul away the body. The spy had not been able to give his alarm as soon as he had planned because his comrades had made him hold a lantern while they did the digging.

The conspirators, brought to Springfield and tried, were sentenced to one year in the penitentiary. At that time that was the fullest extent of punishment for stealing a dead body. In 1879 the penalty was raised from one to ten years.

Sought $200,000

The thieves had intended to steal Lincoln's body, rebury it in some secure place, leave the country for a while and at a favorable time, return and claim a reward. They hoped to get $200,000 and the release of a confederate who had been arrested for counterfeiting and was serving a 10 year sentence in Joliet.

Following the "snatch" scare, the "Lincoln Guard of Honor" was organized to protect Lincoln's body and to raise a fund whereby his home might be purchased, repaired and opened to the public.

Attempt to Steal Lincoln's Body

On January 24, 1936, Jess Jones of Chicago, visited the tomb. He is a distant relatives of Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones famed as the founder of Lincoln center, Chicago. This enterprise, while primarily a department of social activities, was established and supported by the donations and endowments of Chicago people somewhat after the Hull house plan. He had heard of the plot to steal Mr. Lincoln's body.

The story briefly is as follows: Ben Boyd had been sent to the penitentiary in 1886 for making counterfeit money plates. Mullen and Hughes were handling counterfeit bills in Chicago. To get their engraver out in 1876, they proposed to steal Mr. Lincoln's body and bury it in the sand dunes of Indiana and at the proper time agree to return it for the pardon of Boyd and $200,000. It all failed because they had taken a Pinkerton detective into their confidence. The United States secret service officers and the detective and two thieves all came to Springfield on the same train—the night Hayes was elected president. The secret service men were in the south room. In all their plans the detective was to remain outside on guard and at any time could appear at the window in the south room. He was to light a cigar and that was the signal. At the last moment they placed the detective in the inside of the north room to hold the light. When the sarcophagus was torn apart and Lincoln's casket drawn out about eighteen inches, they ordered the detective to go for his wagon, as he had promised. When out in the darkness he proceeded to the north room and found that the thieves had vacated. When they saw a dozen men approach they left for Chicago but were captured in a few days and sent to the penitentiary for one year.

WR. [illegible] — 2/1/36

PLOT TO STEAL LINCOLN'S BODY

Compiled by HERBERT WELLS FAY, *Custodian Lincoln's Tomb*

The question of the place of his burial is the one most frequently asked at Lincoln tomb. This is quite generally followed by the inquiry "Why would any one wish to steal his body?" The story is this: A group of counterfeiters had been located in northern Illinois in 1876, and Benjamin Boyd, an expert engraver had been caught by the U. S. secret service men in the act of making a plate in a deserted stone house along the Mississippi river at Fulton, Illinois, and had been sent to the penitentiary at Joliet.

The passing of counterfeit bills in Chicago has been traced to Muilens and Hughes, and Lewis Sweigles, a Pinkerton detective had been sent by the U. S. officials to shadow them. After the detective had gained their confidence, they said they were getting short of counterfit bills, and disclosed the plot to steal Mr. Lincoln's body from his tomb at Springfield, take it to the sand dunes of Indiana, hide it between two trees, where the winds of the night would cover all traces of recent movement and when the excitement of the loss of Mr. Lincoln's body had reached fever heat to again to return it for the pardon their engraver from the penitentiary and a payment of $200,000 in cash besides.

But it all failed because they had taken the detective into their confidence, who disclosed the whole plot. He pretended to them that he was an expert body snatcher and had furnished many bodies for the medical students, and for alleged skill and valor they proposed that he accompany them to Springfield on their goulish mission.

They all came on the same train. The detective and the two thieves occupied the smoking car, while Capt. P. A. Tyrrell of the secret service force and his men, slipped into the sleeping car as the train was pulling out. They kept out of sight during the trip.

When in the yards at Springfield they had the trainmen let them off on the wrong side and they made their way to the Lincoln tomb and joined the custodian and local officers in the registrar room.

In their plans Hughes was to visit the tomb and get the lay of the land. Mullen was assigned to get the tools and the detective was to get a horse and wagon which he told them he had secreted at the bottom of the hill near the receiving vault, but being a detective he had no rig.

In all their plans the Pinkerton detective was to remain on the outside and he had planned with the secret service men that when they had entered the tomb proper he was to dash around to the south door, the entrance of the registrar room and as an alarm was to strike a match and light a cigar in front of the window in the door. This was the signal for the whole force to proceed to the north room and catch the thieves in the act.

But at the last moment they changed their plans, they placed the detective on the inside to hold the lamp. The officers had a relay of men stationed around the hallway and they reported the tearing of the sarcophagus apart but they could get no signal.

They tore off the top and end end and drew out the casket holding Mr. Lincoln's body about 16 or 18 inches, just ready to load it up and take it away when they told the tective to go for his wagon.

It was the night of the election of Mr. Hayes, president of the United States, and a people interested in election returns were constantly passing through the cemetery. The two thieves hid behind some bushes north of the tomb to await developments.

The detectives started down the steps as if after his wagon. but when out into the darkness proceeded to the south end of the tomb and gave the signal. The secret service men rushed to the tomb proper and found it empty.

When the thieves saw a force of men approaching striking matches instead of the man and wagon as they had expected, they fled in the darkness, got away and started on foot for Chicago. They were arrested in a few days, brought back to Springfield and tried. There being no penalty at the time for such offense, they were charged with breaking the lock and sentenced to one year in the penitentiary. The next legislature placed a penalty at from one to ten years for like offenses.

Fear of subsequent attempts caused the officials in charge to place Mr. Lincoln's body in iron and masonry six feet south from the north wall or grating, ten feet below the floor with head to the west. It was not disturbed in the 1931 reconstruction, but a centopah was placed six feet and thirty inches south of the grating.

The position of the body at the present time is thirty inches beyond or north of the cenotaph ten feet below the floor surrounded by six feet of concrete and iron with head to the west or facing the east.

ATTEMPT TO STEAL LINCOLN'S BODY

Compiled by HERBERT WELLS FAY, *Custodian Lincoln Tomb*

Oct 24 1936

There were two thrilling events in the history of Lincoln. One his tragic death and the other the attempt to steal his body. As the latter failed, but little is said about it in the 15,000 books and pamphlets written about him which alone fill a large library.

A group of counterfeiters were discovered by the U. S. secret service men and local authorities in Illinois in 1876. Ben Boyd, an expert engraver, was located in the top story of a deserted stone building along the Mississippi river at Fulton, Illinois. The residents of the vicinity never could see any daylight activity about the weird structure, but at night they would see a light above, and "haunted" house was often whispered among the residents.

Government men were also watching a printing outfit that was stored for a time in the freight house at Clinton, Ill., and later saw it moved to Centralia, Ill., where a building was rented by Rev. Griggs and the office was located on the second floor. The secret service men were gathering evidence that in this print shop counterfeit money was being printed.

It was arranged that when Ben Boyd was arrested at Fulton, the reverend gentleman would be captured at Centralia. The code telegram was "The bird has been captured."

Boyd and Griggs were simultaneously arrested, tried and sent to the penitentiary, the former at Joliet. It was to get him released that the plot to steal Mr. Lincoln's body was planned.

Terrence Mullen and Jack Hughes were passing counterfeit money in Chicago and with their engraver in the penitentiary they naturally would be soon out of funds. They planned schemes to get their engraver out. One of the plans was as follows:

To steal Mr. Lincoln's body from its tomb at Springfield, bury it in the sand dunes of Indiana and when the excitement was aroused over the case, to agree to return it for the release of their engraver and $200,000 in cash.

It all failed and that is why so little is said about it in Lincoln books. It failed because they had taken a Pinkerton detective into their confidence by the name of Lewis C. Swegles. They told him that they were getting short on counterfeit money and must get their engraver out.

Swegles pretended that he was an expert grave robber and they invited him to accompany them on this job.

Then all came down to Springfield on the same train. Mullen, Hughes and the detective rode together in the smoking car and Officer P. D. Tyrrell and several aids slipped into the sleeping car and kept out of sight all the way to Springfield. In the yards the railroad men let them off on the wrong side and they went immediately to the tomb and hid themselves under the tomb back of the register room.

Under their plans, Mullen was to get the tools, Hughes to get the lay of the land which they both did, and the detective was to secure a horse and wagon which he did not get but told them that he had it secreted at the bottom of the hill.

In all the plans the detective was to remain on the outside and he had arranged with the secret service men that when they commenced to tear the sarcophagus apart he was to go to the south entrance and light a cigar in front of the window in the door at that time.

But at the last moment they changed their plans and ordered the detective to go inside the tomb and hold the light.

When the sarcophagus was torn apart and the casket drawn out eighteen or twenty inches they told the detective to go for his wagon. He went out in the darkness and when out of sight he proceeded to the south entrance of the tomb and gave the belated alarm. The officers rushed round the tomb proper at the north end and found it vacant.

It was the night Rutherford B. Hayes was elected president, and citizens were

constantly passing through the cemetery. Mullen and Hughes hid behind some bushes north of the tomb, and when they saw a lot of men approaching, instead of two in a wagon they left at once on foot for Chicago.

Their haunts were known and they were arrested, brought to Springfield, tried and sent to the penitentiary for one year, on the charge of burglary, the breaking of a lock. There was no penalty at that time for attempting to steal a human body. A subsequent legislature passed a bill making a penalty of from one to ten years for like offenses. Many guests at the tomb say that when it is a national offense that it should be for a long term of years or even for life.

After the attempt to steal Mr. Lincoln's body it was hid around under the monument in six or eight places and under the construction of 1901 an excavation was made six feet in from the north end of the tomb and twelve feet below the floor. A cement base of two feet was built in the bottom, upon this was placed a steel cage in which the casket of Mr. Lincoln was placed, with head to the west. A steel cover was riveted upon this and thin cement was poured over it and solid masonry built over it to the top of the ground (six feet) and it is four feet to the floor. This was not disturbed in the 1931 construction, but a handsomely designed cenataph of real are fosil marble from Arkansas was placed six feet and thirty inches south from the north end of the building.

The guests are constantly told that Lincoln's body is now thirty inches beyond or north of the cenotaph and ten feet below the floor in iron, rock and cement, with head to the west, made necessary by the attempt to steal Mr. Lincoln's body, Nov. 7, 1876.

Why the Plot to Steal Lincoln's Body Failed

BY HARLOWE R. HOYT

Counterfeiters Plan

One of the lesser known incidents in the realm of Lincolnia is probably the most startling in history of that colorful president. That it came to pass nearly a dozen years following his assassination makes it the more unusual.

For it was nothing less than a scheme on the part of counterfeiters and their associates to steal the body of Abraham Lincoln from its tomb and hide it until a ransom of $200,000 was paid them.

The germ of this plot, ingenious as it was diabolical, originated in the fertile brain of "Big Jim" Kinealy. Following the days of the Civil War and during the period of reconstruction, "Big Jim" and his followers were the most notorious gang of counterfeiters in the United States. But in the early 70s, hard luck caught up with them. Ben Boyd, master engraver, was arrested and sent to Joliet. The supply of queer currency became exhausted. And in 1876, the Kinealy gang was up against it.

Calling his followers together, "Big Jim" considered ways and means. Finally a plot was hit upon. First of all they needed Boyd in order to secure their counterfeit bills. Next, they needed an immediate fund to carry on. So it was decided that they would steal the body of Lincoln from its tomb, hide it away and return it only when Boyd was out of prison and the United States government had turned over to them the sum of $200,000.

The actual crime was not surrounded with as many difficulties as might be presumed at first glance. Lincoln's body lay at that time in its first resting place—a small private family tomb surrounded by vines and trees, half covered with earth, two miles from Springfield. It was a deserted spot where they practically were free from espionage.

Election Day

On the evening of Nov. 6, 1876, three of the Kinealy gang left Chicago for Springfield. They had met in a saloon which served as headquarters. Taking a copy of the London Times, they tore a piece from one page and stuffed the newspaper into a bust of Lincoln that stood on the bar. They planned to leave the scrap of paper in the tomb. Later, when it had been discovered, they would contact Illinois officials, identify themselves by the paper in the bust, and demand their ransom.

It was election night when the body snatchers reached Springfield. The Hayes-Tilden fight was at its height—probably one of the bitterest battles ever waged for the presidency. Excitement was at full tide. There was the parading, the kerosene torches, the ringing of bells and blowing of horns, and the pitched battles, man-to-man or mob-to-mob, to prove how seriously they took their politics in the good old days.

The actual rifling of the tomb and the plan to conceal the body was this. The lock of the tomb was to be broken. Lincoln's body was to be taken from its black, silver-mounted coffin, put in a sack, placed in a spring wagon and driven up into the dunes of Indiana. There it was to be buried, in the midst of the piling hills, where the winds would obliterate every trace of the spot, and only those who marked it well might find it again.

Entry

The first part of the plot was carried out with never a hitch. The padlock on the iron door was sawed away. The marble lid was pried from the sarcophagus and the wooden casket lifted out. One of the gang was dispatched to bring up the waiting horse and wagon. He left. But when he returned, it was not with a conveyance and quadruped but with eight members of the United States Secret Service. (This was before they called them G-men.) For the supposed gangster was none other than an operative who had been trailing the gang for months, who had participated in their consultations, and who had reported every step of the proposed body-snatching as the plan evolved.

The nine officers dashed into the tomb with drawn revolvers, demanding immediate surrender. There was no answer. Someone struck a match. The flickering light disclosed only the coffin of Lincoln on its side on the floor. Above the trees a full moon showed its face. The detectives dashed out. Shots were fired, more or less at random. The thieves, who had withdrawn into the thicket awaiting the coming of the horse and wagon, made good their escape.

But the escape was short. Ten days later, with the information of their government spy, officers had rounded up the whole gang. Most of them were cornered in Chicago. Indignation was at top pitch. The men were taken to Springfield, placed in prison, and surrounded by a detachment of militia.

Robert Lincoln engaged the best Chicago talent to assist in the prosecution. But that was where the rub came. What charge was to be made against them? At that time, Illinois had no law against body snatching. And if it had one, the body had not been stolen. The tomb had been desecrated but that was a minor offense. So, after much worry, the gang was indicted and put on trial for conspiring to steal a coffin. The value was placed at $75.

Convicted

Eight months passed before the case came to trial. With the law's delay and passing of time, indignation was not so hot. Several ballots were taken by the jurors before an agreement was reached. At one time, four of the jurymen voted not guilty.

But in the end, the gang were found guilty. They were sentenced to serve one year in Joliet Prison.

Not many years passed before the new Lincoln Mausoleum was erected and the coffin removed to the spot where it now waits for eternity.

CLEVELAND
2-13-37

ENTIRE NATION TO HEAR TALKS ON RADIO CHAIN

Searcy Recalls Lincoln's Mirror, Attempt to Steal Body

By EARL B. SEARCY
Minority leader, Illinois State Senate

The national broadcast on February 12 from the Lincoln tomb here in Springfield will carry with it a deluge of thoughts and suggestions upon similar events worth while for the future. Americans, more and more, I believe, are coming to look upon Lincoln and Americans of kindred distinction as national institutions, and their resting places as national shrines.

A few days ago, I was talking about this coming broadcast with a man whose family had an unique and interesting connection with Abraham Lincoln and his family. That man is William Chenery, one of the best informed students of Lincoln in the United States.

It was in Will's home that I was talking to him. He pointed out a long, antique mirror.

"Lincoln gazed at himself a good many times in that mirror," my friend remarked. Naturally, I asked when and where. Came, then, the story.

Chenery's father and uncle owned and operated the old "Chenery House" in Springfield, which stood at the northeast intersection of Fourth and Washington streets, where the Illinois hotel now stands. After his election to the presidency, and before his removal to Washington, Lincoln and his family rented the Lincoln home—the only home he ever owned—at Eighth and Jackson streets, and moved his family over to the old Chenery House for a week. The mirror, as well as several other items of furniture Will has in his home in Springfield now, stood in the suite which the Lincoln family occupied. I might remark that the Will Chenery of Springfield is a cousin of William L. Chenery, editor of Collier's Weekly, in New York.

The nation on February 12 will listen to voices speaking from within a few feet of where the remains of Lincoln and his family now rest, in Oak Ridge cemetery. Years ago, as a Springfield newspaper reporter, I availed myself of the privilege of talking to several older citizens who had known Lincoln personally, some of them intimately, in his lifetime. From these people I gained the undisputed notion that Lincoln, whom I have long regarded as America's greatest man, was just a plain human being, full of whatever it takes to win in life's battles, but actuated by the same motives, and subject to the identical trials and tribulations, that beset any American of his circumstances. Only Lincoln overcame them. Many of us don't.

I wish, in that broadcast of February 12, all the voices that I have heard discuss Lincoln from a personal basis, could be brought back to life and could be heard to speak again.

Even in death, Lincoln has been a much disturbed man. After the near successful attempt to steal his body for ransom in 1874, precautions by the score were taken to prevent a like occurrence. They tell me, and with authority, that in the years that immediately followed, Lincoln's casket was often placed in the most grotesque niches in the tomb, and often in a most amazing posture—in order to make it fit some secret recess.

However, when last the casket was opened and Lincoln's features were gazed upon by an official state committee—on the occasion of the rebuilding of the tomb in the early 1900's—I have it from at least two men, still living, who saw that face, that his features were even then perfectly preserved. I never tire of talking to elderly Louis Hopkins, then a tinner, who was the last to look upon Lincoln's features as he re-soldered the lid of Lincoln's coffin. Mr. Hopkins' son, Dr. Louis L. Hopkins, still has a piece of lead taken from the casket and replaced with new metal by his father on that occasion.

If such voices of the country as have spoken to Lincoln in the flesh could stand before the microphone in future nation-wide broadcasts from the Lincoln tomb on February 12, what a fascinating story the aggregate of their reminiscences would comprise.

Anniversary of Lincoln's Death Recalls Plots to Steal His Body From Tomb

By WILLIAM D. CHENERY

The majority of adult citizens of Springfield may be aware that an attempt was made to steal the body of Lincoln on the night of Nov. 7, 1876. The younger generation may be less informed, hence this brief condensation of facts from the volume entitled "Attempt to Steal the Body of Lincoln," by John Carroll Power, published in April, 1887.

Three different known plots to steal the body of Lincoln are of record. The first, in 1867, was made by an unimportant lawyer of Springfield, who planned to convey the body to some point south of the United States and hold it for ransom. He endeavored to secure the co-operation of two young men, one a telegraph operator and the other a mechanic, whom he thought might be persuaded by the possibility of great financial booty. Both refused his plan, and fearing he had created witnesses against himself he disappeared.

The second, and also the third, plan originated in the shrewd and fertile brain of an emigrant Irishman, James B. Kinealy, alias Big Jim, who had served a five-year sentence at Joliet for passing counterfeit money and who, upon his release opened a livery stable in St. Louis as a cloak for his dealings with representatives of counterfeiting gangs. While he never touched an incriminating bill himself, he arranged the distribution.

The centennial year of the United States, 1876, was one of nation-wide celebrations. Big Jim plotted with a gang of sixteen thieves and counterfeiters, with headquarters in Lincoln, Ill., to make an attempt to steal Lincoln's body on the night of July 3, when no one would be suspicious of the presence in the city of strangers. Five of the men came to Springfield, rented a vacant store on the north side of Jefferson street, a few doors west of Fifth street, opened it temporarily as a saloon, and from there made trips, as casual visitors, to the tomb, and laid all their plans. One of the five became intoxicated and revealed the plan while drunk to a woman in a disreputable resort. This woman sent word of it to Abner Wilkinson, then chief of police of Springfield who, in turn, notified Mr. Power, custodian of the tomb. Mr. Power called into consultation the three members of the executive committee of the National Lincoln Monument association, John T. Stuart, Col. John Williams and Jacob Bunn. To them it appeared so incredible that no action was taken by the committee. Fortunately, however, the gang learned that the plot had been discovered, left the saloon (rent unpaid) and disappeared.

Third plot—n 1876 Patrick D. Tyrrell, chief operative of the United States Secret Service, had headquarters in Chicago for his district, comprising Wisconsin, Missouri and Illinois. There were at large at that time the two most important counterfeiters in the United States, Ben Boyd, born in Cincinnati, 1834, son of an engraver, and who became the most expert maker of counterfeit money in the entire country, and his confederate, Nelson Driggs. To gain information from gangsters Mr. Tyrrell employed men, known at that period as "ropers," who had once themselves been criminals, had apparently reformed, but still were in the confidence of law-breakers.

One of these, Lewis C. Swegles, intimated to members of gangs associated with Kinealy that he was a horse thief himself, but would also assist in other profitable undertakings. Boyd was caught in the act of making a counterfeit plate of $20 bills on the First National bank of Dayton, Ohio, and Driggs that same morning, October 21, 1875, was caught distributing bills. Both mere sentenced to the penitentiary. At the time of Driggs' arrest he had $43,000 in good money, and owned 28,000 acres of land in Texas. He was then 65 years old, was sentenced to fifteen years' confinement, and a fine of $5,000. Because Boyd turned state's evidence against Driggs his term of sentence was but ten years, $100 fine and court costs.

The conviction of these two men deprived Kinealy of his source of supply of counterfeit money, and he then revived the idea of stealing the body of Lincoln. The night preceding the national election, November 7, 1876, was selected because of the general excitement attending a presidential election. One of the gang, Jack Hughes, a counterfeit distributor of twelve years' activities, was out on bail, and frequented the saloon of Terrence Mullens, 294 Madison street, Chicago. It was there Swegles ingratiated himself in their confidence so completely that they asked his help in stealing the body of Lincoln. It was the plan to reveal the hiding place of the body to Boyd, who would then negotiate for its recovery with the government, receiving his own release from prison and the cash payment of $200,000 in gold.

The body was to be taken from the tomb to the east gate of Oak Ridge cemetery, placed in a wagon, driven some distance toward Mount Pulaski, using various relays of drivers to divert suspicion, the leaden casket hidden in a large hollow log fallen in a thick patch of paw paw bushes in a grove on the river bottom land of a farm belonging to Daniel Clark (of course without Clark's knowledge) about six or eight miles northeast of Mount Pulaski. From there it was to be later taken to the sand dunes of northern Indiana, where winds would soon obliterate all traces of its place of concealment.

Friday, October 26, 1876, Swegles had an interview in the law office of C. W. Dean of Chicago, with Tyrrell, Robert Lincoln and the Hon. Leonard Swett, a legal adviser of the late president, and also a friend of Robert Lincoln. Mr. Swett wrote a letter to Major Stuart, giving particulars of the plot, and directing Major Stuart to have watchers stationed at the tomb. After that the custodian, Mr. Power, and two armed men were on duty every night, carefully arranging signals to avoid shooting each other in the dark.

On the night of November 1, 1876, the gang met in the room of Swegles in Chicago, decided upon the amount of ransom, $200,000, and the liberation of their engraver, Boyd, also their method of securing the body.

At nine o'clock on morning of November 6 Swegles informed Tyrrell that the gang would leave that night for Springfield. Tyrrell thereupon arranged a meeting in the office of Robert Lincoln to counteract the plot. They secured the services of ex-Chief U. S. Secret Service Washburn, John McDonald, a detective of the Illinois Humane society and two Pinkerton detectives, John McGinn and George Hay.

That night, Nov. 6, the gangsters, Hughes, Mullins, one other unnamed gangster, and the reformed Swegles boarded the Chicago and Alton train by the front platform of the first passenger coach. Tyrrell, McGinn and Hay boarded the rear platform of the last coach just as it was pulling out of the station. Ex-Chief Washburn and McDonald followed on the first train the next morning. The law officers stopped at the St. Nicholas hotel, while the gangsters had gone to the Saint Charles hotel on Third and Jefferson streets. All members of both parties registered under assumed names. A telegram from Robert Lincoln to Major Stuart caused the latter to seek Tyrrell a the hotel, take him to the tomb and plan the method of proceedure when the gangsters arrived there. That afternoon Hughes, accompanied by his supposed confederate, Swegles, called at the tomb as casual visitors, asked many questions of Mr. Power and learned the environment of the casket. While they were at the tomb Mullins secured an old ax from a saloon to use in forcing the top off the marble sarcophagus.

At five o'clock a conference of the five previously mentioned officers, with also a previous secretary of ex-Chief Washburn, named English, and Swegles met in Tyrrell's room in the St. Nicholas and completed their plans.

At six forty o'clock that evening all assembled in the memorial room in south end of the tomb. It had been a cloudy day and at that hour it was so dark that the hand could not be seen before the face.

Remaining in the unlighted Memorial hall the first intimation they had of the approach of the gangsters was a bright light from a bull-eye flashed through the door of Memorial hall. As they had taken places out of range of vision through the door the gangsters Hughes and Swegles, felt safe and proceeded around the tomb to the north chamber where the casket stood. Mr. English, stationed where he could hear sounds from the chamber, reported that the gangsters were sawing the lock at the door of the catacomb.

Swegles had been instructed by Hughes to have a horse and wagon at the east entrance to Oak Ridge, and he had planned with the officials to inform them of the progress of the robbery while seemingly going for the wagon. However, Hughes and Mullins had pushed Swegles into the catacomb before their own entrance and forced him to hold a lantern while they worked on opening the marble sarcophagus. When they had the leaden coffin partly withdrawn from the sarcophagus they sent Swegles for the wagon. Instead of going all the way to the east gate he turned to the right at the foot of the hill, and returned to the Memorial hall and gave Tyrrell the password and information. Tyrrell told him to

keep out of sight, while the officials hastened around the tomb to the catacomb chamber. Hughes and Mullins had cautiously gone part way down the hill, while awaiting the return of Swegles with the wagon, and made their escape.

Strangely—they were unsuspicious of the double-dealing of Swegles, and he related to them some marvelous yarns about his "hair-breath" escapes from the officials, when he met them more than 10 days afterward in Chicago, at Mullins' saloon. He reported their frequenting the saloon to Tyrrell and they were captured there about 11 o'clock p.m., November 17, 1876. Next day both were returned to Springfield for trial. There were no adequate laws upon the statute books of Illinois at that time regarding grave robbing, and these two men were sentenced to one year in Chester, one day of which in solitary confinement and the other days at har labor, and to pay the costs of th trial.

Although the name of Kinealy St. Louis, brains of the plots, can to attention he was not prosecute till found in possession of counterfe money in 1880, strangely enough o April 15, the very day that the firs memorial service was being held i Springfield at the tomb of Lincoln He was sentenced to one year i Chester for possessing counterfeit money.

The leaden casket was pushed back into the sarcophagus, and the lid replaced. Six days later Major Stuart called upon Mr. Power and told him he could not sleep for thinking of another attempt at robbery and that they would conceal the leaden casket elsewhere. That night, the three executive officials of the Monument association, Col. Williams, Major Stuart and Jacob Bunn came with Adam Johnson, a marble worker of the city, and the five men, including Mr. Power, carried that heavy casket, weighing over 500 pounds from the catacomb, around the tomb, and into the Memorial hall, on into an unfinished passage under the tomb. Major Stuart afterward stated it injured him so seriously that he could hardly walk for weeks after.

In February, 1880, a group of men who had assisted in secreting the casket two years after its first removal to the corridor, organized the "Lincoln Guard of Honor" to further protect it. Their first public function was to hold a memorial service at 7:22 o'clock a. m., April 15, because it was the exact anniversary of Lincoln's death.

ILLINOIS STATE REGISTER SUNDAY APRIL 17 1938

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Dr. Louis A. Warren, Director
"Lincoln Lore"
Ft. Wayne, Indiana:

829 Pekin Street
Lincoln, Illinois
July 7 1938.

Dear Sir:

In checking through my otherwise complete file of "Lincoln Lore", I find that I lack Nos. 475 and 476 to complete the file to date. I would very greatly appreciate your sending me copies of these Bulletins.

Referring to the article "The Lincoln Tomb Plot" in the "Chicago Sunday Tribune" supplement of May 29, 1938, Mr. Fay has pointed out to me various errors in the naming of personages in the group picture shown in this article. The original plot had its inception in a saloon formerly located here in Lincoln on Pulaski St. (south side) between Kickapoo St. and alley to the west of K.-- St. according to Judge Stringer.

Yours very truly, William Atkins

LINCOLN
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1938
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THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Dr. Louis A. Warren, Director
Lincoln National Life Foundation
Fort Wayne,
Indiana.

The MONITOR, June 2, 1938

LINCOLN HISTORY STORIES

Tried to Steal Lincoln's Body

Sixty-one years ago this season an effort was made to steal the body of Abraham Lincoln from the tomb at Springfield, Ill., and the men almost succeeded, but were caught and given prison sentences, after a trial. As a consequence of this attempt, the body now lies some fifteen feet under the floor of the tomb and in a bed of steel and concrete.

Booklet on Lincoln Park

The Indiana Lincoln Union has published a very neat booklet in which is the history of the grave of Abraham Lincoln's mother from the time the Indiana Lincoln Union came into possession of the grounds up to the present time. It also has some other Lincoln history material of interest to all students of Lincoln history. It also gives data and information of the formation and growth of the recreation park in connection with the burial grounds. The recreation park is distinct and separate from the grave memorial grounds and is being made quite attractive for picnics and vacationists. The booklet is illustrated and very nicely printed and additinal copies may be obtained by writing Richard Lieber, executive secretary, Indiana Lincoln Union, Indianapolis, Ind.

PAUL STOTLER SAVES THREE

Rendezvous at Oak Ridge

Even in Death They Would Not Let Abraham Lincoln Rest

Article by King V. Hostick

Extension of Remarks of

Hon. George A. Dondero

of Michigan

in the

House of Representatives

Tuesday, February 18, 1941

Not printed at Government expense

United States Government Printing Office, Washington : 1941
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REMARKS

OF

HON. GEORGE A. DONDERO

Mr. DONDERO. Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks in the RECORD, I include an article which appeared in the American Legion magazine of February 1941, written by my good friend, King V. Hostick, a Lincoln student and writer.

The article follows:

EVEN IN DEATH THEY WOULD NOT LET ABRAHAM LINCOLN REST

(By King V. Hostick)

Criminal annals record few exploits as bizarre as the plot thwarted by Secret Service agents of the United States Government 62 years ago when they prevented the attempted theft of the body of Abraham Lincoln from its tomb in the outskirts of Springfield, the capital city of Illinois.

The daring plan to spirit away the body of the sixteenth President of the United States in June 1876 was conceived by a gang of counterfeiters, headed by one "Big Jim" Kinealy. Their purpose was twofold—collection of a fat ransom for return of the body and the release from prison of a previously captured member of the gang whose skill as an engraver was sorely needed to continue successfully their illegal operations.

For many years "Big Jim" and his satellites had plied a profitable business in the manufacture and passing of spurious currency. Counterfeit bills, known to be the handiwork of this gang, had appeared throughout the entire country. "Big Jim's" cleverness and luck eluded every effort to apprehend him and his accomplices while the financial returns from their depredations reached rich proportions.

All went well until the arm of the law managed to reach out and gather in a single member of the gang; and ironically enough, the most indispensable of all. It was Ben Boyd, the master engraver, whom the Government collared and put safely behind prison bars for a long term.

With this engraver gone, "Big Jim" was seriously handicapped. He combed the underworld for someone who could replace Boyd; but he searched in vain. Then it was decided that Boyd must be released from jail—but how? An out-and-out prison break was impracticable since it involved too great a risk. "Big Jim" realized the necessity of a more subtle method to achieve his ends.

After much deliberation Kinealy had a fantastic inspiration. The gang would steal the body of Abe Lincoln from the tomb where it had lain for 11 years. With the body of the Great Emancipator in their possession, "Big Jim" sensed it would be a simple matter to negotiate with the Governor of Illinois for both a ransom and Boyd's freedom.

During the month of March 1876 "Big Jim" put his plan into action. Taking five of his cohorts, he quietly left their Chicago headquarters and went to Springfield and opened a saloon and dance hall. Kinealy masqueraded the men as bartenders. Soon everything was in readiness. That this first attempt did not succeed then was due to one of the gang itself. This worthy, his tongue loosened by drink, was indiscreet enough to boast to a woman acquaintance that he was going to get rich quick. He even went on to reveal details. He would, he said, be out in Oak Ridge Cemetery on a certain night of the next month "stealing Old Abe's bones" and later burying them beneath a bridge spanning the Sangamon river a few miles north of Springfield.

Be it said to her credit, the woman scurried to the local police with the story. She also confided her "secret" to several of the townspeople. Quickly the news spread over the entire village. The townspeople formed a vigilante committee on the spot and the conspirators were forced to abandon all thought of carrying out their project. They lost no time in closing shop and fleeing from the town.

But this failure did not discourage the determination of "Big Jim." It merely delayed him several months.

The scene now shifted to Chicago where "Big Jim" was the owner of a saloon, and it was from this center that future activities would be directed. The legitimate business conducted in the front of the tavern served to cover the secret meetings in a rear room where plans were discussed for a second attempt to rob the tomb.

For several weeks an acknowledged thief named Lewis C. Swegles had been loitering around the saloon, bragging of being "the boss body snatcher of Chicago." Swegles asserted frequently and proudly that he was the chief source of supply of medical schools seeking cadavers for the dissection rooms. "Big Jim" listened and was impressed. Swegles' known record of having served two terms in the penitentiary for horse stealing proved an additional recommendation and Kinealy soon took him into the gang as a valuable assistant for the work in hand.

Finally new plans were perfected. The gang decided to break into the tomb, remove Lincoln's body from its casket, place it in a huge sack and, using relays of horses, carry it to the sand dunes of northern Indiana. Here the desolate, uninhabited lake shore would afford an ideal spot for concealing the former President's body, while the winds from the lake would quickly obliterate all traces of recent activity and any other telltale evidence. Another part of the plan the gang agreed on was to buy a copy of a London newspaper, from which a piece would be torn and purposely left on the floor of the tomb, to be found by the police. Later it would play an important part when a member of the gang approached the Governor bearing as credentials the rest of the same paper. "Big Jim" was taking no chances of some other crook horning in to demand pay-

ment when the news of the crime reached the ears of a startled world.

After completing all preliminary plans, the gang again set off for Springfield. Arrived there, they proceeded immediately to Oak Ridge Cemetery. The date set for the "snatch" was November 7, a clever choice because that day was Presidential election day, and most of the townsfolk out that night would be congregated near the newspaper offices and downtown saloons to hear election returns.

"Big Jim" and his men reached the cemetery without challenge. The lock of the door leading into the tomb was soon sawed away, the huge marble lid of the sarcophagus shunted aside and the wooden casket partially lifted out.

Swegles had previously secured a team of fast horses and a wagon, and these were ready and waiting in a nearby secluded spot. After the gang succeeded in lifting the casket part way out of the sarcophagus, Swegles was ordered to drive the wagon nearer the tomb's entrance. Obediently he moved off, not to get the horses, however, but to inform eight detectives stationed in a room at the other end of the tomb that the moment was near. Swegles had been masquerading, too. Actually he was a reformed criminal now in the employ of the police. He ran around the tomb building and gave the agreed signal to the waiting detectives by striking a match, lighting up a cigar and whispering, "Wash."

With drawn weapons, the Secret Service men dashed to the sarcophagus and called upon the ghouls to surrender, only to discover that they had disappeared. When Swegles had been dispatched for the horses and wagon, the thieves had stepped out a few feet into the nearby woods. Upon seeing their plot discovered, they dashed further in among the trees and escaped.

Several days later all who participated in the attempted theft were captured in Chicago, returned to Springfield and imprisoned to await trial.

295891—20069

At the insistence of Abraham Lincoln's only surviving son, Robert, the finest legal talent in Chicago was retained to prepare charges against the criminals. These attorneys did their best, but a technicality worked in the counterfeiters' favor. There was no law on the statute book of the State of Illinois under which the gang could be brought to trial for the actual crime which had been committed—attempting to steal a human body. If the gang had stolen the coffin, a charge could have been laid on these grounds—but they hadn't succeeded in doing even that since the coffin had not been removed from inside the tomb. The gravest indictment which could be drawn against them was conspiracy to steal a coffin valued at $75. After taking several ballots the jury found the defendants guilty on this count and sentence of 1 year in the Illinois State Penitentiary at Joliet was imposed.

As a result of this abortive attempt to steal it, Abraham Lincoln's body began a series of secret travels. Fearful for its safety, the Lincoln Monument Association moved it continually from place to place, some 17 times in all.

Finally, and again at the insistence of Robert Lincoln, the body of his father was embedded permanently in a mass of steel and cement some 6 feet beneath the floor of the tomb. The casket is completely surrounded by this impregnable shell and will in all probability remain intact for ages to come.

The old sarcophagus was doomed to be destroyed. Years later, when the present construction of Lincoln's Tomb was being effected, workmen laboring near the monument carelessly cracked the priceless slabs which previously housed the body and which had been pried apart by the thieves.

Because of the nature of the crack in the original sarcophagus, a massive brown marble cenotaph stands today in the interior of the tomb as a permanent monument to a name which will never cease to be remembered.

O

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 792 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA June 12, 1944

THE PLOT TO STEAL THE LINCOLN CORPSE

There are few incidents connected with the final disposition of Lincoln's remains which are of more human interest than the plot to steal the corpse. Although most students of Lincoln have a vague idea of the episode, the development of the plans and the frustration of the effort are not so easily called to mind.

A band of counterfeiters was found operating in Illinois during the latter part of 1876. It was discovered that an expert engraver, by the name of Benjamin Boyd, was making the plates from which the money originated, and it was thought if he would be apprehended, the gang could be broken up. It was also discovered that a printing press, owned and operated by a certain Dr. Driggs, was being used to strike off the currency. His press was discovered in a freight house at Clinton, Illinois, but it was soon removed and traced to its destination.

A plan was laid by the officers to arrest the engraver and printer at the same time, although they were operating in different towns. The United States secret service men had made Fulton their base of attack, and Capt. Patrick D. Tyrrell and John McDonald remained there to arrest Boyd, while Chief Elmer Washburn proceeded to Centralia to pick up Driggs. The engraver was found in his workshop in a deserted storehouse, near the river at Fulton, and a telegram was sent to Washburn, who immediately captured Driggs in a secret room in the top story of a building in Centralia, where he had set up his press.

Boyd and Driggs were tried on October 21, 1876, and both were found guilty, and sentenced. The former and the more important one of the pair was sent to Joliet to serve his term.

The salesmen for the gang, who dealt in the worthless money, were Terrance Mullens and Jack Hughes. Their chief locality for the distribution of the goods was Chicago. Running short of funds after the arrest of their accomplices, and with their engraver now in prison, they began to discuss plans to have him released.

There is some evidence that they first conceived of their weird plot at Lincoln, Illinois, in a saloon on Pulaski Street. Possibly their presence in a town, named after the martyred president, and which he is said to have christened with a watermelon, may have suggested the possibility of stealing the lamented Lincoln's body and holding it as a ransom for the release of Boyd.

Before their plan became mature they had raised their bounty and not only were they to demand the release of Boyd, but also ask for a cash settlement of $200,000, to boot. Possibly as they visualized this amount of cash the release of Boyd may have become a secondary matter. Their plans were to remove the body from the tomb at Springfield, and transport it to the sand dunes of Indiana. There they intended to deposit it in a secluded place between two trees where the wind would so blow the sand that the traces of their own presence there would be obscured, and the body preserved until it would be redeemed by the payment of the funds.

Soon after the arrest and conviction of their confederates, Mullins and Hughes were suspected of their part in the counterfeiting enterprise, and Lewis S. Swengles, a detective, was ordered to shadow the pair. He did such an excellent job that they soon made him their confident, and revealed enough of their plans so that he was invited to assist them after he had left the impression that he had some experience in snatching bodies.

The date set for the raid in Springfield was November 7th, 1876. The election of President Hayes occurred on that day, and it was contemplated that election night would be an ideal time for the effort. In the meantime Swengles had kept his other detective associates acquainted with what he knew about the proceedings. At the appointed time not only Mullens, Hughes and Swengles boarded a Chicago train for Springfield, but Capt. P. D. Tyrell, John McDonald, and a force of detectives also found quarters in the sleeping car of the train, while the three confederates occupied the smoker. Just before the Springfield station was reached, the officers were let off in the freight yards without any suspicions aroused on the part of the counterfeiters.

Upon reaching Springfield the part each one of the three men was to play in the abduction was assigned. Hughes was to go immediately to the tomb and make a survey of the situation. Mullens had the task of providing the necessary tools, and Swengles, the detective, was to be responsible for transportation of the body by securing a vehicle which he assured he could acquire.

An interesting detail about the arrangements called for the wrapping of the tools used in an old newspaper which they felt sure those discovering the empty crypt would preserve as evidence. A part of the front page of the paper was ingeniously torn off through the title and date. This was to be sent to Boyd in the penitentiary so that he might prove he was in touch with the kidnappers, and with the payment of the ransom money could produce the body.

In the preliminary plans of the plot the detective, Swengles, was supposed to act as a watchman on the outside of the tomb. This would give him an opportunity to signal the other secret service men hiding in the registration room of the monument, when the time was ripe to catch the culprits in the act of robbing the grave. At the last moment, however, Swengles was given a lamp to hold within the crypt. It was not until the marble sarcophagus had been mutilated, the end and part of top removed, and the casket holding the body partly pulled from the stone receptacle that Swengles was free to signal. He was sent for the vehicle, but instead notified the secret service men.

As soon as Swengles left on his supposed errand for the horse and wagon, Hughes and Mullens hid in some nearby bushes to await the return of Swengles. They had just reached their hiding place when they saw the group of detectives rush around the monument and enter the tomb. Of course the officers found no grave robbers present. The counterfeiters now conscious that their plans were known made their escape.

Several days after the failure of their plot, they were arrested in Chicago and brought to Springfield for trial. The law at that time provided no penalty for an attempt to steal a dead body, so a charge of burglary was entered against them, and they were sent to the penitentiary for a year.

It is of interest to note that the Pinkerton detective agency which warned Lincoln of the Baltimore plot to assassinate him, on the way to the inauguration, and which became invaluable to the government during the hostilities, conclude their services to the martyred Lincoln by frustrating the plans of those who would steal his corpse.

IN 1876

Lincoln's Grave Hit By Thieves

By HENRY J. TAYLOR

TV mayhem and crime make many suspect that these are America's most sordid days. Are they? Lincoln's birthday month evokes a reminder of other days—if this lets us feel any better. In any case, this happened:

Mr. Taylor

In the post-Lincoln era the biggest counterfeiter in the North was a giant hoodlum named "Big Jim" Kinealy. He and his gang hung out in the rear of a Chicago saloon at 294 West Madison St. The plates for the greenbacks were made by a true genius, a master engraver, one Ben Boyd, pale and perky.

The Secret Service caught Boyd up to his elbows in etchers' tools admiring his own handiwork, and he was sentenced to 10 years at hard labor in the state penitentiary at Joliet.

The disaster stopped Kinealy's money supply, of course, and in the autumn of 1876 the gang decided that its hard times would be permanent unless they pried Boyd out of prison and put him back to work.

Late on the afternoon of November 6, 1876, 11 years after the death of Abraham Lincoln, three of the gang left Chicago on a Chicago & Alton train for Springfield, Ill. The others left two days earlier in a wagon. They set out to kidnap Lincoln's body.

Barter Plan

Kinealy planned to carry it into the deserted sand dunes of Northern Indiana near the shores of Lake Michigan, and bury it in a sack the gang had with them. Then while an outraged nation demanded its return they would barter the kidnaped body of Abraham Lincoln for the release of Ben Boyd from Joliet.

The three men sawed the padlock of Lincoln's mausoleum. The others waited in their wagon in the graveyard's darkness. The marble tomb was in a deep circular well. They pried away the slabs with crowbars. Lincoln's wooden coffin lay bare.

Easing it back and forth and upward inch by inch, they pulled it half out of the well. But the angle was steep and the weight too much for them.

So while Lincoln's coffin stood tilted there, half erect, half out of its tomb, one of the three, Lewis G. Swegles, said he would get the rest of the gang to help with their backs and with ropes. Swegles disappeared in the darkness.

But Swegles did not return with the men or the ropes. He came back with eight other Secret Service agents — for Swegles himself was a Secret Service man planted in the Kinealy gang from the time of Boyd's arrest.

Gang Flees

They threw a torch into the well of the tomb for light and, with guns drawn, called on the men to surrender. But the well was empty, save for the tilted coffin. The pair had fled and the rest of the gang with them.

A Chicago bartender named Terrance Mullen, told the Secret Service the gang had come back to a Chicago hideout. One by one "Big Jim" and the others were captured and returned to Springfield for trial.

Illinois records show all in the gang were sent to join unsprung Ben Boyd in Joliet Penitentiary for a single short year.

But they were not convicted for conspiring to steal the hallowed body of our great Abraham Lincoln. They were convicted for conspiring to steal the casket.

MAYHEM IN THE OLD DAYS

Tried To Kidnap Abe Lincoln's Body

By HENRY J. TAYLOR

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Taylor

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LATE ON THE AFTERNOON of Nov. 6, 1876, 11 years after the death of Abraham Lincoln, three of the gang left Chicago on a Chicago & Alton train for Springfield, Ill. The others left two days earlier in a wagon. They set out to kidnap Lincoln's body.

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The three men sawed the padlock of Lincoln's mausoleum. The others waited in their wagon in the graveyard's darkness. There was no moon and all was black and silent except for the rustle of a soft wind in the trees and, once, a neighing of the horses.

THE MARBLE TOMB was in a deep circular well. The three men leaped down and lit a torch. They pried away the slabs with crowbars. Lincoln's wooden coffin lay bare. Easing it back and forth and upward inch by inch, they pulled it half out of the well. But the angle was steep and the weight too much for them.

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But Swegles did not return with the men or the ropes. He came back with eight other Secret Service agents—for Swegles himself was a Secret Service man planted in the Kinealy gang from the time of Boyd's arrest. District Chief Tyrrell and his aides had been hiding nearby.

They threw a torch into the well of the tomb for light and, with guns drawn, called on the crouching men to surrender. But the well was empty, save for the tilted coffin. The pair had fled and the rest of the gang with them. November 6 was election day; Hayes and Tilden running for the presidency. But that night this news of horror and desecration, crackling over the telegraph wires of the nation, drowned out even the election returns.

BY A CURIOUS TWIST a London newspaper figured in the search clues, but the decisive tip came from a Chicago bartender named Terrance Mullen. He told Tyrrell the gang had come back to a Chicago hideout. One by one "Big Jim" and the others were captured and returned to Springfield for trial.

Abraham Lincoln's son, Robert, hired lawyers to prosecute them. This was harder than one might think. For, as Kinealy well knew, there was no law in Illinois against stealing a body. Moreover, they had attempted to steal it but had not actually stolen anything. Crooked politics, some graft and other interferences delayed the trial more than eight months. Even on the first ballot four jurors voted for acquittal. Finally all 12 agreed, and the men were convicted.

Illinois records show all in the gang were sent to join unsprung Ben Boyd in Joliet Penitentiary for a single short year. But they were not convicted for conspiring to steal the hallowed body of our great Abraham Lincoln. They were convicted for conspiring to steal the casket, on which a proven value could be placed at $75.

Chicago American
Chicago, Illinois
February 7, 1962

HENRY J. TAYLOR Chi. American Feb 7 1962

The Lincoln Body Theft Story

TV mayhem and crime make many suspect these are America's most sordid days. Are they? Lincoln's birthday month evokes a reminder of other days—if this lets us feel any better. In any case, this happened:

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In the post-Lincoln era the biggest counterfeiter in the north was "Big Jim" Kinealy. He and his gang hung out in the rear of a Chicago saloon at 294 W. Madison st. The plates for the greenbacks were made by a master engraver, Ben Boyd. The secret service caught Boyd up to his elbows in etchers' tools, admiring his own handiwork, and he was sentenced to 10 years at hard labor in the state penitentiary at Joliet.

The disaster stopped Kinealy's money supply, of course, and the gang decided that its hard times would be permanent unless they pried Boyd out of prison and put him back to work.

Late on the afternoon of Nov. 6, 1876, three of the gang left Chicago on a train for Springfield, Ill. The others left two days earlier in a wagon. They set out to steal Abraham Lincoln's body.

Planned Dunes Hiding Place

Kinealy planned to carry it into the deserted sand dunes of northern Indiana and bury it. Then, while an outraged nation demanded its return, they would barter the body for the release of Boyd.

The three men sawed the padlock off Lincoln's mausoleum. The others waited in their wagon in the graveyard's darkness. There was no moon. All was silent.

The marble tomb was in a deep, circular well. The three men leaped down and lit a torch. They pried away the slabs with crowbars. Lincoln's wooden coffin lay bare. Easing it back and forth and upward inch by inch, they pulled it half out of the well. But the angle was steep and the weight too much for them.

So, while Lincoln's coffin stood tilted there, one of the three, Lewis G. Swegles, said he would get the rest of the gang to help. The other two blew out the torch and Swegles disappeared in the darkness.

But Swegles did not return with the men or the ropes. He came back with eight other secret service agents — for Swegles himself was a secret service man planted in the Kinealy gang from the time of Boyd's arrest.

Tip from a Bartender

They threw a torch into the well of the tomb for light and, with guns drawn, called on the crouching men to surrender. But the well was empty, save for the tilted coffin. The pair had fled and the rest of the gang with them.

The decisive tip came from a Chicago bartender named Terrance Mullen. He told the secret service the gang had come back to a Chicago hideout. "Big Jim" and the others were captured and returned to Springfield for trial.

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The Detroit News
February 11, 1962

Almost Forgotten: The 1876 Night Gangsters Tried To Steal Lincoln

THE DETROIT NEWS - February 11, 1962 P.12-B
By HENRY J. TAYLOR

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Kidnap Plot

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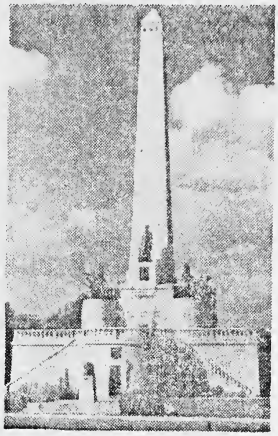

The Lincoln Memorial at Springfield, Ill., from which thugs all but succeeded in "kidnaping" Lincoln's body.

Abraham Lincoln for the release of Ben Boyd from Joliet.

The three men sawed the padlock off Lincoln's mausoleum. The others waited in their wagon in the graveyard's darkness. There was no moon and all was black and silent except for the rustle of a soft wind in the trees and, once, a neighing of the horses.

Tomb Desecrated

The marble tomb was in a deep circular well. The three men leaped down and lit a torch. They pried away the slabs with crowbars.

Lincoln's wooden coffin lay bare. Easing it back and forth and upward inch by inch, they pulled it half out of the well. But the angle was steep and the weight too much for them.

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Gang Escapes

But Swegles did not return with the men or the ropes. He came back with eight other Secret Service agents—for Swegles himself was a Secret Service man planted in the Kinealy gang from the time of Boyd's arrest. District Chief Tyrrell and his aides had been hiding nearby.

They threw a torch into the well of the tomb for light and, with guns drawn, called on the crouching men to surrender.

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Hideout Found

By a curious twist a London newspaper figured in the search for clues, but the decisive tip came from a Chicago bartender named Terrance Mullen. He told Tyrrell the gang had gone back to a Chicago hideout. One by one "Big Jim" and the others were captured and returned to Springfield for trial.

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Robert Todd Lincoln, who retained lawyers to prosecute desecrators of father's tomb

Crooked politics, some graft and other interferences delayed the trial more than eight months. Even on the first ballot four jurors voted for acquittal. Finally all 12 agreed, and the men were convicted.

Short Jail Term

Illinois records show all in the gang were sent to join unsprung Ben Boyd in Joliet penitentiary for a single short year.

But they were not convicted for conspiring to steal the hallowed body of our great Abraham Lincoln. They were convicted for conspiring to steal the casket, on which a proven value could be placed at $75.

Lincoln Lore

Bulletin of The Lincoln National Life Foundation . . . Dr. R. Gerald McMurtry, Editor
Published each month by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1609 | Fort Wayne, Indiana | March, 1972

THE ATTEMPT TO STEAL LINCOLN'S BODY

Editor's Note: The newspaper account of the attempt to steal Abraham Lincoln's body the night of November 7, 1876 (presidential election day), as reported by *The Chicago Tribune*, on Wednesday, November 8, 1876, must be one of the most sensational news stories in the history of American journalism.

A Xerox copy of the newspaper article has been called to the attention of the editor by Webb Garrison of Evansville, Indiana, who stated that "the story is of great historical importance because it was a national 'scoop' — whose veracity was at first challenged by other Chicago papers."

Of course the story was true, and the many ramifications of the plot and the people connected with the event wove itself into a bizarre and complicated narrative.

One of the most unique books in all Lincolniana was published in Springfield, Illinois, in 1890, bearing the title, *History Of An Attempt To Steal The Body Of Abraham Lincoln* . . . The author was John Carroll Power, custodian of the Lincoln Tomb, who from the very first suspected the ghoulish plot and played a leading role in the apprehension of the criminals. Power's devoted 105 pages of his 287 page book to the details of the crime. In his introduction, he wrote among other things that, "This volume is a record, in the plainest language possible, of the plottings prior to, and of the attempt to steal, the body of Abraham Lincoln, in order to make merchandise of it."

When *The Chicago Tribune* published their first story about the crime, their reporters could not foretell the eventual outcome of the case. Later, news stories would follow, but the minute details would be left for custodian, J. C. Power, to discuss and anaylze in his book in 1890. Later condensed versions of the plot were published (see "Rendezvous at Oak Ridge" by King V. Hostick) and additional facts were gleaned from newly acquired evidence. One of the most factual accounts to embody the basic evidence was the account written by Louis A. Warren for *Lincoln Lore*, Number 792, June 12, 1944, entitled "The Plot to Steal The Lincoln Corpse."

The Chicago Tribune "scoop" is reprinted for the edification of our subscribers.

R. G. M.

HORRIBLE

Dastardly Attempt to Despoil the Lincoln Monument.

Thieves Trying to Steal the Bones of the Martyr President.

Warning Given, and Steps Taken to Arrest Them.

Elmer Washburn and His Assistants Waiting in the Dark.

The Robbers Interrupted by Accident, and Contrive to Escape.

Special Dispatch to *The Tribune*.

Springfield, Ill., Nov. 7. — An attempt was made this evening to perpetrate one of the most infamous outrages which the mind of man can conceive of — that of stealing the bones and ashes of Abraham Lincoln. Unfortunately the perpetrators escaped, leaving, however, the evidence of their crime behind them, and though the clews are next to nothing, if human ingenuity can track them it will be done. Somehow or other, no one exactly knows how, J. C. Power, the custodian of the Lincoln monument, became impressed with the idea that there were designs upon the remains, and he communicated his suspicions to Leopard Swett and Robert Lincoln. They could hardly believe that any one, even the meanest and lowest scoundrel in the land, could conceive such a thing. However, to prevent the horse from getting out of the stable, they concluded to lock the door — to adopt precautions even should there be nothing in the feeling. Accordingly, Swett wrote Col. Stewart (Stuart), of this city, about two weeks ago, requesting him to station a guard at the monument. This was done, but no one came to disturb the corpse. Detecttive Tyrrell, of the United States Secret Service, whose headquarters are in Chicago, having business here, was

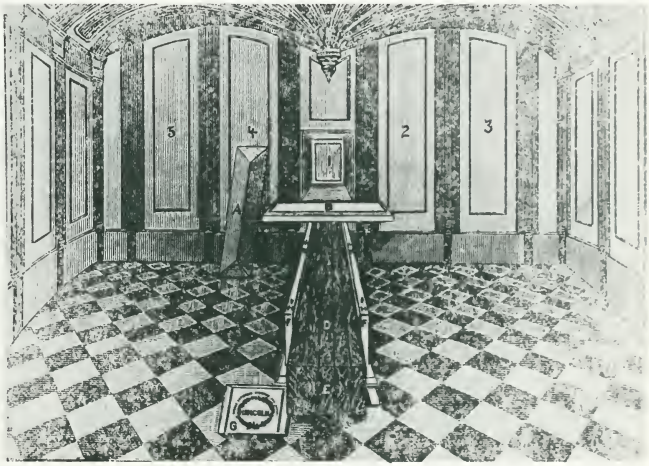

Illustration from the John Carroll Power book, *History Of An Attempt To Steal The Body Of Abraham Lincoln* . . .

Interior of the Catacomb, as the thieves left it. Crypts designed for the bodies of the Lincoln family were assigned as follows: (1) Lincoln, (2) William and Edward, (3) Thomas (Tad), (4) Mrs. Lincoln, (5) Robert. Lincoln's body rested in crypt No. 1 from September, 1871, until October, 1874, when it was placed in the marble sarcophagus. This entire arrangement of the Lincoln bodies (some members of the family were still living) was later changed. A, is the top or false lid of the marble sarcophagus. B, is the main lid of the marble sarcophagus. C, is one of the wooden temporary trestles supporting the sarcophagus. D, is the top of the red cedar coffin. E, is the end of the cedar coffin, drawn about eighteen inches out of the sarcophagus, ready to be carried away. F F, are the marble sides of the sarcophagus. H H H H, are copper dowels in the marble sides of the sarcophagus. G, is the marble end piece of the sarcophagus, bearing the inscription Lincoln, surrounded with an oaken wreath in marble. It is proper to state that this piece did not occupy the place it does in the picture, but was left by the vandals where it could not be seen from the door.

requested by Swett and Lincoln to see Mr. Power, and to look around town, and watch for suspicious characters. He arrived here three or four days ago, and at once commenced a vigorous shadowing of several of the small hotels, but he saw no one whom he recognized. This afternoon Mr. Power came into town in a hurry and hunted up Tyrrell and informed him that two very hard-looking cases had been out to the cemetery looking around, and he felt assured that they were there for no good purpose. One registered as from Racine, and the other from Kenosha, Wis. Their names are suppressed, since they have had nothing to do with what occurred later. An effort will of course be made to find out who they are, and should they prove to be innocent injustice would be done them by telling now who they are. Mr. Power, not being used to detective work, could give but meager descriptions of them. The result of the interview with Tyrrell is unknown, but he must have concluded that election night was an excellent one in which to rob the tomb.

The evening's train brought from Chicago ex-Chief of the Secret Service Elmer Washburn, who, it seems, had been requested by Swett and Lincoln to come here and aid Tyrrell. About half-past 6 Washburn, Tyrrell and three other men went out to Oakwood (Oak Ridge) and concealed themselves in Memorial Hall inside the monument to await developments. One man was posted in the labyrinth in the rear, so called because of the walls running in different directions and making numerous passage ways, these walls supporting the terrace. His object was to hear the noise made in the vault if any were made. After patiently waiting for nearly three hours, and when about tired out from standing still, the utmost silence being imparative, he heard a grating noise which lasted perhaps five minutes. Then, in a little while, came several successive thuds, as if some one was hammering. The time having arrived for action, Washburn and his men slipped out of the door, with cocked revolvers in their hands, determined to shoot to kill if any resistance was made. Just as they were turning the corner to the left one of the men accidentally exploded his revolver. The noise was very loud, so still were the surroundings, and unfortunately it was too loud, for, though there were but about 120 feet to go over, when the officers got to the door of the vault the dastardly villains were gone. They must have had some one watching to give them the signal of danger or else had come outside for a breath of fresh air and heard the snapping of the cap and ran into the woods which surrounded the monument. It is but a short distance, and a man could get within shelter and be unobservable in a quarter of a minute. The men at once scattered, and went in the direction the thieves had gone, and while dodging behind the trees, two of them exchanged shots, each mistaking the other for one of the fugitives. After shooting at each other, they cried "Wash," "Wash," indicative of a friend in such an emergency, and then they found out their mistake. The bullets whizzed close to both, and it was miraculous that they escaped injury.

No traces of the thieves being discovered, the party returned to the catacomb, and there beheld a sight which made them sad. The body, as is known perhaps, is inclosed in a lead casket. This is surrounded by a cedar case, and the receptacle of these is a marble sarcophagus. The latter had a double lid, the upper one not being as large as the other. Both had been pried off with a chisel or an ax, and somewhat chipped in the operation. The under lid was laid crosswise on the casket, the headpiece on the floor, and the upper lid standing against the wall. The casket itself was pulled out about a foot from the body of the sarcophagus, and a small piece had been taken off on the floor, where an ax with the edge full of marble-dust, an ordinary chisel, and a pair of nippers. The other tools had evidently been taken away since the lock on the iron-grated door had been sawed-off.

It should perhaps be stated that the sarcophagus was in the catacomb and not in the crypt, being thus placed in order that visitors might see it. The damage done is comparatively little.

The officers of course were disappointed at not catching the vandals, but they think it is only a question of a little time when they will be apprehended.

Only one motive can be attributed to these despoilers of the grave, and that is the hope of a reward for the restoration of the remains. If they had succeeded in carrying them off, it certainly could not have been their intention to take away the casket, for it must weigh from 500 to 600 pounds, and half a dozen men could not have carried it to the fence for transfer to a wagon in the road. It is more than likely that they intended to cut open the casket and gather up the bones and dust of the martyr-President and put them in a bag. What would have been the indignation of the country had this been done! The scheme concocted by these men is certainly unparalleled in the history of crime and, now that there is evidence of minds so debased, it is certain that measures will be taken to guard the monument and prevent future attempts. The facts given above did not come until early this morning, and are known to only a few, otherwise the outrage would have occupied as great a share of the attention of the community as the election. Words cannot express the feelings of those who do know it, and it is earnestly hoped that the double- . . . perpetrators of this attempted robbery of the remains of America's most loved President will soon be brought to justice.

A Lincoln Campaign Song - 1860

The May 5, 1908, *Oxford Democrat* of South Paris, Maine, published a Lincoln campaign song that was sung at a rally at Paris Hill, Maine, sometime in 1860. Hannibal Hamlin and his brother Elijah spoke at the rally. On the platform with them was a wooden chair said to be made of rails split by "Old Abe himself."

The text of the song was re-written in 1908 for the newspaper in response to a request from a reader. The person who wrote the words from memory (she well may have been at the rally in 1860) was Mrs. E. V. Canwell of South Paris. The singing of the Rally Song was led at the mass meeting at Paris Hill by "Mr. Locke, the army balladist." He may have been attached to the local militia.

The text of the song follows:

Hark! Hark! A signal gun is heard
Just out beyond the fort;
The good old ship of state, my boys
Is coming into port.
With tattered sails and anchor gone,
I fear the rogues will strand her.
She carried now a sorry crew,
And needs a new commander.

Old Ab'ram is the man
With a sturdy mate
From the Pine Tree State,
Old Ab'ram is the man.

Four years ago she put to sea,
With prospects brightly beaming;
Her hull was strong, her sails new bent,
And every pennant streaming.
She loved the gale, She plowed the wave,
Nor feared the deep's commotion.
Majestic gently on she sailed
Proud mistress of the ocean.

Buchanan was the man,
But his four year's trip,
Leaves a crippled ship,
Buchanan was the man.

Our ship is getting out of trim,
'Tis time to calk and grove her;
She's foul astern of human gore,
They've turned her to a slaver.
She has cruised about from coast to coast,
Her flying bondsmen hunting.
Until she strained from stem to stern,
And lost her sails in hunting.

Old Ab'ram is the man
With a sturdy mate
From the Pine Tree State,
Old Ab'ram is the man.

We'll give her what repairs she needs,
A thorough overhauling;
Her scurvey crew shall be dismissed
Into some honest calling,
Brave Lincoln soon shall take the helm,
On truth and right relying,
In calm or peace, in storm or war,
He'll keep her colors flying.

Brave Lincoln is the man,
With a sturdy mate
From the Pine Tree State
Brave Lincoln is the man.

Brig.-Gen. Ben Hardin Helm
Mrs. Lincoln's "Rebel" Brother-In-Law

(Continued from February, 1972 issue)

Through correspondence with the Todd family, Lincoln had been informed that Mrs. Helm owned some six hundred bales of cotton located in Jackson, Mississippi, and Atlanta, Georgia, over which she wished to estab-

It happened in . . .

ORLANDO, Fla.: Cocoa, a dwarf sperm whale with a bad sunburn, is rapidly recovering after being rescued from the surf at Cocoa Beach. The whale has eaten nearly 15 pounds of squid since Friday.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill.: The attempted theft of Abraham Lincoln's body from Oak Ridge Cemetery in 1876 was revealed in files by Sangamon County employees. The files showed three men were charged with conspiring to steal the body and casket, valued at the time at $75.

LONDON: A cuddle in the morning can cause absenteeism, the owner of a toy factory has found. Joe Potts appealed to his 158 female employees to put work first and ask their husbands to wait until evening for that cuddle. Potts says fewer than 120 of the women report each day.

PEKIN, Ill.: Thirty years ago, Pekin High School named its athletic teams the "Chinks" because the city was named after Peking, China. Sensitivity has caught up with the times, and a meeting has been scheduled with the state Human Relations Commission to consider a name change, perhaps to "Dragons."

lection Day, 1876

Norfolk, Va. Ledger-Star Nov. 1, 1976

Funeral - Plot to Steal Body

News a century ago was bizarre

By Henry S. Rorer

The big news on Election Day is WHO ON, but at the close of Election Day on ov. 7, 1876, there was no winner. Due to e fact that the electoral votes of Louisi- a and South Carolina were contested, e election of Rutherford B. Hayes was t certified until March 2, 1877, two days fore his inauguration.

The sensational story of the time was a te news bulletin published the following y by the Chicago Tribune: The attempt steal a corpse and hold it for ransom. he corpse was that of Abraham Lincoln.

The story began in 1875 when two coun- rfeiters were arrested and imprisoned. wo of their confederates, Terrence Mul- n and Jack Hughes, who had been pass- g the counterfeit bills, planned to steal e body of Lincoln, hide it in a sand dune Indiana, and demand for its return the lease of the two counterfeiters and 00,000 ransom.

A Pinkerton Agency detective, Lewis C. wegles, learned of the plot and became

Historian Henry Rorer formerly taught that subject at Maury High School and went on to serve as principal of three Norfolk elementary schools before his retirement in 1971.

confidant of the conspirators by convinc- g them that he was an experienced grave bber. The date for the grave robbery was anned in the belief that their venture ould be overlooked in the excitement of election day.

Swegles had agreed to provide a horse nd wagon to haul away the casket. When e tomb had been opened and the casket ulled from the grave, Swegles was sent r the vehicle, but instead he notified a roup of Secret Service men who were aiting nearby.

Meanwhile, Mullen and Hughes had hidden in nearby bushes and escaped when they saw the Secret Service men rush to the tomb. They were arrested several days later in Chicago and returned to Springfield for trial. As the law at that time provided no penalty for an attempt to steal a dead body, a charge of burglary was entered against them and they were sentenced to a year in the penitentiary.

According to the custodians of the Lincoln tomb, the remains of the 16th president have been removed 17 times since the body was first placed in the receiving vault at Springfield, Ill., on May 1, 1875. The construction of the temporary vault, the erection of the Lincoln Monument, the abortive attempt to steal the body, and the numerous repairs and reconstruction of the deteriorating monument were responsible for the many secret movements of Lincoln's body.

In order to satisfy morbid curiosity, and to put an end to rumors that the body was not there, the coffin was opened five times, and witnesses who had known Lincoln were present to identify the body.

At the turn of the century, it was found necessary to rebuild the Lincoln tomb. The foundation was not secure, as freezing temperatures had thrown the outer granite blocks out of alignment. When the tomb was opened on Sept. 26, 1901, the coffin was opened for the last time, and the body identified by 25 witnesses, a number of whom had known Lincoln.

The lead casket was then sealed and placed on a concrete foundation 12 feet beneath the surface. The coffin was lowered into a steel frame and a steel cover riveted over it. Cement was poured over the steel-caged box, and today the body is enclosed in tons of steel, stone and cement, 10 feet beneath the surface. When the tomb was reconstructed in 1931 it was not necessary to move the body again.

It is interesting to note that the Pinkerton Detective Agency, which had warned Lincoln of a Baltimore plot to assassinate him while en route to his inauguration, concluded their services to him by frustrating those who had attempted to steal his corpse.

Lincoln's tomb in Springfield as it appears today

Lincoln's troubles didn't end with his death. In 1876, criminals tried to kidnap his corpse.

GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE/GETTY IMAGES

U.S. News & World Report

A Plot to Steal Lincoln's Body

A posthumous kidnapping attempt shaped the Secret Service

By Thomas J. Craughwell

Before Secret Service agents guarded the president, they chased counterfeiters. Their assignment did not formally shift until 1894, when a handful of agents served as Grover Cleveland's bodyguards. But there is an earlier example of the Secret Service getting involved in presidential security, albeit briefly, and in a posthumous kind of way.

In 1876, Abraham Lincoln's body lay within an aboveground white marble sarcophagus in a handsome tomb on the grounds of Springfield, Ill.'s Oak Ridge Cemetery. Oak Ridge was a rural cemetery located about 2 miles outside of the town. No groundskeeper lived there. No night watchman patrolled the area around the president's tomb. And the only thing standing between Lincoln's body and any would-be grave robbers was a single padlock on the tomb's chamber door. Not even the president's sarcophagus was burglarproof: Its lid was sealed, not with cement but with the less permanent plaster of Paris. To the distinguished gentlemen of Springfield who were members of the National Lincoln Monument Association, the organization charged with maintaining Lincoln's tomb, the absence of rigorous security measures seemed perfectly reasonable. After all, who would want to steal Lincoln's body?

Comic caper. The answer to that question was a gang of Chicago Irish counterfeiters led by a small-time crime boss named Big Jim Kennally. Early in 1876, Kennally's best engraver of counterfeit plates, Benjamin Boyd, had been sentenced to 10 years in the state penitentiary in Joliet, Ill. To pressure the governor to release his man, Kennally recruited two members of his gang, Terence Mullen, a saloonkeeper, and Jack Hughes, a sometime manufacturer of counterfeit nickels, to kidnap Lincoln's body. For ransom, they would demand $200,000 in cash and a full pardon for Boyd.

Given the cemetery's minimalist ap-

Mrs. Julion Valleth, of this city, brought out Mrs. E. J. Buckbee, of Mattoon, and they heard ten stories of Lincoln. They were especially enthused over the Coles county collection.

Mrs. S. S. Cobb, of Wagoner, Okla., who recently visited the tomb, sends a picture of Maj. George F. Bucher, and notice of his death at Muskogee, Okla. In his sketch it records a tradition that Major Bucher was the sole survivor of four soldiers who guarded Lincoln's body at Lincoln's tomb. At midnight, so the story goes, the four guards thwarted an attempt to steal Mr. Lincoln's body. They arrested the intruders and they were sent to prison. As Lincoln's body did not arrive in Springfield until May 3, 1865, and placed in the receiving vault May 4, and the attempt to steal Mr. Lincoln's body eleven years later, there are some doubts if Major Bucher may have guarded the receiving vault, but the reporter who wrote the story may have made additions to make it interesting.