

HAT

DRAWER

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APPEARANCE

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Abraham Lincoln's Appearance

Hat

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

LINCOLN'S FAMOUS HAT.

The Odd Headgear Always Worn by the Great Emancipator.

It Was Tall and Big Enough for a Giant, and Served as a Storage Place for Most of His Papers—Now on Exhibit in Washington.

The annual recurrence of Lincoln's birthday annually brings to light a number of new stories about the Martyr President. These are always intensely interesting. I have just run across several good stories about the high silk hat that Lincoln always wore. This important piece of head apparel served the great Kentuckian in as good stead as the magic cup did Slegfried, "tiding him through wonderful tasks." In all positions that he filled, whether as soldier, store-keeper, surveyor, solicitor or statesman, the silk tile was alike indispensable. Gen. Grant's cigar came in for a good deal of attention by writers and reviewers, but the hat of "Honest Abe" was a veritable treasure house. It served in turn for carrying surveyor's notes, letters, dispatches, newspaper clippings, lawyer's briefs, and

plug, if a few well-known facts are borne in mind. The President had a gaunt and grotesque frame, and stood 6 feet 4 inches in his stocking feet. His strength equaled his length, for he could lift a cask full of beer and drink out of the bung-hole. It was such Herculean feats as this that made him the hero he was in the eyes of the Clary Grove boys.

The Hon. Robert R. Hitt, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives, was the official stenographer in the famous debates already mentioned, and from him I gained the following information regarding his famous tile:

"Yes; I remember that Mr. Lincoln's hat was very large. He was a man of large head, and the style at that time was to wear high and full crown silk hats. The one he wore toward the last of his life, which is preserved in the museum here, looks enormous as compared with the hats seen nowadays. When he was making speeches in the campaign of '58, he often had papers—newspaper clippings chiefly—which were caught just behind the lining of the hat and easily taken out. I recollect his taking from his hat, as we were in the cars, a clipping from the Charleston "Mercury," then one from the Charleston "Courier," which he afterwards used in speaking."

The hat referred to is preserved in the Oldroyd Museum at Washington; it is that which Mr. Lincoln wore on the night of his assassination. It stands under a big glass case, and suggests that worn by ex-President Harrison's grandfather. I tried it on recently, and found it very heavy and cumbersome. It fitted me loosely, and was a



FROM AN OLD CARTOON.

state papers of all sorts. It even figured in a hilarious foot-ball game on the night of his election to the presidency, and the scene would have done credit to the best memories of Manhattan Field.

But before passing to an account of the part played by the noble tile in the Martyr President's career, it may be well to give a description of it.

The hat that Lincoln was accustomed to wear seemed to be a foot high, with a brim almost as big as a Southern sombrero. Indeed, Lincoln's headgear was something like his old kitchen stove—large, generous, and built for hospitality. "In this joint of stovepipe," as one writer has described it, were tucked away all his personal and professional papers, while its broad brim made it alike serviceable for rain or shine.

In his debates with Douglas the hat fairly loomed into space. The smallness of the stature of the latter is well known, and when Lincoln stood beside him with his hat on, the appearance they presented was that of a boy and a giant standing together. And curiously enough, when Lincoln came to be inaugurated at Washington, Douglas held the high hat in his own hand, that no careless person might put his foot in it.

The reader can readily imagine the appearance of Lincoln when arrayed in his favorite

good $\frac{3}{4}$ in size. In addition to the heavy black band around it, there was another tiny band with a dainty buckle. This hat is in a remarkable state of preservation, and the maker's name on the lining inside shows it to have been manufactured by J. Y. Davis, of Washington, D. C., showing that Mr. Lincoln believed in patronizing home industries.

Mr. Lincoln's hat played a very important part in his career, when he was Postmaster at New Salem. It was before the days of the railway mail service on steam or street cars. There were no "special delivery" carriers at that time. But Lincoln was equal to the demands of the situation, and became a peripatetic post office. As soon as the letters were received each day he would put them in his hat, and stroll through the town. His tall, gaunt form could easily be described from all quarters, and everybody was more or less concerned in the contents of the hat. Upon being questioned as to what the mail brought, Lincoln would remove his tile and carefully look over the lot of letters. In this way he not only became acquainted with his neighbors, but his unique and utilitarian hat became an object of reverence.

It was, however, on the night of his election to the presidency that the noble tile served to bring about a foot-ball game,

which, for genuine excitement and the prominence of the parties engaged, has never been surpassed. The news had just come to the old homestead in Illinois that Lincoln was elected. Here is the story as told by an eye-witness:

"A few of us ladies went over and helped Mrs. Lincoln prepare a little supper for friends who had been invited in to hear the returns. Every half hour or so we would pass around coffee and cakes. About 1 o'clock in the morning enough had been learned to warrant the belief that the 'Rail Splitter' had been elected. I think it was when we heard the news from New York. The men rushed on Mr. Lincoln and shook his hands, while the women actually hugged him, and, I might as well admit it, I kissed him. Then some one went into the hall and took from the rack that old silk hat which he wore, as long as a joint of stove-pipe and about as shapely to my mind, and it was thrown up to the ceiling. As it came down some one gave it a kick; then the women joined in the fun, and we played foot ball with that hat until it was an unrecognizable mass. We were simply beyond control. What a ridiculous scene it would have been to one looking in without knowing what prompted it!"

"It was the more so, so far as I was concerned, because I had seen a Seward woman. While the Convention was in session it had been arranged to fire a cannon in case Lincoln received the nomination. My nearest neighbor was a Mrs. Dubois, with whom I had had several friendly spats during the campaign. I heard the cannon shot, and the next moment saw Mrs. Dubois running across the street. She had been making a shirt for her husband—who was about the size of the late Judge David Davis, so you

may gain some idea of the size of the garment she was waving. She rushed into the house and flaunted it in my face. It made me so mad that I sat down and began to cry. The good woman put her arms around me, begged my pardon and kissed me; and from that time we were both Lincoln women. She also took part in the foot-ball match."

There are a good many stories afloat concerning the hat of the Martyr President which are hard to verify at this late day. One is to the effect that Lincoln was saved from death some months before his assassination by his trusty tile. It was his wont to go horseback riding, on pleasant afternoons, from the White House. In the vicinity of the Soldiers' Home, one day, his horse was startled by the report of a rifle. Upon examining his silk hat, Lincoln discovered a bullet mark at the top of the crown. Misled by its height, the would-be assassin had overshot his mark. It is needless to say that horseback riding was discontinued after that.

Lincoln once met with a mishap to his headgear. It was before the days of "quorum hats." In order to prevent a quorum he leaped from a window and crushed the tile beyond recognition. Had Lincoln lived and been a member of the Fifty-first Congress, "Tom" Reed would have had no trouble in seeing and counting that monumental plug.

Judge Springer, of Illinois, told me that Lincoln's hat was the most indispensable part of his whole outfit.

"It was, in fact, a sort of file rack," said the Judge. "Here were all the briefs of his various law cases. Curiously enough, he carried the accounts in his head, and that is why he lost so much money. Had he reversed the process, and kept his accounts in his hat and the cases in his head, he would have been better off. His hat served for his satchel on a journey, and all that was needed besides this were his saddlebags and his horse."

Cartoonists and correspondents of newspapers had a good deal of sport out of the noble tile. While Lincoln was one of the "long time" in the Illinois Legislature, not only was he geyed about there being "so much of himself on the ground," referring to the size of his feet, but he was also twitted about there being so much of him towering above the ground. In the collection of Lincoln relics in Washington I saw some of the cartoons that were used in the early political campaigns. One sketch sets forth the advantage of the high hat. Mr. Lincoln is represented as being concealed by his admirers on his trip to Washington. The artist pictures the friends encircling him, and then portrays the towering somewhat after the fashion of the present Washington monument.

Lincoln's hat was only typical of his character. He was generous and broad in all things. It is a well-known fact that he would invariably throw up his brief when he had a bad case. He would only undertake suits that he believed to aim at justice. What he would have carried in his trusty tile in the way of the reconstruction and regeneration of the South, had he lived, can only be conjectured. But it is safe to surmise that the hat would have contained many a good scheme for the welfare of the country.

LINCOLN'S PLUG HAT.

ODD HEADGEAR WORN BY THE GREAT EMANCIPATOR.

Tall and Big Enough for a Giant—Served as a Storage Place for His Papers—Now on Exhibit in Washington.

Abe's Famous Tile.

Abraham Lincoln's silk tile was more remarkable than a storied urn, for Abe's plug was about three stories high and always full of jocular stories from brim to crown.

The hat that Lincoln was accustomed to wear seemed to be a foot high, with a brim almost as big as a Southern sombrero. It was a 7¼ size, a heavy, cumbersome affair, and never a thing of beauty.

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The reader can readily imagine the appearance of Lincoln when arrayed in his favorite plug, if a few well-known facts are borne in mind. The President had a gaunt and grotesque frame, and stood six feet four inches in his stocking feet. His strength equaled his length, for he could lift a cask full of beer and drink out of the bung hole. It was such hereulean feats as this that made him the hero he was in the eyes of the Clary Grove boys.

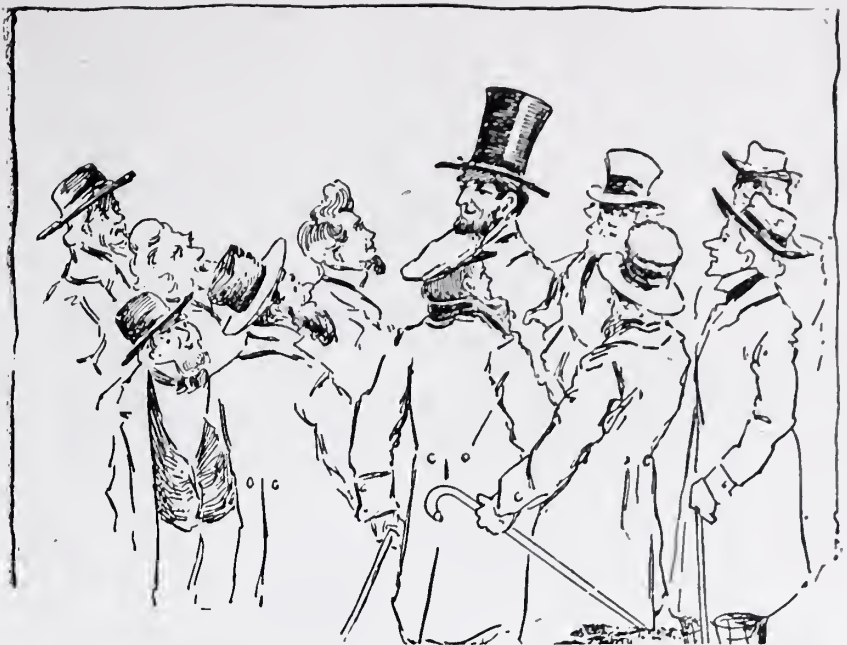
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THE LITTLE GIANT HELD HIS HAT.

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never been surpassed. The news had just come to the old homestead in Illinois that Lincoln was elected. Here is the story as told by an eye witness:

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LINCOLN'S HAT WAS HIS FILE RACK.

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Preserved in Bank Vault

**Wind-Blown Hat Souvenir
Of Lincoln's Visit Here**

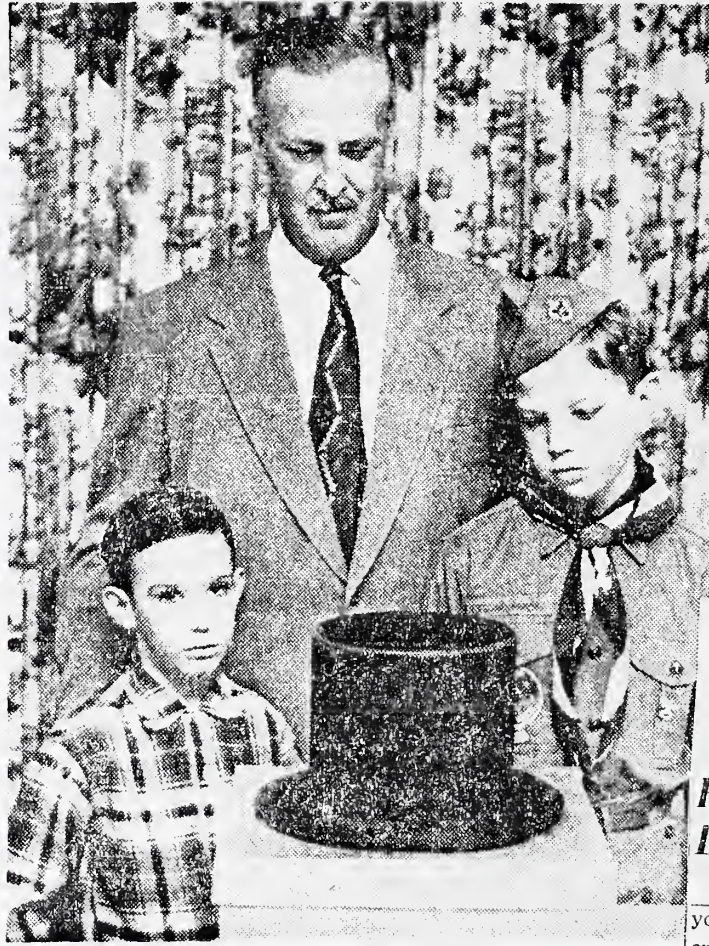
Bright-eyed youngsters listen eagerly as Dan Forry, 468 Hudson Ave., again tells the story of the day Abe Lincoln's hat blew off as he rode into Newark on the train that was taking him to Washington to be inaugurated. On the left in the photo is young Daniel S. Forry, seven-year-old son of Dan Sr. and on the right is J. Thomas Swank, 11, a member of Boy Scout Troop 8.

It was 96 years ago Thursday that a gust of wind blew Lincoln's hat off. It was Valentine's Day, Thursday Feb. 11, 1861, and Lincoln was riding on the rear platform of the train as it pulled into Newark. As the train stopped and Lincoln spoke to the crowd at the station he explained what had happened to his hat.

Watched For Hat

Among those assembled at the station were Zelora S. Forry, nine, and his father Daniel, who lived on a farm about where the Newark Stove Co. is located today. The railroad ran right through the farm and after Lincoln had gone the two Forrys headed for home,

(Continued on Page 2, Column 8)



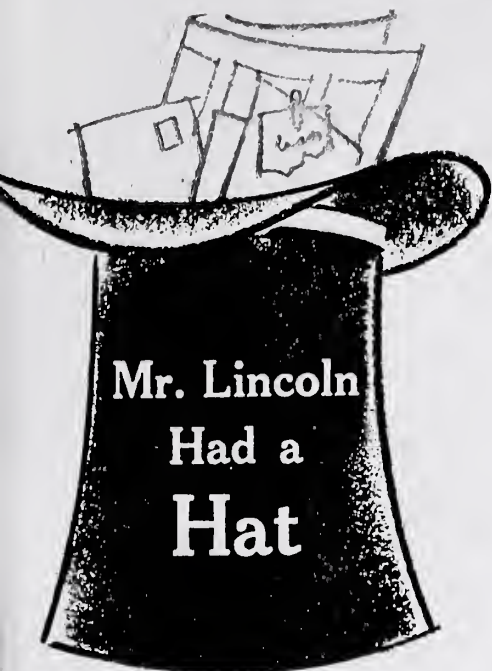
**Hat Souvenir Of
Lincoln's Visit**

(Continued from Page 1)

young Zelora keeping a bright eye on the alert for the hat.

He found the hat at a spot which would nowadays be identified as along the right of way of the Pennsylvania and B & O Railroads, just west of Raccoon Creek. It was one of his most treasured possessions until his death in 1934. Since then his son, Daniel Z. Forry, pictured above, has taken over the guardianship of this historical reminder of the Great Emancipator.

The hat was an almost new beaver which a friend in New York City had given Lincoln. For most of the time the Forrys have had it, it has been kept in a vault in the First National Bank and brought out only on historic occasions. It establishes one intimate fact about Lincoln, seldom if ever mentioned by biographers. He wore size seven.



Mr. Lincoln Had a Hat

By Ruth Jaeger Buntain

Mr. Lincoln had a hat, but it wasn't the kind your father wears, or your grandfather or the postman or the milkman or the man down the street.

Lincoln's hat was a tall black silk hat. The crown of it was so tall that it looked like a piece of stovepipe. So people called it a stovepipe hat.

Most men of Lincoln's time used their stovepipes for nothing more than weather breaks or to show that they were men of importance. But not Mr. Lincoln. He used his hat as a catchall and a carryall. It was his storehouse and secret hiding place. Into it he put his hand-

kerchief, bank book, letters, newspaper clippings, notes for speeches, business papers, and other things.

A friend who had known Lincoln many years said, "I know why Abe's ears stick out so far from his head. It's because of his hat. He always puts so many things into it that it's a heavy weight on his ears. It made them bulge out and now they've grown that way." Sometimes Lincoln's hat was half-filled with the things he put into it.

Mischievous boys of Lincoln's time liked stovepipe hats. They could have fun with them, and they had fun with Lincoln's hat. One evening they tied a string across the street. They put it high up so that everyone could pass under it but tall Mr. Lincoln and his foot-high hat.

Lincoln came walking down the street, not thinking about boys or strings. He walked into the string, and off came his hat. Out tumbled the many things he carried in it. As he stooped down to pick them up, the boys ran out from their hiding place and jumped on him. He didn't mind the trick they had played. He laughed and had fun with them.

Sometimes Mr. Lincoln was a forgetful person. Sometimes he left his hat on when he should have

taken it off. Such a thing happened on one of the most important days of his life. It was the day that he was inaugurated as President of the United States for the second time.

Mr. Lincoln went to his office at the Capitol very early that morning. There was much work he wanted to do before it was time for him to be inaugurated. He was thinking so much about the work that he forgot to take off his hat when he reached the office. All morning long he sat at his desk with his stovepipe hat on.

Messenger boys came and went, but not one of them told Lincoln about his hat.

"After all," they said, "should messengers tell a President to take off his hat?"

Two senators were in the office with Lincoln but neither of them would mention the hat.

"After all," they thought, "should senators tell a President to take off his hat?"

At noontime some of Lincoln's friends came to the office to tell him it was time for the ceremony. Mr. Lincoln went to the place where he kept his hat. Only it wasn't there. It was on his head. He and his friends laughed because he had been so absentminded.

