

Quick Step News

Volume 7, Issue 6

Jan 2005

Happy New Year

January Speaker

Joseph DiPaolo

**A Hot Bed of Secession:
New Hope and the Civil War**

Monday, January 10, 2005

HSMC 7:30 PM

**Joe's Book will be available
for 10 dollars.**

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Painter of Lincoln Portrait Dies of Paralysis after Long Illness.

The Indianapolis Star
October 4, 1913

Charles W. Nickum, 69 years old, who, without knowing the identity of his model, painted what is said to be the only life portrait of Abraham Lincoln in existence, died of paralysis about 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon at his home, 525 North Highland avenue. A curious coincidence in connection with the painting is the fact that Mr. Nickum was born on Lincoln's birthday anniversary, Feb. 12, 1844.

For twenty-five years Mr. Nickum was a eaterer to Indianapolis society folk, and for twenty-two years he had maintained a store on Massachusetts avenue. He began this work as a delivery wagon driver and in that humble capacity formed the acquaintance of hundreds of persons in Indianapolis. Since his illness began nearly six years ago he had been failing gradually, but was not confined to his home until about three weeks ago. Since then many friends and business acquaintances had called to see him.

SURVIVED BY WIDOW

Mr. Nickum is survived by his widow, one sister, Mrs. Mary Norris of Dayton, O., and two brothers. George and Daniel Nickum, Los Angeles, Cal. Funeral arrangements have not been completed.

It was only a fancy that causes Mr. Nickum, more than fifty years ago, to paint the portrait of Abraham Lincoln. The latter, with a Cincinnati lawyer, entered a photographic gallery in Dayton, O., where Mr. Nickum was employed, and posed for some pictures. Mr. Nickum did not know the identity of his distinguished visitor, but the homely face appealed to him in a striking manner and he sketched the outline of Lincoln's face on a piece of pasteboard.

PORTRAIT STORED AWAY

Later the painting was finished in oil and stored away with other sketches by the young artist in the studio. Some time later Mr. Nickum met the Cincinnati lawyer on the street and the latter asked him if he had drawn a picture of the visitor to the studio. Mr. Nickum replied in the affirmative and the lawyer asked to see the picture. "That man", said the lawyer, "was Abraham Lincoln, now

President of the United States.”

The picture was found and since then cherished by its owner. It is such a good likeness of the martyred President that Mr. Nickum was offered a high price for it, but he refused to consider a sale. The portrait has been shown in the John Herron Art Institute, and is strikingly similar to the famous painting of Lincoln that hangs in the Cooper Institute, New York.

Lincoln at Dayton, Ohio

This article is a portion of what appeared in the *Lincoln Herald*, The Commemorative Issue 1897 - 1997 Spring 1997

“The Political excitement was running high in the fall of 1859, and it was this occasion which allowed the opportunity for Lincoln to jot down a few lines between handshakes and socializing. If Stephen Douglas had not first campaigned in Ohio about 8 days ahead of his rival, Lincoln probably would not have felt compelled to make his follow-up campaign in Ohio. Douglas arrived by train on Sept. 8, and was met by his fellow Democrat, Daytonian Congressman, Clement L. Vallandigham. Since from early newspapers and witnesses of the both Douglas and Lincoln were considered "Favorite Sons" in their respective parties, they were soon to be vying for presidential nominations in 1860. Dayton received Douglas amid salutations from admiring crowds at the court house but the Senator had to excuse himself from speaking since he had a cold and was too hoarse to talk. He was the honored guest of Dr. Edwin Smith at his home on west Third Street. The old home is still standing in Dayton and is the Bicycle Club today. On September 17, shortly before noon, Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln arrived at Dayton's Union station from Columbus, and proceeded to the Phillips House in the center of town, near the courthouse. A boarder there, Dan Medler, remembered the day in his diary:
The Hon. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, who was defeated for the United States Senate last fall by S.A. Douglas arrived at the Phillips house today and in the company of Hon. Robert C. Schenck of this place, Hon. John A. Gurley of Cincinnati, and our would be Senator F.P. Cuppy, occupied a table all by themselves, enjoying their wine and their jokes extensively. After lunch other dignitaries met at the hostelry, and Dayton lawyer, Samuel Craighead, proceeded to show the distinguished visitor around the town. A visit to Cridland's Photographic Gallery a few doors to the east was scheduled, and Mr. Lincoln posed for his picture. Later on, at about ten minutes to two o'clock Lincoln held forth for two hours. After his stirring address Lincoln rejoined his wife at their presidential suite at the hotel. The party then left Dayton for Cincinnati on the 4 o'clock train.

DOES THE WORK SURVIVE?

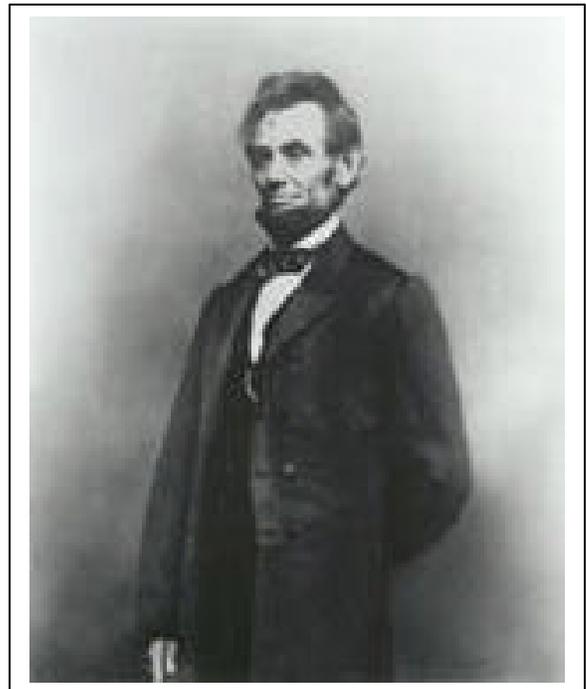
No record of Charles W. Nickum could be found searching the Internet. Linda Martin-Schass of the Philadelphia Museum of Art could locate no information on the artist or

the work.

Nickum was the son of Daniel and Catherine Nickum of Dayton, Ohio. The 1860 census records list Charles' occupation as a clerk. At the time of Lincoln's visit to Dayton Charles would have been 15 or 16 years old. By 1900 Nickum resided in Indianapolis and was employed in his life's work as a baker. He resided with his wife Mary and an adopted daughter Mary E. who was age 14 at the time of the census.

For more than a century, the Indianapolis Museum of Art has contributed to the exceptional quality of life in Indianapolis and central Indiana. The IMA traces its beginnings to the founding of the Art Association of Indianapolis in 1893. Two years later, John Herron, a native of England who settled in Indianapolis (and who had never in life expressed an interest in visual art), left the Art Association \$250,000 to establish a permanent gallery and art school in his name. The John Herron Art Institute and Herron School of Art opened to the public in 1906 at a site located at the corner of 16th Street and Pennsylvania Ave. In 1966, the museum and school split when the museum was given acreage for building a larger museum. The newly named Indianapolis Museum of Art opened in its present location on 38th Street in 1970. In 1990, the IMA completed a major renovation and expansion project, doubling the size of its exhibition space. The IMA is now the nation's seventh-largest general art museum.

The Herron Art Institute was not familiar with the artist and had no readily available information on him. The Indianapolis Museum of Art was able to provide a similar biography but no additional information.



January 8, 1864 in Washington, DC
Matthew Brady

From Ellwood Roberts' Biographical Annals, 1904:
Montgomery Co, PA Vol I - Part 7: pp. 131.

LINCOLN AND LIBERTY.

David Newport

Lines on hearing that California had voted for Lincoln in 1864.

From where the placid Delaware winds onward in its course,
To where Niagara's waters flow with their resistless force:
From where New England's stalwart sons amidst the woods of Maine,
The axe rings forth the anthem, rings forth glad refrain!

The miner in the land of Penn, the boatman at the oar,
The farmer in the teeming West, among his garnered store,
The sailor on the ocean, amidst the surging sea,
All have caught the glad acclaim,--LINCOLN and Liberty!

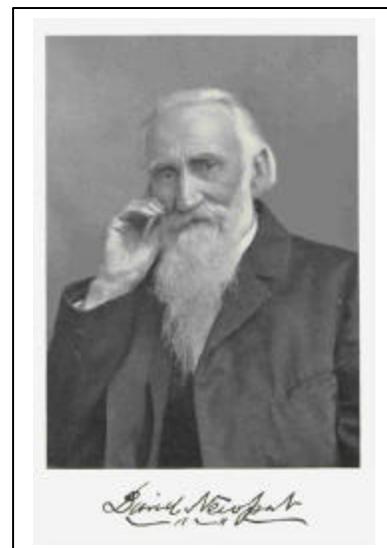
And where Columbia's patriot sons encamp at Richmond's gate
Their every shot and every shell proclaim the voice of fate!
The slave's dull ear has caught the note,--the anthem of the free,
As Dahlgren's voice pronounces clear,--LINCOLN and Liberty!

'Twas thus along our country's shore, from heart to heart it flew;
The lightning's wing conveyed the news that gladdened not a few--
All o'er the land, from lake to gulf, responsive thrilled each breast,--
From North to South, from sea to sea, and in the fair young West--

And o'er Pacific's gentle wave, far toward the setting sun,--
From where the sands with gold are mixed, and silvery waters run;
From where Nevada rears his head, and Winter's chaplet crowns;
Where Nature, both in mount and tree, in giant growth abounds,--

There, in that land where Broderick lived, there where he fought and fell,
In Freedom's ranks his friends have ranged, and Freedom's cohorts swell!
The tide from out the Golden Gate is ebbing toward the sea;
Amidst the shrouds the sailor sings,--LINCOLN and Liberty.

David Newport was not seventeen years old when he went to the country to learn the practical duties of a farmer. He attended a Friends' school in Philadelphia, and later was sent to the Friends' school at Alexandria, Virginia. Early in life he became deeply interested in moral questions and in politics, especially in the slavery question, then assuming great prominence owing to the attitude of southern slaveholders in forcing it upon the country. Being born a Friend he inherited hatred of oppression in every form, and was an enthusiastic advocate of freedom. He was one of seven voters of Moreland township who in 1848 cast their ballots for Martin VanBuren, the Free-Soil nominee for president. He acquired also a literary taste, and contributed articles to the Norristown papers, the "Herald," "Free Press" and "Republican." After the war began and the new system of internal revenue was framed by Congress, President Lincoln appointed him collector for the congressional district composed of the counties of Montgomery and Lehigh, with his office in the court house at Norristown. He chose Samuel Homer and Howard M. Jenkins as his deputies, and during the four years he held the position, from 1862 to 1866, about two and a half millions of dollars passed through his hands in the shape of direct tax. He fulfilled all his duties with fidelity and strict integrity, attending carefully to business, and rendering a complete account of the transactions which was never questioned by the authorities at Washington. David Newport has also achieved considerable fame as an author. He published a volume of poems, and a volume entitled "Indices, Historical and Rational." Within a few years he has published another volume, "Eudemon, Spiritual and Rational: the Apology of a Preacher for Preaching." His book of poems is called "The Pleasures of Home." The volume contains a poem, Lincoln and Liberty which attracted wide attention at the time it was published, during the great national crisis of 1864.



On September 26, 1901, after work had been completed on a new tomb for Abraham Lincoln, all was pronounced as ready. Because of the permanency of this burial, a discussion arose among those present as to whether the coffin should be opened. Some people argued that the remains should be identified due to rumors around the country that Mr. Lincoln was not the body in the box. Other people thought opening the casket would be a violation of privacy. In the end, it was decided to open the coffin.

Two plumbers, Leon P. Hopkins and his nephew, Charles L. Willey, chiseled an oblong piece out of the top of the lead-lined coffin. The piece these two men cut out was just over Lincoln's head and shoulders. When the casket was opened, a harsh, choking smell arose. 23 people slowly walked forward and peered down. Mr. Lincoln's features were totally recognizable. His face had a melancholy expression, but his black chin whiskers hadn't changed at all. The wart on his cheek and the coarse black hair were obvious characteristics of Lincoln's. The biggest change was that the eyebrows had vanished. The president was wearing the same suit he wore at his second inauguration, but it was covered with yellow mold. All 23 people were unanimous in their agreement that the remains were indeed those of Abraham Lincoln.

Nothing new on The Union League and the Hancock portrait. Keep Watching.



Thomas Nast Illustration

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