



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Latschar under fire by Feds

BY SCOT ANDREW PITZER,
Gettysburg Times,
February 23, 2009

The Inspector General's Office is investigating Gettysburg National Military Park Superintendent John Latschar in what the veteran battlefield boss describes as "an inquiry into everything that my critics allege that I've done wrong over the past 15 years."

In an interview with the Gettysburg Times Friday afternoon, Latschar was confident that the investigation would result in a "complete exoneration of all these false charges that have leaked out."

"I don't think it's any surprise to you or anyone else around here that people are trying to get me fired," Latschar said. "They've written to the Park Service, congressmen, the Department of the Interior, everyone. All of those letters have piled up, so eventually, someone is going to look into it."

"I believe that they'll find there's nothing to the allegations, and it will close this door forever," Latschar concluded.

The Inspector General's Office is a branch of the Department of the Interior. Investigators there declined to comment Friday.

"It was a lengthy interview. They asked about everything," said Latschar, adding that investigators returned a second time. "They had in their arsenal every single slander that has ever been printed in the newspaper or posted on a blog. They swept up the crumbs over my 15 years here."

"Being a public figure, like any other public figure out there," Latschar said, "people that are opposed at what we do think that the best way they can

get back at me is to tarnish my name."

A cover story in The National Journal written by Edward Pound reported that the IG is looking into whether Latschar misused \$8,700 in park funds to build a fence on four acres of park land, adjacent to his home. Latschar's wife, Terry, uses the pasture to exercise her horses under a park permit. The park's nonprofit partner at the time, Eastern National, paid for the fence as part of what Latschar said was an annual monetary contribution.

"If you write the Interior Department a letter that says John Latschar is misusing funds, they're eventually obliged to see if there's anything to the allegations," Latschar said. According to Latschar, the inquiry stems from his retirement in October 2008, when he planned to transfer to the Gettysburg Foundation and replace President Robert C. Wilburn. Federal ethics officials later advised against the move, so Latschar isn't going anywhere.

"They (the Inspector General) told me that they came here because it was an exit interview," said Latschar. "They were closing the file." Investigators questioned Latschar about what he calls "street rumors." At one time, his wife's nephew David Deal worked at the park's book store, operated by Eastern National. Deal and at least two other employees, according to Latschar, "were caught with their hands in the till" stealing money. They were successfully prosecuted, Latschar said.

Cheryl Cline was previously the head of the reservation office at Eastern National. She later took a similar job with the Gettysburg Foundation when Eastern violated its contract with the park in 2006.

Critics allege that she downloaded proprietary and credit card data from Eastern's files — including reservation lists and customer information — and gave it to the foundation. Eastern threatened legal action to keep the data, Latschar said, but nothing transpired. "Eastern tried to sue Cheryl for giving this so-called proprietary information to the foundation, when in essence, it was the park's information all along, and we gave it to the foundation," said Latschar.



John Latschar

NPS Photo

A spokesperson at the Inspector General's office said Friday that questions about the investigation are being handled by the National Park Service Public Affairs Office in Washington, D.C.

"My understanding is that the Inspector General is doing a review about John Latschar taking the job at the Gettysburg Foundation," said David Barna, NPS Chief of Public Affairs. "He decided to stay, so I don't know what they're looking at now." Mainly, according to Latschar, investigators probed the park's partnership with the Gettysburg Foundation, and fundraising for the \$103 million Visitor Center. The inquiry is unrelated to an ongoing probe by the Government Accountability Office, which is looking into park fund raising.



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Among other issues, Latschar said that the Inspector General's office talked to him about the park's relationship with developer Robert Kinsley, who is also chairman of the Gettysburg Foundation Board of Directors. According to The National Journal, Kinsley's construction firm and another company owned by his son were paid \$8.5 million for their work on the visitor center project. The park's controversial relationship with its former service partner, Eastern National, is also being probed.

Georgia Civil War museum gets Union letters describing Baltimore Riot

By Mark Davis, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, February 09, 2009
Imagine John Swett's terror.

The lines formed, and marched. The buildings of Baltimore loomed on either side. It must have felt like walking into a forest where wild things waited.

The attack started with catcalls and insults. Then bottles and sticks. Then gunfire. Someone threw a brick and struck Pvt. Swett on the temple.

Swett, of the 6th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, suddenly was a casualty of a young conflict, the Civil War.

In May 1861, he recalled the attack in a long, rambling letter to his sister, Maria. He paid little attention to punctuation — Swett, apparently, had never heard of a period or comma — but no matter.

He caught the tension of what happened on April 19, 1861, as Union troops entered a city with Confederate sympathies — "a pretty close place to be [with] stones and pistol shots flying all around you," he wrote.

The letter, faded ink on rag paper, is in safekeeping at the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in Kennesaw. The museum acquired that letter, plus two others Swett wrote, late last year. It also got a letter written by a Union soldier from Wisconsin, who recalled Mississippi's blood and fear.

The letters are part of a growing collection of correspondence the museum has from soldiers on both sides of the 1861-65 conflict.

They aren't priceless. The war generated millions of communications, ranging from the gripes of privates to the musings of generals.

Still, the letters are invaluable to museum curator Mike Bearrow.

"These [letters] are like pieces of gold," said Bearrow. "You've got to mine them to find the gold."

Gold sometimes lands on your lap, as it did with the Swett letters.

The Swett letters came from Caryl Kelley of Lakeland, Fla. Visiting the museum last year, she saw a drawing of Union troops ringed by an angry mob. It triggered a memory: Her great-great-uncle had written about an assault of Union troops in Baltimore.

She mentioned her letters to a museum volunteer, who didn't hesitate to pick up the phone. Moments later, Bearrow greeted her, a smile on his face, a question on his lips: Would she like to donate them?

Kelley, who kept the letters in a closet, said yes. "[Bearrow] was so genuine," she said.

Bearrow is genuinely tickled with the latest acquisitions. When he read them, said Bearrow, "My hair stood on end."

The letters are in the archives room, a sunny place with a vague look of disarray. An O-gauge train rests atop

a credenza whose files contain such documents as "Marietta & North Georgia Railroad Project," and "The Southern Railway: Further Recollections." Aged railroad calendars dot the walls.

Bearrow is especially happy to have letters from Union soldiers — the museum, he said, is not in the business of favoring one side of the war over another. Instead, it stresses the importance of transportation in how the war played out.

Pamplin Historical Park Announces Spring Operating Hours

CWi, February 18, 2009

Petersburg, VA - Pamplin Historical Park and the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier announces that effective March 2, 2009, the Park will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. The Park will continue to be open by reservation only on weekends.

"We are extremely pleased to reestablish regular operating hours this spring," said Executive Director, A. Wilson Greene. "With the warmer weather our attendance always perks up and we look forward to welcoming everyone from students to visitors from around the region and the country."

Pamplin Historical Park has been open by reservation only since January 2 when the faltering economy forced the Park's Foundation to reduce funding, causing staff layoffs. During the winter the Park has trained nearly three dozen new volunteers, rehired some of its former employees, and cross-trained the permanent staff to perform a variety of duties. "Our generous members have been instrumental in helping us get back on our feet," said Greene. "Many of the



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Park's friends contributed significantly to our general operating fund, which has allowed us to begin to rebuild our professional staff."

Pamplin Historical Park has operated highly regarded school field trips during the spring. According to Greene, some 32,000 students have reservations to visit the Park between March and early June. Revenues from these programs will allow the Park to serve walk-in visitors as well. Anyone can make a reservation to visit the Park on weekends throughout the spring. A basic fee of \$100 allows up to ten people to tour the Park on Saturdays and Sundays. Reservations must be made 48 hours in advance. "Once a group has made a weekend reservation, we will open the Park that day for general visitation," explained Greene. Regular Park admission is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.

Felony charges refiled in re-enactor shooting

D.A. said earlier dismissal was mistake

By KATHARINE HARMON, Hanover Evening Sun, February 25, 2009
The aggravated assault charges previously dropped against the Civil War re-enactor who allegedly shot another re-enactor in the foot in August were refiled last month.

Paul J. Sproesser, 44, of Locust Street in Frederick, Md., was originally charged with two felony counts of aggravated assault as well as two counts of reckless endangerment and one count of simple assault for shooting the 17-year-old re-enactor.

But the aggravated assault charges were dropped at a Nov. 25 preliminary hearing before Magisterial District Judge Thomas A. Carr after Sproesser's attorney, Steve Rice, argued that the shooting was

accidental and that the aggravated assault charges were extreme.

"We thought, think and continue to maintain it was reckless conduct," said Adams County Assistant District Attorney Brian Sinnett who refiled the charges against Sproesser on Jan. 28.

Sinnett said he thought the evidence against Sproesser was sufficient in the first hearing, but that Carr obviously disagreed.

Because Carr dismissed the charges in the first hearing, the newly filed charges will be heard before Magisterial District Judge John C. Zepp III. The preliminary hearing had been scheduled for Thursday morning, but was continued until March 2.

On Aug. 3, Sproesser shot a .69-caliber Springfield black powder rifle point-blank at a piece of canvas over the teen's foot, court documents said.

The rifle was filled only with shot resulted in powder burns to two of the teen's toes and the partial amputation of one, court documents said.

Both re-enactors had just completed a re-enactment at the American Civil War Museum at 297 Steinwehr Ave. The 17-year-old lay on the ground, covered by a piece of canvas tarp, when Sproesser walked past, pointed his rifle and fired.

The gunpowder went through the canvas, through the victim's leather boot and socks and into his right foot. In an interview with police, Sproesser said he had walked up to the tarp, pointed the rifle, which he had loaded, at the canvas and fired. He also said he knew the boy was under the tarp, court documents said.

His previous charges remain in Adams County Court where he was scheduled to enter a plea on Feb. 17. The case was put on hold until the

May term, at which time Sinnett said he believed the new charges will catch up.

Sproesser was released on his own recognizance from Adams County prison.

Author, Historian

Gregory A. Coco dies at 62

Gettysburg Times, February 20, 2009
Gregory Ashton Coco, 62, of Gettysburg, died on Wednesday, February 11, 2009 at home in the care of his loving family. He was born on May 4, 1946 in Marksville, Louisiana, to Merlin J. and Lucy Parrish Coco. His father preceded him in death. In his words, he was "the happy husband of Cindy L. Small for 26 years. He was the fortunate father of daughter, Keri E. Coco. He loved them both with all his heart." Keri Coco is married to Cail MacLean. Greg graduated from the Allen Academy in Bryan, Texas in 1964. He attended the Citadel in Charleston, S.C. He graduated from the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette, La., in 1972 with a degree in American History (1850-1870).

In his professional career, he worked as a Park Guide for the Department of Interior, National Park Service, Gettysburg National Military Park; and as a Seasonal Park Ranger in the Interpretation Division at GNMP, where he is known for his development of the more extensive 2- to 3-hour battle walks across the battlefield. He also was an NPS Licensed Battlefield Guide for several years. He served in law enforcement as a State Trooper with the Louisiana State Police and as a Patrolman First Class with the Lafayette City Police in Lafayette, La.



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Greg authored 16 books and 12 scholarly articles on topics related to the American Civil War and the Battle of Gettysburg. He received national recognition for two of the above books, "A Strange and Blighted Land. Gettysburg: The Aftermath of a Battle," was voted #12 in the Top 50 Civil War Books ever written, while another received an award from Eastern National Parks and Monuments Association.

He was an honorably discharged U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War. He served in the 25th Infantry Division as a prisoner of war military interrogator and infantry platoon radio operator. He received the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Medal and Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

In addition to his wife and daughter, Gregory is survived by his sister, Linda Stowe of Mansura, La., and several nieces and nephews.

Student finds rare Lincoln fingerprint

Cwi, February 13, 2009

A student at Miami University has discovered what experts say is a fingerprint belonging to Abraham Lincoln from nearly 150 years ago.

Lydia Smith, a first-year psychology major from Granville, Ohio, was transcribing a letter written by Lincoln on Oct. 5, 1863, for a class project when she noticed a smudge that she suspected could be Lincoln's thumbprint.

The Papers of Abraham Lincoln, a project of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, reviewed and confirmed the print, making it the second rare fingerprint of the 16th president housed at Miami's libraries.

The collection at Miami includes the first authenticated fingerprint of

Lincoln with a signature known to historians since it was first verified in 1957. Lydia Smith's discovery of the second fingerprint has historians taking notice.

"Miami's collection includes the first certified document that provides a critical comparison for us," said John A. Lupton, associate director of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln project. "I have seen a number of fingerprints that I assumed to be Lincoln's, but never more than one in one repository. The fact that Miami has two makes it fascinating."

The 1863 letter was among hundreds of miscellaneous letters stored in Miami's Walter Havighurst Special Collections section of King Library and uncovered this fall. With this find, the university now owns four Lincoln letters, all of which are part of a larger collection of Lincoln-related items donated to Miami in 1967 by alumnus William A. Hammond ('14) who had spent 30 years collecting Lincoln-related items.



Lydia Smith holds the letter written by Abraham Lincoln

Smith is one of 25 students at Miami involved in the "Whispers in the Words" project, a collaborative effort led by Thomas Kopp, a professor in the department of teacher education and Betsy Butler, Special Collections librarian. The project is designed to foster learner appreciation and intellectual curiosity and scholarship through the transcription and recreation of historic letters.

Both Lincoln and Miami University are celebrating their 200th birthdays this month. Miami, founded in 1809, celebrates its charter day on Feb. 17. It is the 10th oldest public university in the nation.

The transcription project was funded by a grant from the School of Education, Health and Society.

Shore artist's sculpture a tribute to Tubman

Salisbury man works to have piece installed at Dorchester County park
By Candice Evans, Delmarva Now,
February 9, 2009

SALISBURY -- In a seventh grade social studies class at Bennett Junior High, Richard Norman became fascinated by the Eastern Shore woman who led runaway slaves to freedom through the Underground Railroad.

Araminta Ross, better known as Harriet Tubman, was a leader of the abolitionist movement, as well as a nurse and spy for Union forces in the South.

"I was overcome with pride to know that such a person came from my home," said the 43-year-old Salisbury resident. "I wanted to learn more about her."

Norman's family visited the place of Tubman's birth, Bucktown, which has an historical marker erected by the Maryland Civil War Centennial Commission in her honor.



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"I couldn't help but feel that the words on the marker were too brief to do justice to her life," he said. For the last three years, Norman

relied on photographs and my imagination -- the framework of the sculpture -- for the body. "I did everything by hand without an assistant or model," he said. "I just

part of the man whose life we celebrate tonight.

As commemorations take place across this country on the bicentennial of our 16th President's birth, there will be reflections on all he was and all he did for this nation that he saved. But while there are any number of moments that reveal the exceptional nature of this singular figure, there is one in particular I'd like to share with you.



creating a life-size sculpture of Tubman out of modeling clay. This month, he completed the project and joined forces with the newly formed local organization "Friends of Harriet" to raise funds for his creation so it can be installed at the new Harriet Tubman National Park in Bucktown.

"The sculpture needs to be cast in bronze," said Norman, a graphic artist and screen printer for N S Enterprises Inc. in Berlin.

Norman is a self-taught artist who began his art career "as soon as I could hold a crayon," he said.

His fascination with Tubman's life inspired him to set a goal of one day creating a piece of art in her honor.

"I was convinced that art could be the means to communicate not only the virtues of this woman I had come to admire, but the inspiration I felt as I considered her life," Norman said.

Distracted by other priorities in his life, Norman pushed the project back until his mother, Doris Norman, died of breast cancer three years ago in April.

"I realized it was time to honor that promise I made several years ago," he said. "My mother always thought that I could do anything."

Norman said he created Tubman's head first with the idea of donating the bust to a local museum. But after some encouragement from his neighbors, he began building the

armature -- the framework of the sculpture -- for the body.

relied on photographs and my imagination." Norman hopes his reflection of Tubman, which he plans to dedicate to his mother, brings "inspiration, comfort and consolation" to observers. He is currently working on a second sculpture of a Tubman collection, which would serve as markers along the Underground Railroad.

"Wherever it may rest, I want it to serve as a lasting tribute to the woman herself," he said.

Text of Obama Speech at Re-dedication of Ford's Theater

CWi, February 13, 2009

Michelle and I are so pleased to be here to renew and rededicate this hallowed space. We know that Ford's Theatre will remain a place where Lincoln's legacy thrives, where his love of the humanities and belief in the power of education have a home, and where his generosity of spirit are reflected in all the work that takes place. It has been a fitting tribute to Abraham Lincoln that we've seen and heard from some of our most celebrated icons of stage and screen. Because Lincoln himself was a great admirer of the arts. It is said he could even quote portions of Hamlet and Macbeth by heart. And so, I somehow think this event captured an essential

Not far from here stands our nation's capitol, a landmark familiar to us all but one that looked very different in Lincoln's time. For it remained unfinished until the end of the war. The laborers who built the dome came to work wondering whether each day would be their last; whether the metal they were using for its frame would be requisitioned for the war and melted down into bullets. But each day went by without any orders to halt construction - so they kept on working and kept on building.

When President Lincoln was finally told of all the metal being used there, his response was short and clear: that is as it should be. The American people needed to be reminded, he believed, that even in a time of war, the work would go on; that even when the nation itself was in doubt, its future was being secured; and that on that distant day, when the guns fell silent, a national capitol would stand, with a statue of freedom at its peak, as a symbol of unity in a land still mending its divisions.

It is this sense of unity that is so much a part of Lincoln's legacy. For despite all that divided us - north and south, black and white - he had an unyielding belief that we were, at heart, one nation, and one people. And because of Abraham Lincoln, and all who've carried on his work in the generations since, that is what we



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remain today. Thank you, and good night.

Gettysburg officials balk at size of proposed Lincoln statue

McClatchy Tribune, March 1, 2009
Gettysburg - Even a life-size statue of Abraham Lincoln would tower over most folks. He was, after all, 6 feet 4 inches tall.

But if a Utah-based sculptor gets his way, Gettysburg children might have a tough time seeing more than Lincoln's shoelaces.

Originally proposed as a 9-foot-tall bronze statue of the president who famously delivered the Gettysburg Address, the monument could now reach as high as 17 feet into the sky. Sculptor Stanley Watts visited Gettysburg recently to scope out locations for the artwork, which he plans to give to the borough this year through an anonymous donor. Officials have all but settled on Alumni Park as a location. The Baltimore Street facility is owned by the Gettysburg Area School District, which offered the space after a vote of its school board in December. At a recent meeting, borough officials said they learned of the statue's change in size during Watts' recent visit. Watts plans to sculpt a 12-foot statue of Lincoln on a 5-foot pedestal. And that development has more than a few officials concerned. Borough Manager John Lawver put it this way: "A 12-foot statue in Alumni Park is bigger than (the school district's) gazebo."

Councilman Michael Birkner, expressed similar concerns. "It's big," Birkner said. "You're talking

about a child not even getting up to Lincoln's feet."

Public gets look at model for iconic Lincoln statue

Memorial's creation shown in exhibit
By James R. Carroll, Louisville (KY)
Courier-Journal

WASHINGTON -- It is instantly recognizable, one of the best-known sculptures on the planet.

At once both magisterial and intimate, inspiring and very human, Daniel Chester French's rendering of Abraham Lincoln is the 16th president.

And that's just the "six-footer," as French called his plaster sculpture. Most people know the sculpture three times its size -- the centerpiece of the Abraham Lincoln Memorial in Washington.

The smaller version was unveiled to the public last month in the National Gallery of Art's West Building, one of many exhibits commemorating Lincoln's 200th birthday. The future president was born in Kentucky in what today is LaRue County on Feb. 12, 1809.

"Designing the Lincoln Memorial: Daniel Chester French and Henry Bacon" will run for a year at the gallery.

The French plaster sculpture is fragile, and this marks only the second time in more than three decades that it has left the sculptor's summer home, Chesterwood, in Stockbridge, Mass.

Across from the sculpture is a wooden model of the Lincoln Memorial, made by its designer, architect Henry Bacon. The model is detailed on the outside but mostly

blank in the interior. And the famous statue is not in the model's central space.

Bacon and French had collaborated on projects for 25 years by the time they took on the Lincoln Memorial. Bacon recommended French as the sculptor, and the Lincoln Memorial Commission took his advice.

Early on, French and Bacon settled on a seated Lincoln. French started in clay and worked up to larger plaster models, adjusting Lincoln's pose along the way.

The president is seated in a classical Roman chair with bundled rods called fasces, a symbol of unity. Lincoln's hands, the left closed, the right open, were modeled on French's.

French's creation in plaster, finished and signed in the fall of 1916, was replicated in 28 blocks of marble for the memorial, which was dedicated in 1922.

"French said he wanted this piece to have the calm of the Greeks but the intensity that portrayed the subject," said Donna Hassler, director of Chesterwood, which is a National Trust for Historic Preservation site.

Yet the plaster version is a bit different, even taking into account the visible seams where the sculpture comes apart for transport.

Especially along the sides of Lincoln's chair, the rake-like marks of French's sculpting tools are visible. In the marble version, carved by the firm of Piccirilli Brothers of New York, the statue's surface is smooth.

Indeed, the plaster medium and the smaller scale of the Lincoln sculpture "offers a really informative opportunity to see the sculptor's eye and mind at work ... (a) very close-up look at a masterpiece in the making," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust.



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"Looking at this plaster and the incredible tactility and immediacy of it is enormously exciting as a visual experience," said Earl A. Powell III, director of the National Gallery of Art. Near the French statue in a separate gallery is a Lincoln-related sculpture by Augustus Saint-Gaudens.

His restored plaster model of the Memorial to Robert Gould Shaw and the Massachusetts Fifty-Fourth Regiment is on public view for the first time in two years, following a renovation of the National Gallery of Art's American galleries.

Shortly after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans were recruited for the Union Army. The 54th Regiment was the first black unit and was involved in an attack on the Confederacy's Fort Wagner in South Carolina in July 1863 (the subject of the film "Glory"). Casualties claimed nearly half of the 600 men who attacked, including Shaw, the white colonel commanding them, but word of the soldiers' bravery sparked an increase in enlistments by African Americans. By the end of the Civil War, 175,000 blacks were in uniform -- about 10 percent of the Union forces.

The hero history has forgot

Joe Blackstock, Contra Costa Times (CA), February 9, 2009

There are no monuments or statues honoring George Foster Robinson, and you'll rarely find him in even the most detailed history book.

But on one dark day in the nation's history, he was an American hero.

Robinson, who spent his last years in Pomona, was thrust into the limelight on the night of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, whose birthday was 200 years ago on Thursday.

Robinson wasn't at Ford's Theater on the night of April 14, 1865, when John

Wilkes Booth shot Lincoln. A few blocks away, he fought off another assassin trying to kill Secretary of State William H. Seward as part of a conspiracy to bring the government to its knees.

A 32-year-old Union sergeant, Robinson was recovering from wounds when he was temporarily assigned as an attendant to Seward. The secretary was bedridden because of injuries received when his carriage overturned 10 days before.

Lewis Payne, a Booth co-conspirator, burst into Seward's home about 10 p.m. Robinson struggled with Payne before being struck in the head with the handle of his large knife.

Stunned and bleeding, Robinson rose up and jumped on the assassin who was stabbing Seward. After a struggle, in which Robinson was cut in the back, Payne escaped. Robinson and Seward's daughter then managed to stem the flow of blood from the secretary's wounds.

Payne, who was captured shortly after the attack, was part of a conspiracy in those days after the end of the Civil War to kill not only Lincoln and Seward but also Vice President Andrew Johnson and Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Attacks on the latter two did not go forward.

Payne - who was also known as Lewis Powell - was a Confederate soldier who had been captured at Gettysburg, but later escaped and was recruited into the circle of Southerners planning the assault on Washington leaders.

Payne and other accused conspirators were tried - Robinson testified at the trial - and on July 7 were hanged.

Seward and Robinson recovered from the wounds inflicted in the attack.

For those few moments on April 14, the spotlight was turned on the previously undistinguished Robinson. Born in tiny Hartford, Maine, he had been educated at two colleges before returning to work in his father's farming and lumber interests near Island Falls in northern Maine.

Midway through the Civil War, Robinson enlisted in Co. B of the 8th Maine Volunteer Infantry.

On May 20, 1864, he was wounded in the knee at the Battle of Petersburg near Richmond, Va., and spent much of the next year in Washington-area hospitals before being assigned as Seward's aide.

His heroics did not go unrewarded. He became a clerk in the War Department, until the Maine Legislature petitioned Congress asking their favorite son be honored in a more appropriate way.



George Foster Robinson

In 1871, Robinson was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal, the same national award given notables from



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Thomas Edison to Rosa Parks to Tony Blair.

In addition to awarding him the specially crafted \$2,000 gold medal, the House of Representatives voted to give Robinson \$5,000 in cash, "commemorative of (his) heroic conduct."

As a bonus, he was promoted to major and appointed paymaster of the Army. While serving in that capacity Robinson first visited Southern California.

In 1892, he bought 20 acres of orange trees on the east side of today's Towne Avenue in Pomona, a ranch his son Edmund operated.

In 1896, Robinson retired from the military and moved with his wife Aurora to a Pomona house at 245 E. Pasadena St.

The old soldier died at home of pneumonia at 75 on Aug. 16, 1907. He and Aurora, who died in 1922, are buried at Arlington National Cemetery just a few yards from the burial place of another assassinated president, John F. Kennedy.

In 1965, on the centennial of the attacks on Lincoln and Seward, Congress named Mount Sergeant Robinson, a 10,415-foot peak about 90 miles northeast of Anchorage, Alaska. The selection of a mountain there was in part because Seward, two years after Robinson saved his life, brokered the purchase of Alaska from Russia.

Also in 1965, the Maine Civil War Centennial Commission renamed May Mountain near Island Falls as Robinson Mountain.

But despite these honors, Robinson remains almost anonymous as neither his birthplace in Maine nor his final hometown of Pomona have any marker or remembrance of his heroic actions.

For George Foster Robinson - a national hero with a gold medal and his name on two mountains - fame has been very much fleeting.