



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

### Lincoln photo at Gettysburg believed found

A history buff magnified a vintage stereoview to see a tall man in a stovepipe hat saluting troops.

By Amy Worden, Philadelphia Inquirer, November 18, 2007

GETTYSBURG, Pa. - From a distance it looks like a nondescript Civil War-era photograph: Union soldiers and townspeople crowd around the grand memorial arch that marks the entrance to Soldiers' Cemetery.

But zoom in closer, really close, and a startling image takes shape at the center of the crowd. A tall, slim figure astride a horse. A familiar profile. That signature stovepipe hat, a white gloved hand raised in salute.

Could it be President Abraham Lincoln shortly before delivering his Gettysburg Address?

Some Civil War scholars and experts in early photography believe it is.

It is one of two three-dimensional images taken, experts say, within minutes of each other as Lincoln arrived Nov. 19, 1863, to dedicate the cemetery just four months after the bloody battle. If it is Lincoln, the photograph holds enormous historical importance and adds two invaluable images to the slim archive of Lincoln photographs.

"This find doubles the number of apparent images of Lincoln at his greatest moment," said Bob Zeller, president of the Center for Civil War Photography, who explained that only two other images of Lincoln at Gettysburg were known to exist. "When I saw it for the first time, my jaw dropped."

The latest discovery - unveiled formally at the annual conference of

the Lincoln Forum yesterday - was hiding in plain sight.

The photos were among the more than 5,000 Civil War images included in the Library of Congress archive. Librarians began scanning the archive in 2000 and made them available to the public online.



Detail by the Center for Civil War Photography

Amateur historian and author John Richter of Hanover downloaded a large 3-D image from the archive several years ago. But it wasn't until last year, after a computer upgrade, that he was able to magnify the photos enough to pick out a figure deep in the crowd.

"It's that much more convincing in 3-D," said Richter, who has spent hundreds of hours studying images from the period and is a board member of the Center for Civil War Photography.

These 3-D images, or stereoviews, brought to life the leading figures of the day and delivered the horrors of the war to millions.

Among the details that came into focus with high magnification was a mounted figure, his gloved hand lifted to his forehead.

"Who else would salute the troops but the commander-in-chief?" Richter said.

He said some critics questioned why Lincoln would salute with his left hand. "Perhaps he was holding the reins with his right hand," he said.

Naysayers have emerged, but that doesn't bother Richter or Zeller.

"There's going to be debate," Zeller said, "but I believe we've found it."

### Gettysburg Preservation Group Continues Campaign against Target at Camp Letterman

Dec. 2 2007-GBPA Press release- The Target store chain is talking out of both sides of its mouth in dealing with the growing controversy over its plans to pave over a large portion of the remaining Camp Letterman field hospital site on Route 30 in Gettysburg.

Kathi Schue, president of the Gettysburg Battlefield Preservation Association today said that in e-mail response to complaints about the chain store's plans for the Letterman site, a company spokeswoman claims it has "no concrete plans at this time for this location," Metro Commercial Real Estate is advertising for stores to locate to the proposed "Gettysburg Station" shopping center anchored by a Target store.

In the e-mail response, the corporate official is identified as Jennifer Hanson, but no title is given other than she is with "Target Executive Offices."

The Metro Commercial web site touts "Explosive Growth at the Intersection of 2 Major Highways."

The center would obliterate a large portion of the massive field hospital site where thousands of Union and Confederate wounded and dying were treated after the epic 1863 battle.

In addition to claiming it does not have firm plans for the site, the Hanson communication says that the Letterman site "was first developed 40 years ago, and currently operates as a mobile home park." Only a part



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

of the 32-acre site was a mobile home park.

"That shows either how little the Target executive know about the Letterman site or how far they're willing to twist the facts," said Schue. "Much of the camp area remains undeveloped and the trailer park covered only a small slice of the site." The Target proposal includes an entranceway that would require the relocation of the Camp Letterman monument erected in 1914 by the Army of the Potomac Medical Department.

The GBPA is leading an effort to preserve the most historically important portions of the Camp Letterman site from the two-prong threats of residential and commercial development.

"We realize that development is going to take place on a large portion of the remaining Letterman site," said Schue. "We're merely asking Target and the residential and commercial development parties to refrain from destroying a couple portions that we believe that concerted archeological studies would prove are historically significant and are part of the 'hallowed ground' of Gettysburg where men of the North and South suffered and died for what they believed in.

"We're not trying to stop development, but to make sure it is historically prudent development." The GBPA is continuing to build its campaign to get Target and the residential and commercial developers to show historic responsibility and patriotism in their approach to the sensitive area of Camp Letterman.

Schue said that thus far, the campaign is centering on petitions and letter and e-mail communications to the commercial and residential

development companies and potential site occupants. Schue said additional tactics are being developed contingent on the responses they receive.

Persons wishing to help in the preservation can contact GBPA at [www.gbpa.org](http://www.gbpa.org) or by mail at P.O. Box 4087, Gettysburg, PA 17325.

### ***Civil War mystery solved Hagerstown man's 'passion' brings N.C. family to grave of Confederate ancestor***

**By ARNOLD S. PLATOU,  
Hagerstown Herald-Mail,  
November 4, 2007**

HAGERSTOWN — Growing up in Hagerstown near Rose Hill Cemetery, Richard Clem couldn't have known back then that it held the key to a Civil War mystery.

And that he would be the one to solve it.

Clem, 67, was among those at the cemetery Saturday when Bruce Avery, a descendant of a Confederate colonel, came to dedicate a granite marker in his ancestor's honor.

"He was so excited," Clem said of Avery after he learned this year through an article written by Clem that his fourth cousin, Col. Isaac Erwin Avery, was buried at Rose Hill.

"He said, 'You know, you've solved this mystery in our family!'"

Clem had nothing of the sort on his mind when he was a boy living along South Potomac Street and playing cowboys and Indians over at the cemetery.

He'd never heard of the Civil War either, until he reached the age of 8 or 9 and his parents began taking him, his brother, Donald, and his grandmother, Betty Graiffius, on Sunday afternoon trips to Antietam National Battlefield near Sharpsburg.

"My grandmother used to get me interested. She'd say, 'Dickie,' — she always called me 'Dickie' — over there, that's the old Dunker Church ..."

"Course back then, it was just an old pile of brick. It blew down in 1921. I didn't even know what the Civil War was, but I could see it in her eyes and it just kind of stuck with me over the years," Clem said.

### **The story of Isaac Avery**

Clem was a young man, working as a cabinetmaker, when his budding interest in Civil War history took the form of relic hunting and, eventually, of writing articles about it. As the subject became his passion, the story of Isaac Avery grew in his mind.

Avery, in his early 30s when the Civil War began in 1861, left one of his father's plantations in North Carolina to help form a unit of soldiers, Company E, 6th North Carolina Infantry, for the Confederacy.

Appointed captain, Avery and his regiment were sent to defend Richmond, Va., in 1862. The Union was driven back, but Avery was wounded and still was recovering when his men suffered heavy losses at Antietam that September.

The following year, Avery — by now, a colonel — led a brigade at Chancellorsville.

Within weeks, Gen. Robert E. Lee was leading the Rebels on to Gettysburg, Pa. In the resulting historic clash between the Northern and Southern armies, Col. Avery's unit was ordered on July 2 to attack a heavily fortified Union position on East Cemetery Hill. On horseback, leading his men, Col. Avery was mortally wounded and, after the fighting, he lay dying when a close friend, Maj. Samuel McDowell, reached his side. With his friend's

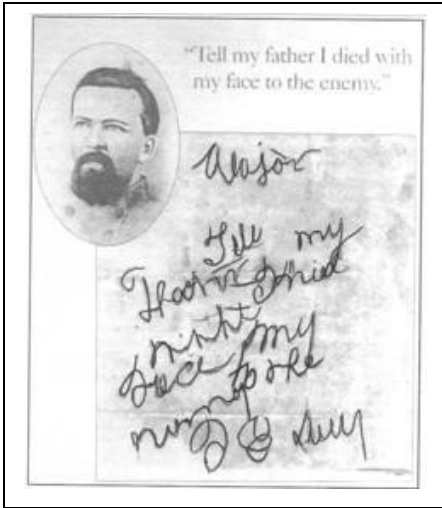


## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

help, Avery, now unable to speak, was given a piece of paper.

Using a stick or some other sharp object, Avery dipped its point into his own blood and wrote: "Major, tell my father I died with my face to the enemy."

Avery died early the next day, July 3. The document written in his blood is preserved in historical archives in Raleigh, N.C.



Col. Avery wrote this note before he died.  
-Hagerstown Herald-Mail photo

Avery's father lost two other sons in the Civil War, and both of their bodies were returned to North Carolina.

But until this year, the family never knew what had become of Isaac Avery's remains.

They only knew that after the fighting at Gettysburg, Avery's slave had buried his body on land overlooking the Potomac River at Williamsport as the Rebel troops made their long march back home.

Members of Avery's family made repeated trips right after the war and as recently as the 1960s to Williamsport, trying to find his grave site.

### Unraveling the mystery

What they didn't know, Clem said this past week, was that a few years after the war, Maryland Gov. Oden Bowie had appropriated \$5,000 to find and rebury the thousands of Confederate soldiers buried in shallow graves near Sharpsburg, Williamsport and other areas of Washington County.

Aware of the anger in many Northern states at even the thought of burying the Rebels in the national cemetery at Antietam, Gov. Bowie bought three acres for what became known as Washington Confederate Cemetery inside Hagerstown's Rose Hill Cemetery, Clem said.

Col. Avery's were among the remains that were moved, but no one realized that until Clem put the evidence together.

"What really kept me fascinated with Avery was the story of his death," said Clem, who lives off Wagaman Road south of Hagerstown.

"Seems like it's always been in the back of my mind. And I knew that a good many of those Averys had kept coming up and looking for him."

Clem began by obtaining Bowie's list of the 346 identified Confederate bodies that had been reinterred.

A total of 2,122 unidentified Confederate soldiers also are buried at Rose Hill.

On the list, Clem found a notation, "Buried in the public graveyard at Williamsport," and with it, "Col. J.E. Ayer, 6th N.C.S.T., July 3, 1863."

He knew that Avery's 6th North Carolina Infantry regiment had been known back home during the war as the Sixth North Carolina State Troops, and that its soldiers wore waist belt plates, reading in raised letters: "6th INF — N.C.S.T."

But what he also deduced was that the "J" listed as the soldier's first initial actually could be an "I" for

Isaac, and that "Ayer" actually could be "Avery."

"These two minor errors were common during the Civil War and are understandable when considering the marker at the grave site, more than likely made of wood, and ... badly weather-beaten and barely legible" by the time Bowie's workers found the Williamsport graves, Clem wrote.

Further proof, he said, is that the list shows that three other soldiers, also from North Carolina, were found buried nearby.

"So it has to be him," he said. "There's no one else even comes close to that (information). It has to be Avery."

### 'A great reward'

With this evidence, Clem wrote the article for The Washington Times.

"Before I mailed it, I held it in my hand and I thought of what Stonewall Jackson did every time he mailed a letter. He held it in the palm of both hands, and he'd pray about it that it would be a blessing to whoever opened it," Clem said.

"And you know," Clem said, still sounding a bit amazed, "about two or three days after that article appeared, I got a phone call from Bruce Avery, and he's like a fourth cousin from Isaac Avery."

It turned out that Avery, who is 52 and lives on Kent Island in the Chesapeake Bay, had done a lot of research on his ancestors, Clem said. The two men's conversation, Clem's first with anyone of that family, resulted in them agreeing that a gravestone should be placed on Avery's burial site at Rose Hill. Through their efforts, together with an employee at the cemetery, application was made and approved for a federal agency on veteran's affairs to pay for the stone and ship it to Rose Hill.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Clem said his search and its results give him a feeling "like a great reward of accomplishment, especially for something that's been a mystery so long and for that family.

### Gettysburg Train Station Reopens after Massive Renovation

Reopened station part of new strategy to expand the Civil War history 'experience'

By Joyce Gannon, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, November 18, 2007

GETTYSBURG -- At dusk on Nov. 18, 1863, or 144 years ago today, a train carrying Abraham Lincoln pulled into a downtown station here. The President of the United States disembarked and walked with escorts to a private home about a block away. There he ate dinner and put the final touches on the speech he would deliver the next day to dedicate the national cemetery near the battlefields where an estimated 50,000 Union and Confederate soldiers lost their lives four months earlier.

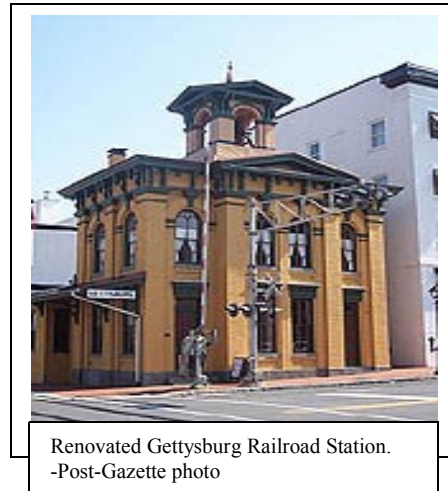
Whether President Lincoln actually stepped into the Gettysburg Railroad Station is a matter of debate: Local historian Gerald Bennett, in a published history of the station, writes that while no eyewitnesses ever confirmed what happened, it is reasonable to assume the president entered through a rear door, walked through the men's waiting room and exited through the front door onto Carlisle Street.

But volunteers and preservation officials currently involved with the station's restoration say Lincoln couldn't make his way inside because it was still jammed with caskets of soldiers who perished in the gruesome July battle.

Visitors can now draw their own conclusions. After being shuttered since the last passenger engine pulled out in 1942, the station has reopened and is in the final stages of a \$2 million renovation that will add it to a host of historic landmarks in the quaint center of this borough whose name is synonymous with the Civil War.

The reopening of the railroad station is part of a strategy by the borough and tourism and historic groups to generate interest in sites around town that aren't part of the National Military Park that is operated by the National Park System and draws thousands of tourists each year.

"People come to the park and spend eight hours there and leave," said Deb Adamik, executive director of Main Street Gettysburg. "We want to encourage them to come Downtown and have the whole experience."



Renovated Gettysburg Railroad Station.  
-Post-Gazette photo

Main Street Gettysburg was involved with efforts to restore the railroad station and is working to reopen the David Wills House, the Gettysburg home where Lincoln spent the night. The station's revitalization was spearheaded by a group of local citizens and elected officials who in

1996 began exploring the renovation costs. They raised the money through a combination of federal and state funds and foundation and private donations. In 1998, CSX Corp. and a private family transferred the deed to the property to the borough. The National Trust for Historic Gettysburg leases it, and volunteers provide free interpretative tours.

The station dates to 1859, the year after freight and passenger train service was launched in Gettysburg. It's located a block north of the town square and historic Gettysburg Hotel. Built for \$2,070, the station is a striking Italianate design featuring a rooftop cupola where a brass bell tolled the trains' arrivals and departures. An addition was completed in 1885.

The first floor had two waiting areas: one for men that had brass spittoons and a separate space for women and children. But both genders purchased tickets from the same office. While the 10th New York Calvary Regiment was stationed in Gettysburg during the winter of 1861-62, its regimental band used the second floor of the station to rehearse.

After fighting broke out about a mile west of downtown Gettysburg on July 1, 1863, the station was quickly converted to a field hospital for the Union forces, and, according to Mr. Bennett's account, some patients observed the battles from the cupola. Inside the restored structure, it's easy to imagine being a rail traveler in the 19th or early 20th century. An exposed brick wall is painted in the shade of gray thought to be its original color. Some original wood floors have been uncovered near the doorways facing the railroad tracks, and in what was the baggage area, visitors can see part of the original stone foundation. The station is



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

painted in period colors, and a spiral staircase that led to the upper floor has been partially re-created.

Since it reopened on July 1, an estimated 75 to 100 visitors per day have toured the station, according to the National Trust for Historic Gettysburg. On display are photos and artifacts from the decades the station bustled with passenger traffic. Running through Dec. 31 is a model of Lincoln's home in Springfield, Ill., that includes figurines of the dignitaries who attended his funeral in April 1865.

Next year at this time, the town plans a grand reopening of the Wills House. Also at the Dedication Day 2008 events, filmmaker Ken Burns, who made the acclaimed PBS series on the Civil War, is expected to be among the guest speakers.

### **Spoon that saved Virginia Confederate's life during the Civil War among items donated to Historical Museum**

By Cathy Benson, OurValley.org, November 13, 2007

This fall, the story of one-time Clerk of Botetourt County Circuit Court John W. Matheny resurfaced at the Botetourt County Historical Society in Fincastle.

Matheny's descendents—Jim Keyser Sr. of Abingdon and his son Jim Keyser Jr., and his brother Kenneth Keyser of Clifton Forge and his son Steve Keyser of Martinsville—came to Fincastle to present items from the family that belonged to their great-grandfather.

Among the items Matheny's descendants donated was a tarnished silver spoon that both saved and transformed Matheny's life, Jim Keyser said.

Matheny lost his arm at the Battle of Winchester in 1862, according to his obituary in The Fincastle Herald some years later. Museum board member Katherine Harris had a copy of the death notice when the Keyzers visited Fincastle to give the museum the family artifacts.

Matheny was part of Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign and at Winchester he was fighting General Banks and the Union Army. According to family lore, said Jim Keyser, Matheny had found the spoon on the battlefield earlier and stuck it in his left breast pocket. While the battle raged around him a Yankee ball hit him in the chest bending the lip of the spoon and sending the musket ball into his arm. He lost the arm from the resulting wound.



This spoon saved John W. Matheny's life during the War Between the States. With it are his discharge papers. — Photo courtesy OurValley.org

"All of our lives that spoon hung attached to the frame that held our great-grandfather's discharge papers from the Confederacy," said Keyser. Keyser said he first contacted Circuit Court Clerk Tommy Moore about donating the artifacts. Moore sent him to Weldon Martin, executive director at the museum. The Keyzers' sister,

who knew so much of the family history, was gravely ill and unfortunately did not live to see the materials dedicated at the museum, lamented Keyser.

Matheny married Julia Granville Morrison in 1863. Keyser said a photograph of Matheny in front of the Confederate Memorial at the Botetourt Courthouse still hangs in the clerk's office.

Matheny served as Botetourt's commissioner of the revenue from May 1875 through 1883. He was elected clerk of court in 1888 and served until 1908. He is listed in Robert Douthat Stoner's Seed Bed of the Republic.

Matheny died in 1921 of cancer of the bladder.

"His character, his frankness, his absolute sincerity and his genial manliness made an impression on me that remains to this hour," the Rev. J.W. Grubb wrote in an editorial about Matheny in the same Fincastle Herald.

The family also presented photographs of Matheny and a tintype of his wife, Laura Ellen, as well as medals from the United Daughters of the Confederacy, a reunion medal and button, a campaign medal and the discharge papers with the spoon.

### **Last known Confederate widow found**

Trumann, AK Democrat, November 13, 2007

Some might think it is impossible a Confederate widow is still alive. However, it was recently discovered that a Confederate widow was residing in an assisted living facility in West Helena. Maude Hopkins of Lexa, is very much alive. Mrs. Hopkins married her first husband, Confederate William M. Cantrell, an aging widower, in 1934.



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

She was 19 and he was 86. Living alone and in his 80's, he employed Maude to cook and care for him. Being mindful of the moral standards of the time, they agreed to marry so as to not bring disrespect upon her name. Confederate Cantrell was in French's Battalion, Company A, of the Virginia Infantry. Maude cared for Cantrell until his death on Feb. 26, 1937, at 90 years of age. Following his death, she remarried and had two daughters.

Recently members from the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis Chapter #2191, New Orleans, La., visited her.

Members Lea Martin of Mandeville, La, Lynn Dowdy of Jonesboro and prospective member Dayl Taylor of Trumann spent time with Mrs. Hopkins and her granddaughter, Donna.

Mrs. Hopkins was presented with a fall arrangement for her room. During the visit, they learned about her marriage to Cantrell and what life was like when she married him. Mrs. Hopkins was made a member of the David O. Dodd Chapter #212, Pine Bluff in August of 2004.

### Baltimore Civil War Roundtable Celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The October meeting of the Baltimore Civil War Roundtable was a celebration of our twenty-fifth anniversary. The speakers were BCWRT Board of Directors member Bob Mullauer and Ed Bearss, Chief Historian Emeritus of the National Park Service. Refreshments were provided by Andrea and Bill Priest and Frank Schilling with additional welcome donations from members of the BCWRT. Below are some of the photos taken at the Anniversary Celebration.



L-R  
Bob Mullauer, Ed  
Bearss, BCWRT  
President Don  
Macreadie



**Above** – Cakes for the Blue and Gray

**L Center** – Members sample the refreshments

**Below** – Board member Dr. Wilmer Jones presides over the book raffle





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

### Is Lincoln Earliest Recorded Case of Rare Disease?

By David Brown, Washington Post, November 26, 2007

Abraham Lincoln was the rarest of men, and John G. Sotos believes that extended all the way to his chromosome 10.

A physician, connoisseur of rare ailments and amateur historian, Sotos believes Lincoln had a genetic syndrome called MEN 2B. He thinks the diagnosis not only accounts for Lincoln's great height, which has been the subject of most medical speculation over the years, but also for many of the president's other reported ailments and behaviors.

He also suspects Lincoln was dying of cancer at the time he was assassinated, and was unlikely to have survived a year. He thinks cancer -- an inevitable element of MEN 2B -- killed at least one of Lincoln's four sons, three of whom died before reaching age 20.

Sotos's theory assigns one of medicine's rarest conditions to one of the nation's best-known figures. It is likely to be controversial. But unlike many historical diagnoses, it can be easily proved or rejected with a DNA test for the single mutation in the gene called RET on chromosome 10 that causes MEN 2B.

Samples of the martyred president's DNA presumably exist in bloodstained fabrics scattered around the country and in eight skull fragments from Lincoln's autopsy in the possession of the federal government. Whether anyone will be willing to sacrifice part of a relic to answer this question is another issue. Sotos, 50, is publishing his idea in a Web-based book, "The Physical Lincoln," which is expected to be

available next month. He will present his findings at Johns Hopkins University on Wednesday.

"No physician ever removes doubt from his or her mind. I am prepared to be wrong, but I don't expect to be wrong," he said last week.

Sotos is a cardiologist who heads a medical device company in Palo Alto Ca. Several years ago, he published research asserting that William Howard Taft had obstructive sleep apnea, which went away when he lost a large amount of weight after leaving the White House

Sotos is supporting his new hypothesis with a 350-page companion Web volume that assembles virtually every known description of Lincoln's health and physical features, as well as those of his relatives.

MEN 2B is short for "multiple endocrine neoplasia type 2B." It is a subtype of a genetic disease whose sufferers invariably develop cancer in a hormone-producing organ. Some are born with tumors. Nearly every victim gets cancer of the thyroid gland, and about half also get cancer of the adrenal gland. In about half the cases, patients inherit the disease from a parent. (Sotos thinks there is some chance that Lincoln's mother, who died at age 34, may have had it.) In the remainder of cases, the mutation appears spontaneously in the sufferer, who can then pass it on to children.

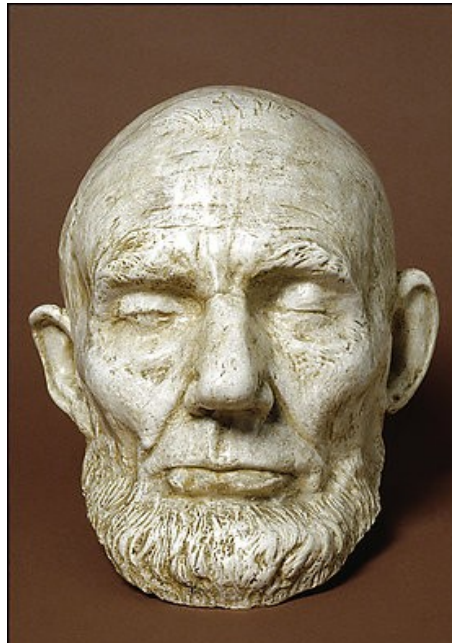
MEN 2B is the "rarest of the rare hereditary cancer syndromes," said Jeffrey F. Moley, a surgeon and an expert in the disease at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

Moley's department has 82 patients with MEN 2B in its database. He suspects there are about 500 in all in the United States. If Abraham Lincoln had MEN 2B, he would be the earliest recorded case.

In the patients Moley sees, droopy eyelids with thickened edges and prominent, bumpy upper lips are the most striking features. Most patients also have massively enlarged colons that bulge visibly, gurgle audibly and produce large amounts of gas -- symptoms not generally attributed to Lincoln.

"The facial appearance is not convincing. Overall, I don't think so," Moley said after learning of the theory and consulting a few pictures of Lincoln.

But, he added, there are always exceptions. Some abnormalities are so subtle that not even the patient notices them. "I would not rule it out completely," Moley said.



An 1860 cast of Abraham Lincoln's face suggests a lump in his right lower lip, a possible symptom of a rare disease.

**Photo Credit:** National Portrait Gallery



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

Others have speculated that Lincoln might have had Marfan syndrome, a genetic condition characterized by long arms, legs and fingers, loose joints, often a breast-bone deformity and a weakness of the aorta, the body's largest artery, which can burst and cause sudden death.

The discovery in 1991 that Marfan syndrome is caused by one of numerous mutations in a gene for fibrillin, a component of elastic tissue, led some people to propose testing Lincoln's DNA for the defect. That was never done, in part because it would have consumed significant amounts of Lincoln's bodily relic.

MEN 2B can also cause a "marfanoid" appearance, and that's what first brought the diagnosis to mind, Sotos said. What clinched it was the 16th president's lips.

One of MEN 2B's many manifestations are neuromas, or lumps of nerve tissue, on the tongue, lips and eyelids. There are no pictures of Lincoln's tongue, but his lips have a bumpy appearance in photographs. The hint of a lump on the right side of his lower lip is even visible in the engraved image on the \$5 bill.

These growths also occur in the intestines and can cause constipation and diarrhea. Lincoln had lifelong constipation, and briefly during his presidency he took mercury-containing pills called "blue mass" to relieve it.

Sotos believes several things point to a diagnosis of cancer. Numerous observers commented that Lincoln became thinner in the White House. Three months before he died in April 1865 at age 56, he fainted while getting up quickly from a chair. He had periodic severe headaches and cold hands and feet. All are symptoms of pheochromocytoma, an

adrenaline-producing tumor that is one of the two MEN 2B-associated cancers.

Furthermore, Sotos believes that two of Lincoln's sons, Willie and Tad, also had MEN 2B.

Photographs of them show somewhat irregular lips. Willie died at 11, probably of typhoid fever, and Tad at 18, reportedly of tuberculosis. Sotos believes that Tad had thyroid cancer that had spread to his chest and caused fluid to accumulate outside his lungs, a condition noted by physicians several times.

Lesser arguments for the diagnosis include Lincoln's famously sad face and his predilection for lounging horizontally whenever possible. Sotos believes those were signs of weak muscle tone, sometimes seen in MEN 2B.

A big argument against the theory, however, is Lincoln's age. Some people with MEN 2B die of cancer in childhood. Only recently have many survived into their 40s. Sotos says he has found just two reports of people surviving untreated into their 50s, and admits that Lincoln would have to be a similar rarity.

MEN 2B patients in Japan tend to live longer than those in the United States, even though everyone has the same mutation in the RET gene. Moley, the Washington University expert, speculates that that is because other genes, common among the Japanese but infrequent in Western populations, somehow modify the disease.

Sotos is well aware that a surprisingly large amount of Lincoln biological material exists. In addition to the skull fragments, the National Museum of Health and Medicine in Washington has a lock of hair clipped from around Lincoln's head wound, and the bloodstained cuffs from one of the

physicians who performed the autopsy. The autopsy did not include examination of the neck, chest or abdomen, an investigation that might have revealed cancer, if Sotos's hypothesis is correct.

Tim Clarke Jr., spokesman for the museum, said curators in the past decided that "destroying nonrenewable, historically significant material is not in the public's interest," but added that "as technology changes and the social and ethical environment changes, it could be addressed" again.

The National Park Service collection at Ford's Theater contains a Brooks Brothers overcoat and suit that Lincoln wore the night he was shot; at least two pillows from his deathbed in the Petersen house across the street; and some towel fragments, all with bloodstains, said Bill Line, the Park Service spokesman. He said the service has two "director's orders" that prohibit research that "destroys or consumes" artifacts.

The Chicago History Museum has the bed where Lincoln died, the mattress, a bloodstained bottom sheet, and a bolster. The collection also includes a shawl worn by Mary Todd Lincoln containing bloodstains that are probably from Henry R. Rathbone, an Army major who accompanied the Lincolns to the theater and was stabbed by John Wilkes Booth, Lincoln's assassin.

Russell Lewis, executive vice president and chief historian, said that while the museum has previously rejected the idea of DNA testing of one of those objects, "I think it's definitely possible now that there could be a way to extract something" without destroying the relic.

But that's not the only issue. The museum must first decide the value of the knowledge that might be





## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

gained, and the cost it might have for Lincoln's, and possibly others', privacy.

"We are living in a time where people sometimes feel that they have the right to know everything," Lewis said. "As a museum, we have the obligation to consider whether medical information or private information should be revealed." For his part, Sotos is not going to press for testing. "I think it will happen eventually, and I'm patient enough to wait for that," he said.

One thing is certain. He came by his diagnosis honestly. While in medical school at Johns Hopkins, he wrote "Zebra Cards," a once-popular accessory to an intern's white jacket. It consisted of a deck of cards (later pages of a book) with one side of each card listing a physical finding or symptom, and the flip side all the rare diseases where it was found.

The title refers to the advice to young doctors: "If you hear hoofbeats behind you, don't expect to see zebras." This means: "Resist the temptation to attribute common findings to exotic diseases" or, more roughly translated, "Don't get fancy."

However, a variant of this aphorism is: "When you hear hoofbeats, don't forget about zebras." It is the acknowledgment that rare diseases do exist, and some people do have them. "Zebra Cards" were a way to keep that knowledge at hand.

Sotos thinks he has found a zebra in the American pantheon.

### **Mort Künstler's gift to Walter Reed honors troops**

BY BILL BLEYER, *Newsday*,  
December 2, 2007

Mort Künstler of Cove Neck, considered by many to be the top historical artist in the country, is

something of a soft touch for noncommercial organizations trying to raise money.

After 9/11, he donated prints of an American flag painting to the Red Cross and raised \$250,000. And for more than a decade, he has allowed the Timber Ridge School for troubled boys in Virginia to use his images on Christmas ornaments, bringing in hundreds of thousands of dollars. So when the wife of an injured soldier asked Künstler several months ago if he could help decorate the dreary, blank halls of a newly refurbished building at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., used by convalescing troops, the artist responded in characteristic fashion. "I said 'Yes, it would be an honor,'" Künstler recalled. "I'm not a warmonger, and I'm not in favor of the Iraq war but I certainly think these guys should be cheered up in any way possible."

So Künstler, who remembered the scandal that broke earlier in the year about deplorable conditions for some patients at the hospital, arranged to donate at cost 31 prints of military scenes for the first floor of the building, hopefully by Christmas. And later he will provide another 30 for the second floor and possibly more for a second building. Because of the popularity of his work, Künstler typically would make tens of thousands of dollars for reproductions like these.

"It will give the soldiers a great feeling of being honored and will give them a sense of their own history and membership of an elite club of historic warriors," said Künstler's contact at the hospital, Maj. Steve Gventer, one of three company commanders in the Warrior Transition Brigade, composed of about 250 wounded soldiers and more than 40 staff

members. "The paintings give a very patriotic and historical look at the United States, showing not only the Civil War, which Mort's famous for, but also across the spectrum of history."

The project started with a conversation between Gventer and Linda Rasnake, whose husband is a soldier. He had back surgery at Walter Reed and became part of the transition unit, which moved into the building in March.

Building 38, the two-story brigade headquarters where the injured men spend a lot of their time on administrative matters, had been renovated and renamed Vaccarro Hall to honor Cpl. Diangelo Vaccarro of upstate New York. He was killed after he won two silver stars and was wounded twice as a combat medic in Iraq.

"She said, 'I want to do something to help,'" Gventer said. "'They're moving into this new building and there's nothing on the walls. What can we do?' I said 'Maybe we can get some kind of artwork.'"

Rasnake suggested contacting three artists who are well known for their military art to ask them to donate patriotic-themed paintings showing soldiers who have made sacrifices throughout American history. She is now employed by the Army as a family readiness support assistant for the brigade that handles the needs of soldiers and their families. Rasnake said she thought of Künstler because "his love for the military is the first thing that struck all of us. He is a very genuine man; you can see that in his painting."

Gventer said, "Mort was the only one of the three that sent anything back. Within three days, he had sent a letter back saying, 'I'm interested.'" The specific proposal was worked out



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

---

when Gventer and two other officers visited Künstler at his Cove Neck studio.

The artist said he could provide free prints on paper. "But I felt if this was something to be proud of, it would be great to make them look like originals," Künstler said.

So he offered to have special laser-printed giclée reproductions made on canvas. And the Walter Reed Society, a civilian support group, agreed to pay to reproduce the paintings, which would have a retail value of around \$30,000 if sold commercially.

The reproductions don't need to be under glass, Künstler said, and "the layman would look at it and think it's an original."

To get the project off the ground, Künstler, who will supervise the installation of the prints, donated a canvas print of "This We'll Defend," a portrait of a soldier in front of a flag. It already has been installed in the conference room at Vaccarro Hall. Half of the other 30 images will be scenes of the Civil War for one wing, with the other 15 depicting other eras of military history.

"We're trying to make it appeal to a broad cross-section of the Army today," Künstler said. He added that the donated artwork will include portraits of black, Hispanic and female soldiers, such as the black 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment during the Civil War. The second phase of the project will be 30 more reproductions underwritten by the Walter Reed Society for the second floor. The artist and Gventer then hope to find veterans' groups to pay for reproducing additional works for Abrams Hall, where single soldiers live.

"It's very exciting for me to take all of

my pictures, reproduce them in a very fine style and have the military enjoy them," Künstler said. "If they feel better when they see these pictures, that's great."

### **Vermont's Civil War flags to move to new home**

Montpelier Argus, November 15, 2007

BARRE -- Vermont's Civil War flags will move from the Statehouse to a safe haven in the Vermont Historical Society's vaults in Barre.

The 142-year-old flags, too fragile for regular public viewing, will be housed in custom storage units in one of the Society's collections storage areas. The storage areas have technology-controlled temperature, security and humidity systems that will help prolong the life of the cloth. "The State's flag collection is one of our most important groups of artifacts," said David Schutz, Curator of State Buildings, in a release issued today.

"We have taken these flags off public display at the Statehouse, and have long needed a suitable environment for their long-term storage and preservation. According to Schutz, State Buildings has hoped for a solution which hinged on a partnership with the Vermont Historical Society as they began to develop the new History Center in Barre in 2000.

"These flags were carried into battle by the great-grandfathers and great-great-grandfathers of some of today's Vermonters," noted Jackie Calder, curator at the Vermont Historical Society, in the release. "The Civil War had a tremendous impact on Vermont and its people. These flags are a priceless symbol of Vermont's history."