

Garman, Black, and the "Baltimore Plot"

WHEN Martin G. Brumbaugh, Pennsylvania schoolman, historian, and later Governor of the Commonwealth (1915–1919), was preparing his *Stories of Pennsylvania* or *School Readings from Pennsylvania History* (New York, 1897), he decided to include Lincoln's escape from the "Baltimore Plot" as one of the chapters in his book. In the 1890's the story was already known to all historians and many general readers: Benson J. Lossing had published it in 1866 in his *History of the Civil War*, exactly as the President had told it to him two years earlier; Detective Allan Pinkerton and Police Superintendent John A. Kennedy had quarreled in print over who should have chief credit for saving Lincoln's life at that time; A. K. McClure, *Lincoln and the Men of War-Times* (Philadelphia, 1892), had associated himself as intimately as possible with the event.

Seeking possible additional information in 1898, Brumbaugh searched out the engineer and fireman of the special one-car Pennsylvania Railroad train that took Lincoln from Harrisburg to Philadelphia the night of February 22–23, 1861, and invited them to tell the story as they remembered it. Both Daniel Garman, the fireman, of Lebanon, Pennsylvania, and Edward Black, the engineer, of Philadelphia, responded with their recollections in statements now owned by Mrs. Brumbaugh. It appears that both men could have been influenced by the already published accounts of the event. Nevertheless, the reminiscences of Garman and Black seem to offer a folksy sidelight on this historic episode in Lincoln's career.

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CLAUDE R. FLORY

The Fireman's Story

Engineer Edward Black, & I, Daniel E. Garman, fireman with engine No. 161, took President Abraham Lincoln to Harrisburg, from Philadelphia where he was to take the Northern Central train to Washington. But late in the afternoon Superintendent G. C. Franciscus came to me very much excited & asked me where Ed Black was (he was the engineer), and I told him he was at the United States Hotel; then he said I shall go look after the engine, have her ready while he went to look [for] Ed. I quick went and oiled up the engine and lighted the head light and turned up my fire. Soon after Ed came running down the track, mounted the engine, and asked whether she was oiled up. I said everything was all ready. We then backed

up to [the] depot and coupled the engine to one car, & ran below town to Front Street crossing where we stopped for about one minute when four plumed horses & [a] closed cab dashed up along side of us & President Lincoln boarded the train along with some other Pennsylvania R. R. officials; the gong rang and we did some lively running. I did not know that we had the President aboard until we arrived at Lemonplace to take water, then I got back, slipped on the hose; in stooping down I looked into the car door and I saw the President sitting with his back turned toward me, but I knew him because he was so much taller than the rest of the inmates. I went back and cried to Ed Black [that] the railsplitter was on the train, then I saw Franciscus run to the door & said to me, Dan, you must not mention that the President was on board. You bet I kept quiet then. When we started, I turned to Ed and asked, "Ed what's up," he said "I don't know, but just keep the engine hot," and of course I did and if ever I got a fast ride, I did that night. We ran so fast, that when I got a shovel full of coal to put in the furnace, I would be laying on the foot board rolling in the coal instead of getting it in the furnace, but with all that I kept up steam until we got to Phila. As soon as we stopped, the superinten[den]t came up to us and handed us two ten dollar gold pieces with the President's compliments, one for the engineer & one for me. So we can say that we got the first money in protecting the President.

When we arrived there, four plumed horses & a closed cab stood there; they got in and went full gallop to [the] Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore depot.

The Engineer's Story

I have been asked to give a statement of the run which saved the life of Abraham Lincoln Feb. 22, 1861.

So long a time has elapsed that only the main facts now remain in my memory. But I will try to tell them as briefly as possible.

In 1861, I was running a passenger train on the Pennsylvania railroad from Philadelphia to Harrisburg, with Engine 161. Feb. 22nd I was called upon to take a special train (consisting of one ordinary coach no. 29 and one special no. 160)—containing Lincoln and his family to Harrisburg, on their way to Washington. They were to spend the night in Harrisburg, and go by way of Baltimore the following day. I was introduced to Lincoln and after a few words, he shook me by the hand, handed me a cigar, and passed into the train. Could I only have foreseen what was to occur in the next few years I think that cigar, instead of being smoked, would have been kept as a precious and hallowed remembrance.

The run up was uneventful. We stopped at all of the principal stations, Lincoln making a few remarks at each.

After arriving in Harrisburg Lincoln and family were taken to the Jones Hotel where they were to remain till the following day. In the afternoon he spoke to a large crowd from the balcony of that house.

In the meantime there came quietly to me orders to take car 29 (the ordinary coach) and run about one mile east from the Harrisburg Station, stopping near Hanna Street, and there await further orders. It was then about 7 o'clock in the evening. I had been told quietly that Lincoln would not be allowed to pass through Baltimore alive, and we must secretly get him to Washington another way. In a short time I had my train in readiness awaiting further developments.

I had only been there a few moments when a closed cab drove up as far as Front Street in which was Lincoln quite alone. He quietly alighted, walked down the track to the car, went to the saloon and laid down.

I remember well how he looked. He wore a long circular cloak, and a Scotch cap.

Awaiting him on the train was Enoch Lewis, General Superintendent Thomas A. Scott, and Division Superintendent Charles Franciscus.

There are one or two men in public life today who claim to have been in that car. I am sorry to spoil a good story, but they were not there. It had been rather a difficult matter to persuade Lincoln to leave his family to go to Washington alone, and accept the plan made for him. He declared he had no fear of violence at Baltimore or elsewhere. But after considerable persuasion consented to be guided by his friends. I was told to make no stops (and when obliged to take water, to do so at the most secluded places I could, to keep a sharp look out) and to arrive at Thirtieth Street, West Philadelphia by 10 o'clock *sure*.

Feeling the great responsibility upon me, you may be sure I looked after things mighty sharp. I have often wondered what the people thought of that short train whizzing through the night. A case of life and death perhaps, and so it was.

Lincoln remained in the saloon all of the time. Even some of the trainmen did not know he was aboard, and thought that the night run was simply to get the officials of the road back to Philadelphia.

At 10 o'clock we reached Thirtieth Street. A closed cab was in waiting. Lincoln walked directly from the car to the cab and was driven to Broad and Prime Streets which was then the station of the P. W. & B. RR.

Everything was so timed and arranged that he arrived just as the night line for Washington was ready to start, and was quietly on board without anyone being the wiser. The next morning when the whole United States was at breakfast, the news had been flashed over the wires that President Lincoln was safe in Washington, while the nation thought he was in Harrisburg.

That he would never have reached Washington alive, but for our night run is now well known, and the dreadful tragedy which occurred later would have been enacted in Baltimore then.

EDWARD R. BLACK