BOOK REVIEWS


In this the concluding volume of the Lincoln Chronology, compiled by C. Percy Powell of the Division of Manuscripts of the Library of Congress under the general supervision of Editor-in-Chief Miers, the day-to-day activities of Abraham Lincoln, the War President, are set down. Of the 1,556-day period covered in this volume only 41 days, 26 of them Sundays, are not reported on, for lack of documentation.

This work of scholarship provides insight into the daily routine of the presidential office during the Civil War, although many routine activities such as writing a letter, signing a commission or appointment, or visiting the telegraph office are recorded sparingly. In the process it registers the ebb and flow of public officials, office seekers, the plain curious, and even crackpots who vied for the President's attention. Moreover, it documents the rather well known aspects of the personality and character of its subject.

Courage, dignity, sadness, humor, modesty, consideration for others—these are Lincoln qualities for which there is abundant evidence in this volume. But whereas even those persons having only a limited acquaintanceship with the Lincoln story are familiar with the letter written by the President to Mrs. Bixby condoling with her over the loss of her five sons on the field of battle, relatively few know of his letter to the widow of the Reverend Joseph Stockton of Pittsburgh, in which "learning that you who have passed the eighty-fourth year of life, have given to the soldiers, some three hundred pairs of stockings, knitted by yourself," President Lincoln extended to her his thanks. Lincoln's consideration for others applied to members of his own family. There is a moving account in this chronology of a fire, early in 1864, that consumed the presidential stables, of Lincoln jumping over a boxwood hedge in an unsuccessful attempt to rescue the horses, and of Lincoln and his family standing in the East Room of the White House gazing through the tears at the still smoldering stables where his son Willie's pony had perished along with the other horses.

Although the President's health was generally good—an attack of varioloid smallpox was the only serious illness of his White
House days—the burden of his executive duties was often unbearably heavy. To his friend Senator Browning he confided in mid-1861 that "of all the trials I have had since I came here, none begin to compare with those I had between the inauguration and the fall of Fort Sumpter [sic]. They were so great that could I have anticipated them, I would not have believed it possible to survive them." And again some two and a half years later: "This war is eating my heart out. I have a strong impression that I shall not live to see the end."

Students of Pennsylvania history will find some interest in the condensed accounts of three Lincoln trips through Pennsylvania: the first when Lincoln was President-Elect en route from Springfield to Washington, the second involving Lincoln's part in the dedication of the Gettysburg battlefield as a national cemetery, and the third in connection with his appearance at the Great Central (Sanitary) Fair of June, 1864 in Philadelphia. There are frequent references as well in this chronology to Pennsylvanians of greater or lesser note with whom Lincoln came in contact. Congressman William D. Kelley, a frequent White House visitor, was both garrulous and free with his advice. It was Kelley who, after claiming two and a half hours of a busy President's time, inspired the tart comment of Presidential Secretary John Hay, "Didn't talk about himself more than 9/10ths of the time." Some Pittsburghers with whom Lincoln briefly talked included a businessman named J. Wesley Greene; the wife and daughter of the commandant of the Allegheny Arsenal, Colonel John Symington; and the ardent feminist, Jane Swisshelm.

Somewhat enigmatic is a reference to a conference between Lincoln and Governor Curtin at which Lincoln sought "[in] friendly spirit, to remove the coolness that has [had] so long existed between them." In view of the paucity of confirmatory evidence of the ill feeling in other sources, this statement may well bear further investigation. Quite as mysterious is the nature of Lincoln's response to the request of the officials of the Pittsburgh Sanitary Fair for his autograph to be sold at the Fair. It seems difficult to believe that he would have refused, especially in view of his favorable action on a similar request by the officials of the Philadelphia Fair. However, no mention is made either in the chronology or in any other sources that this reviewer has seen of Lincoln's compliance with the Pittsburgh request.

In general the high standards of editorial craftsmanship em-
ployed in the first two volumes prevail in this third volume of the Lincoln chronology. A particularly useful feature is the 136-page index applying to all three volumes, whose topical entries should prove of inestimable value to the Lincoln scholar.

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Many volumes have been written about baseball and in most instances they have been devoted to the players, their fielding and batting records, with appropriate anecdotes—true or fictitious.

Baseball—The Early Years by Harold Seymour, however, is a book relating the history and development of the game, from its beginning in 1839 (which the author disputes with documentary evidence) to the formation of the American League in 1901.

The tribulations, trials, internal wars and jealousies among club owners are set forth in quite complete detail—too voluminous, in fact. The truly glamorous era of baseball followed the advent of the American League, from 1901 to the present day, a period in which the game has expanded and grown tremendously.

It might be assumed that the author intends to write another volume on the later phases of baseball. This book is of greatest interest to real old-timers, those whose memories go back 50 to 60 years. It is to be doubted if the youth of the country is concerned with events from 1839 to 1900.

Such figures of the rough and ready days as Anson, Brush, Soden, Doubleday, Clarkson, Ebbets, Hugh Duffy, Buck Ewing, Hanlon, McGraw, Connie Mack, Radbourne, Cy Young and many others, lend a romantic air to a time in baseball which roughly corresponds to the days of the Wild West.

Pittsburghers will be especially interested in men who contributed to the game here, such as Barney Dreyfuss, Honus Wagner, Harry Pulliam, Mark Baldwin, Judge Landis, Jimmy Galvin, Ed Gumbert, and W. A. Nimick.

The author is not known as a sports writer, his background being that of turnstile operator, scoreboard man, and batboy. Nevertheless, he has done intensive research from many documentary