

ABRAHAM LINCOLN AS HE WAS KNOWN DURING HIS LIFE

Before He Was President and After His Personality Touched Lives of Local People Who Recall Important Incidents Vividly

Lincoln and the Union Pacific

General G. M. Dodge's Story.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN's part in locating the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific railroad has not been generally understood. General Grenville M. Dodge of Council Bluffs, who was in charge of the location and early work of construction of the road, tells of his meetings with President Lincoln.

"I was privileged to see Abraham Lincoln but twice during his life. The first time was in the fall of 1859, when he addressed a meeting here in Council Bluffs," said General Dodge. "The second time was during the war at the time I was in command at Corinth, Miss., as a brigadier general, when I was ordered by General Grant to report to President Lincoln in Washington."

"I had known of Mr. Lincoln some time prior to his visit to Council Bluffs, as he was the owner of some lots in Council Bluffs, while the owner of the adjoining property was Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio. It was through Mr. Lincoln's ownership of Council Bluffs real estate that I first came to know him."

"I next saw Mr. Lincoln in Washington in 1862, during the civil war, whence I had been ordered by General Grant at Mr. Lincoln's request. I did not see him again after my Washington interview with him. I was in command of the western military department at St. Louis at the time of his death. My estimate of President Lincoln is that he was one of the greatest men that this country has ever produced. In my two interviews with him I came to know him well. He was far-seeing and seemed able even in the awful turmoil of war to comprehend the great needs of the country when war should cease."

"I have been invited to deliver an address upon President Lincoln in Council Bluffs at the centenary celebration of his birth next month and will there endeavor to go more into detail of my acquaintance with him."

In the February issue of Appleton's General Dodge, in alluding to Mr. Lincoln, accords to him the full measure of credit for his participation in events that made the building of the Union Pacific railroad possible. In this article General Dodge says: "My first work in an engineering corps was in 1853 on the Chicago & Rock Island railroad, as it built westward from Chicago. We made a survey for the extension of this line across Iowa to the Missouri river and established the terminals in Council Bluffs. I bought the eighty acres on which these terminals were located and subdivided the tract, a portion being taken by the Rock Island interests and a portion by Council Bluffs citizens. Some of the lots of the railroad company were taken by N. B. Judd, the general attorney for the road. He was a prominent Illinois republican, the intimate friend of Mr. Lincoln, and his representative in the debates with Douglas. Mr. Lincoln's attention was drawn to the progress of the road westward and to the opportunities it offered. He therefore bought from Mr. Judd a portion of his interests in this tract, and his visit to Council Bluffs half a century ago was for the purpose of seeing the country and looking after his real estate interests. I was just then returning from making a reconnaissance westward for the proposed Pacific railroad and reached Council Bluffs at the same time as did Mr. Lincoln. We both stopped at the Pacific hotel. After dinner Mr. Lincoln sought me out and made many inquiries of me regarding the country west of the Missouri river. He was much interested and expressed himself as believing that there was nothing more important before the nation at that time than the building of a railroad to the Pacific coast."

Of his second interview with Mr. Lincoln, then president of the United States, four years later, General Dodge says: "When I reached Washington and reported to the president I found that he had called me to Washington to consult as to the proper place for the initial point of the Union Pacific railway, which under the congressional act of 1862 he was empowered to select. He had not forgotten our conversation on the porch of the Pacific hotel at Council Bluffs. I found him well posted in all the controlling reasons covering such a selection and we went into the matter at length and discussed the arguments presented by the competing points. After going over all the facts that could be presented to him, President Lincoln finally fixed the eastern terminus of the Union Pacific railroad where our surveys determined the proper locality—at Council Bluffs. After this discussion of the location he took up with me the question of building the road. The law of 1862 had failed to bring any capital or men to undertake the work, and I said to him that in my opinion private enterprise could not build the road. Mr. Lincoln said that the government had its hands full and could not undertake the work, but was ready to support any company to the fullest legal extent and amend the law so as to enable such a company to issue securities that would furnish the necessary funds. I went to New York and informed my associates in the enterprise the result of my visit with the president and what he had said. They were greatly encouraged and immediately went to work on the preparation of the measure, which was afterward presented to congress and passed as the Union Pacific bill of 1864. Under this bill the road was built in four years, although congress had allowed ten years for its construction."

"I feel that it was Lincoln's faith, energy and comprehensive grasp of what the building of the road meant to the United States that induced congress to pass liberal laws and made it possible to raise the funds to accomplish the work."

Member of Lincoln's Bodyguard

J. W. Nichols Saw Him Often.

J. W. NICHOLS, watchman at the postoffice building, Omaha, belonged to Company K, 150th Pennsylvania infantry, that was detailed in August, 1862, as the personal bodyguard for President Lincoln, and continued on that duty at the White House until June, 1865. Mr. Nichols says:

"I saw Mr. Lincoln almost daily from August, 1862, until his death, the early morning of April 15, 1865, and was afterwards one of the bodyguard for President Andrew Johnson until our final discharge from the service in June, 1865. We were quartered in temporary barracks just south of the Treasury department building in the White House grounds. It was our duty to escort Mr. Lincoln to and from his summer home at the Soldiers' Home during the summer. We all came to know him personally and he knew most of us by name. Tad Lincoln was at our quarters most of the time."

"Tad was a most lovable young fellow, and was the favorite son of the president, and for this reason I think Mr. Lincoln always had a very kindly feeling for Company K. One thing that always rather amused me regarding Mr. Lincoln was the way in which he would respond to a salute. He always wore an old-fashioned plug hat, and in returning a salute he would awkwardly swing his long right arm around back over his shoulder and grasp his hat by the top instead

of the rim and then bring it down in front of him. I often thought he did this more for the fun of the thing than to really return a salute. He would much sooner grasp a person by the hand and shake it kindly and warmly. Mr. Lincoln was one of the kindest and best of men. His face in the later years of the war always wore an expression of the deepest sadness. He seldom smiled, but whenever he would meet a soldier, no matter how humble his rank or how dirty or ragged were his clothes, Mr. Lincoln always stopped him and spoke to him in the kindest manner."

"I shall never forget the night of his assassination. Yet I had a premonition that something was going to happen, but did not connect Mr. Lincoln with it in any way. We had all been on the Peace Jubilee parade that day and were pretty tired. Mr. Lincoln sent word out to the company that it need not go on duty that evening, as he was going to the theater and would not need a guard. Two or three of the boys went to the theater that night, and when the president was shot one of them came running down to the barracks and told us."

The company was under arms in an instant and we double-quickened up to the theater and were the first troops on the ground. The commanding officer immediately took charge of the situation and we drove the populace back from the front of the theater and then opened the way across the street to the Peterson house, where the president was carried. The Peterson house was a red brick, two-story house sitting above a high basement, a sort of French flat, and was one of a row of similar houses alongside. The president was carried up these steps and laid on a bed in the front room, I think, where he died the following morning at twenty-two minutes past 7 o'clock."

"Of course, everything was in the utmost confusion. Mrs. Lincoln fainted and it was thought for a while that she was dead. I think that those most affected by the tragedy were Secretary Welles, Secretary Stanton and Postmaster General Dennison. Secretary Stanton's grief was most pathetic. He said repeatedly as he leaned over the body of the dying president: 'No one knows, or will ever know, the sorrow of these years, nor how you and I have suffered and been misunderstood, and now I am left all alone, all alone.' Of course, very few people were admitted to the house, none in fact except those connected with the higher officials of the government. We remained on guard at the Peterson house until the dead body of the president was removed to the White House. We continued on guard there until the summer. And, oh, how we missed the gentle, kind face and greeting of Mr. Lincoln."

"There was not a man or boy of us but felt that we had lost more than a father in that great and good man. We had come to look upon him as more than mortal. Not that we stood in awe of him, but that we loved him and esteemed him more than any other mortal being."

Heard Lincoln and Douglas Debate

Judge Cockrell Knew Them Well.

JUDGE GEORGE C. COCKRELL, one of the local justices of the peace, is a man who not only knew Lincoln, but who also met him intimately the time the great emancipator was in Alton, Ill., for one of his debates with Stephen A. Douglas, and Judge Cockrell even acted as marshal of the day during that forensic contest.

It was on October 15, 1858, that two rivals for the senatorship from Illinois met in Alton for one of the debates that have since gone down in history as among the greatest of word battles. Douglas, being the leader of the political faction with which Judge Cockrell was affiliated at that time, registered at the latter's hotel, while Lincoln became a guest at the only other hotel in the town."

"Even on the day of the debate Lincoln was willing to go to see his rival, and they had a witty talk together at my hotel," says Judge Cockrell, recalling the occasion of the debate. "Many people came to see the two men, sentiment and popular opinion being about equally divided between the two at that time."

"Wagons were used by hundreds of farmers and their wives, buggies being scarce, and trips of fifty or sixty miles to hear one of the great debates were not uncommon. There must have been 15,000 people in Alton the time the debate was held here. And I was made marshal of the day, although I was only 22 years of age. It certainly kept me busy to look after that big crowd."

"Tall, awkward and homely, Lincoln's appearance was in marked contrast to that of his opponent in the debate, for Douglas was well-appearing. But there was no advantage in Douglas' address over Lincoln's, for Abe was a powerful speaker and he made just as much of a hit with the Alton people as Douglas did. He was popular with the women, too."

"Lincoln's whiskers were a reality during the time I knew him, when his debate with Douglas was going on. He shaved them off when he ran for the presidency two years later."

"Lincoln knew how to talk to the best advantage. Whenever he got rather serious in his speeches he would stop awhile and tell a story to get next to his auditors and liven them up, so that they never were given a chance to get tired. His power of holding an audience was one of his greatest assets. With plain language and great penetration of voice he held his audiences in rapt attention."

"Every one in the state had heard of Abe Lincoln, but it was the debates that brought him out before the country. I don't know but what Lincoln had things figured out pretty well about how his debates and later contests were going to result. He once told Douglas during the debates that Douglas might win the seat in the senate, but he could never become president on his slavery platform."

On the fiftieth anniversary of the Alton debate Judge Cockrell was invited to go to Alton to attend the reunion and the reproduction of the original contest between Lincoln and Douglas. He accepted with great pleasure and spent several days there. He has this to say about the reproduction of the debate:

"The platform for the speeches was in the same place by the city hall as the original one had been, and the Alton citizens had endeavored to reproduce, as far as possible, the scenes of fifty years ago. There was an immense torchlight parade, but only about 100 of the old crowd were alive to go to the reunion."

As to Lincoln's death, Judge Cockrell, who fought in the war, says:

"We had just taken a town on Mobile bay and were at Blakeley, Ala., when the news of Lincoln's death reached us. It threw the whole regiment into deep mourning, not only outwardly, but with personal feeling and great sincerity. The boys were spurred to fight all the harder when they learned the president had been killed."

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When Lincoln Spoke at Council Bluffs

H. M. Field Recalls the Event.

H. M. FIELD, a pioneer of Council Bluffs, living at 150 Park avenue, that city, was present at the meeting addressed by Abraham Lincoln in Council Bluffs in the fall of 1859.

"I remember the visit of Mr. Lincoln to Council Bluffs very distinctly," says Mr. Field. "He came here by steamboat from St. Joseph, Mo. It was the year after his great debate with Stephen A. Douglas, and we all were curious to see and hear him. The political sentiment of this community then was strongly democratic and we were all admirers of Mr. Douglas. The question of the extension of slavery to the free states had already been settled by the Missouri compromise, so the slave question was not bothering us to any serious extent. There was no particular demonstration over the arrival of Mr. Lincoln, or Old Abe, as he was more popularly known. He spoke in the old concert hall, corner of Sixth street and Broadway, where the opera house now stands."

"Judge Test, a former Indianan, but then in business in the Bluffs, spoke the same night. He was a democrat and was supposed to reply to Lincoln's address. I think that Mr. Lincoln was the guest of W. H. M. Pusey while in the city. I do not remember who presided at the meeting. Mr. Lincoln's speech was along argumentative lines similar to those presented in his debate with Douglas. He compared the conditions of the states where freedom prevailed with the slave-holding states and made an earnest plea for human freedom. He said that he would not interfere with slavery where it already existed, but was opposed to its further extension. He did not arraign the democratic party at all severely, and I rather think that he greatly strengthened the republican cause in his speech. He certainly made friends by his temperate address."

"Judge Test in his reply took the broad democratic ground and intimated that the democratic party was satisfied in leaving well enough alone. He denied Mr. Lincoln's charge that the democratic

party blindly followed its leaders in whatever impracticable or radical measures they advocated. That was about the substance of Judge Test's reply and it was not much of a debate, after all."

"Lincoln made a good impression, as well as making lots of friends, by his visit to the Bluffs and the people remained his steadfast friends ever afterward."

"As I remember him, he was tall, awkward and ungainly, and also homely, but his earnestness impressed me, as it did all who heard him."

Omaha Woman Who Knew Booth

Mrs. Marrow Tells Interesting Story.

MRS. MARY A. MARROW, 2609 Charles street: "I well remember the night of President Lincoln's assassination. I lived in the same row of flats on Tenth street, between E and F Washington, about five doors from the Peterson house to which the body of President Lincoln was removed after he was shot in Ford's theater the night of April 14, 1865. I was then Miss Mary Sardo, my father was Nathaniel Sardo, who was then connected in an editorial capacity with the Washington Star. J. Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Lincoln, was well known to all of us young people living opposite Ford's theater. He occasionally took rooms in the Peterson house, because of its accessibility to the theater. I was a frequent visitor there, knowing William Peterson and his family quite well. Peterson has two daughters and one son. The daughters were intimates of mine and we very frequently went to the theater just across the street."

"On the evening of the assassination of the president I had been invited by Mr. Booth to go to the theater and see Laura Keane in her production of 'The American Cousin.' I had intended to go with the Peterson girls, but being a Catholic and the day being Good Friday, I did not go. I went to bed reasonably early that evening. About 10 o'clock my brother came to my room and called me, stating that the president had been shot over in the theater and to get up at once. I dressed hurriedly and went to the parlor window. The street was then thronged with an excitable mass of humanity and soldiers were hurrying up to the front of the theater. Shortly afterward a pathway was cleared through the crowd from the theater to the Peterson house, which laid directly across the street from Ford's theater. I saw the body of the president brought from the theater to the Peterson house. The military then forced the crowd back from in front of the house and theater."

"The body of the president was taken into the servants' room, which is on the first floor above a high basement of the Peterson house. The room was very small and but few people could get into it. We did not go into the Peterson house that night, but did the following morning after the president's death. Miss Peterson took me into the room and showed me the blood-stained pillows upon which President Lincoln's head had rested. That same day our entire family was placed under arrest under the presumption that Booth had secreted himself in our house. We remained under arrest only that day, for it had been ascertained that Booth at that time was rooming with Mrs. Surratt on H street, between Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets."

"I have always believed that Mrs. Surratt was wholly innocent of any connection with President Lincoln's assassination. Booth and his confederates simply roomed there, and I believe that she was unjustly hung. She could not, by any possible means, know the personal character of any of her roomers, and hence knew nothing of Booth."

Saw Fatal Shot Fired

David Dorn Witness of Murder.

DAVID DORN of Beatrice actually saw President Lincoln assassinated. Mr. Dorn was at Ford's theater in Washington that fatal night and saw J. Wilkes Booth fire the shot that ended in cold blood the life of one of the sublimest characters in history. He gives a most graphic description of this tragedy.

Mr. Dorn had served his country as a member of the First United States cavalry. He had been wounded and was in the hospital at Washington. He went to the theater that night on crutches and he believes had he not been crippled he might have caught Booth."

"I was sitting right across the theater from the president's box and saw the whole tragedy," said Mr. Dorn. "I was on crutches. The president's box was decorated with flags and the flag toward the stage side partly obscured a full view of all those in the box. But I think Mr. Lincoln, Mrs. Lincoln, Major Rathbone, Tad Lincoln and possibly another man and woman were in the box. Mr. Lincoln sat pretty well toward the front. Laura Keane was on the stage at the moment playing 'Our American Cousin.'"

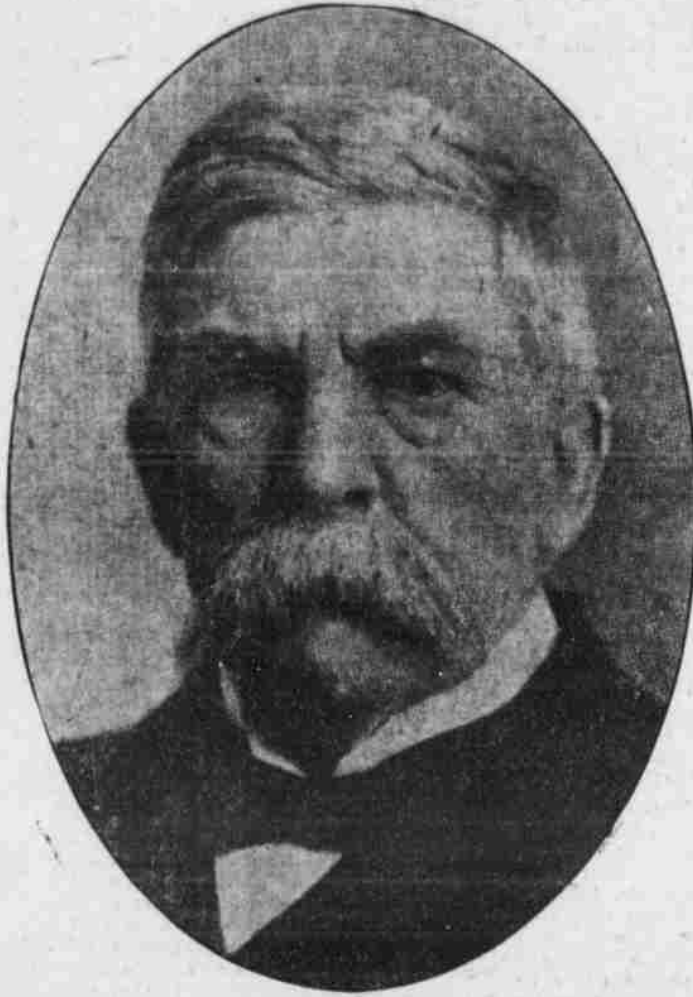
"I noticed that Mr. Lincoln was laughing at something in the play. Just then I noticed the curtain in the rear of Mr. Lincoln's box pulled apart and I looked squarely at the man as he came in. At first I thought he was one of the theater attendants bringing in a glass of water and decanter, for something shone in each of his hands."

"Just then a shot rang out and Mr. Lincoln seemed partly to rise from his sitting posture and then sank back and his head lunged forward and I saw a little trickle of blood running down his cheek. Mrs. Lincoln screamed and Major Rathbone rose quickly and turned to seize the man, who struck at him with a dirk knife and, breaking loose from Major Rathbone, put one foot on the rail of the front of the box and sprang toward the stage. His spur caught in the flag and Booth partly fell on the stage. Laura Keane screamed as Booth rose to his feet, slipping and waving the dagger, spoke out in a deeply tragic voice, 'Sic Semper Tyrannis,' and then ran toward the rear of the stage."

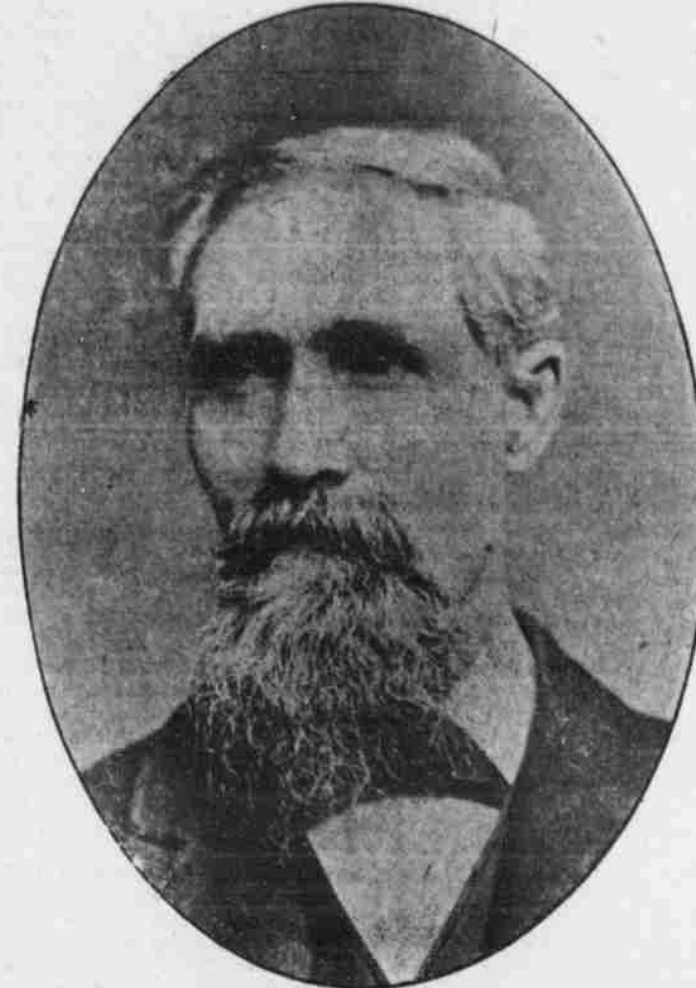
"Some of the boys with me made an effort to get onto the stage and catch Booth, but they were held back and someone called out, 'Be calm, men, be calm; the president is only slightly hurt. The theater people have caught the assassin.'"

"While I have suffered the tortures of the damned from my lost leg and have had to submit to two partial amputations, I never more regretted the loss of my leg than that minute. I could have caught Booth when he started to fall on the stage, for I was an active lad in those days before my wound. But there I was, helpless. All I could do was cry."

"Necessarily I was one of the last persons to leave the theater. Mr. Lincoln had been taken some little time before. The curtain had been lowered in the meanwhile, though it was raised shortly afterward, when one of the theater people came to the front and said that Booth had escaped out the back window and had ridden away on a horse. Soldiers fired in immediately afterward and took possession of the theater."



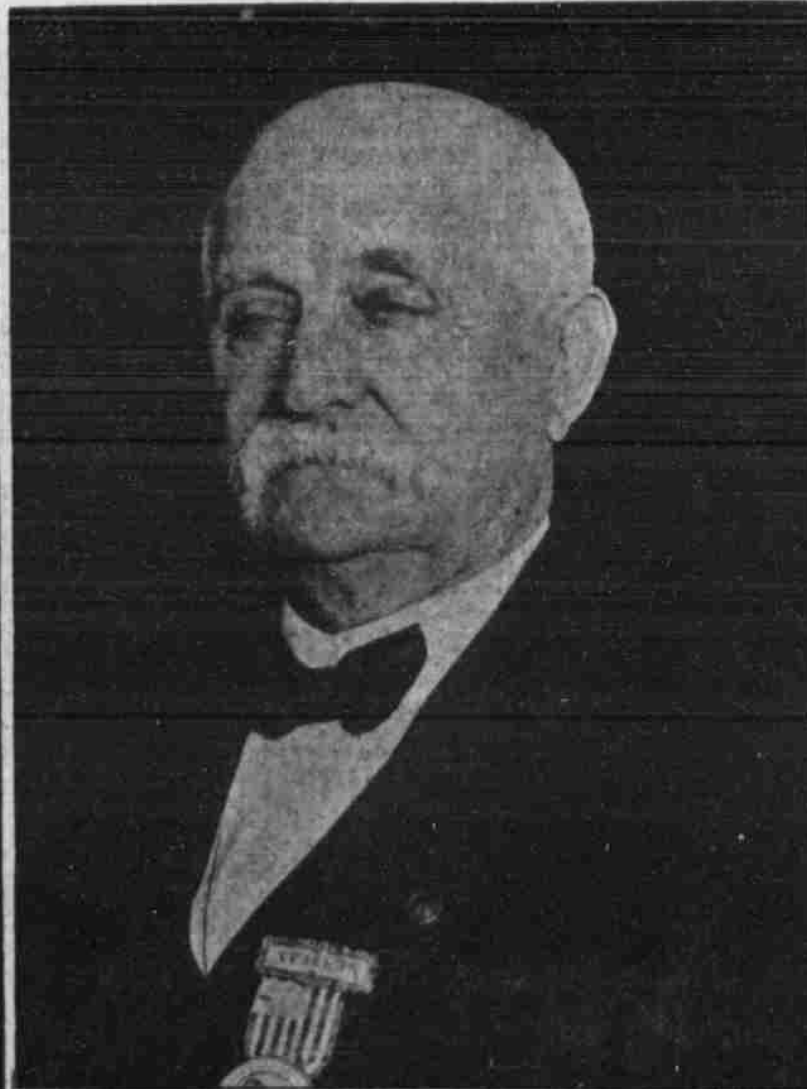
GRENVILLE M. DODGE,
Who Consulted With Lincoln About Building the Union Pacific Road.



DAVID DORN,
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