

Busey, Samuel Clagett Busey. *Personal Reminiscences and Recollections of Forty-Six Years' Membership Medical Society of the District of Columbia, Residence in this City, DC: Washington, 1895, pp. 25-28*

... I took the office on A Street, S. E., now included in the eastern park of the Capitol, vacated by Dr. Francis M. Gunnell, who had a week before passed the Medical Examining Board for the Navy, at the head of the list, and took my meals at a boarding-house kept by Mrs. Sprigg, occupying a seat at the table nearly opposite Abraham Lincoln, whom I soon learned to know and admire for his simple and unostentatious manners, kind-heartedness, and amusing jokes, anecdotes, and witticisms. When about to tell an anecdote during a meal he would lay down his knife and fork, place his elbows upon the table, rest his face between his hands, and begin with the words "that reminds me," and proceed. Everybody prepared for the explosions sure to follow. I recall with vivid pleasure the scene of merriment at the dinner after his first speech in the House of Representatives, occasioned by the descriptions, by himself and others of the Congressional mess, of the uproar in the House during its delivery.

I had not attached any importance, and had rarely referred to the fact of having boarded in the same house with Mr. Lincoln until I read a statement in one of the daily papers to the effect that a diligent search made by the Memorial Association of the District of Columbia had failed to locate the house in which he had resided during his service in Congress; and, more recently, having declined an invitation to make an address at the memorial meeting, held April 14, 1894, the twenty-ninth anniversary of his death, in which I was requested to set forth such facts, circumstances, and reminiscences of Congressman Lincoln as I might recall, it has seemed not only eminently proper, but incumbent upon me to comply so far with that request as to record in some permanent form the brief details of that association.

The house was the fourth of a row of houses known as "Carroll Row," situated on the east side of First Street, E., between A Street, S., and East Capitol Street, the south house of the row being at the corner of First and A Streets, S. The location is now better known as the west front of one of the squares (729) upon which the new Library building is being built. The corner house was occupied by Gen. Duff Green and family, who took their meals at the Sprigg boarding-house, the next by William I. McCormick and family, and the third by John H. Houston and family. The two houses north of the Sprigg house were boarding-houses, then a stonecutter's yard, and the three-story brick house at the corner of First Street, E., and East Capitol Street, with a shop on the ground floor and dwelling above occupied by the stonecutter, completed the west front of the square.

There was a large number of boarders at the Sprigg house, among whom may be named, besides Mr. Lincoln, Messrs. McIlvaine, Dick, Blanchard, and Pollock, members of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania, and Thompkins, M. C., from Mississippi, the Green family, Nathan Sargent—better known as "Oliver Oldschool"—Edmund French, a private citizen, and myself. All the members of the House of Representatives were Whigs. The Wilmot Proviso was the topic of frequent conversation and the occasion of very many angry controversies. Dick, who represented the Lancaster district in Pennsylvania, afterward represented by Thaddeus Stevens, was a very offensive man in manner and conversation, and seemed to take special pleasure in ventilating his opinions and provoking unpleasant discussions with the Democrats and some of the Whigs, especially Thompkins, who held adverse opinions on the Wilmot Proviso. Nathan Sargent was also a radical, but was so interested in the success of the Whigs and the election of Zachary Taylor that he restrained himself and followed Mr. Lincoln, who may have been as radical as either of these gentlemen, but was so discreet in giving expression to his convictions on the slavery question as to avoid giving offence to anybody, and was so conciliatory as to create the impression, even among the proslavery advocates, that he did not wish to introduce or discuss subjects that would provoke a controversy. When such conversation would threaten angry or even unpleasant contention he would interrupt it by interposing some anecdote, thus diverting it into a hearty and general laugh, and so completely disarrange the tenor of the discussion that the parties engaged would

either separate in good humor or continue conversation free from discord. This amicable disposition made him very popular with the household.