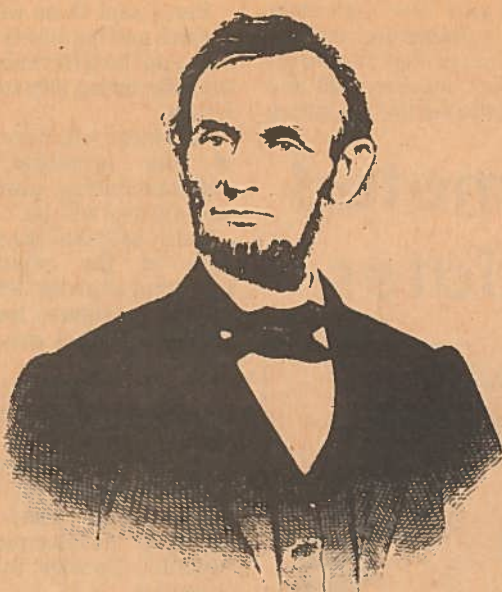


Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin
County
Historian



"Die when I may, I want it said
of me by those who knew me best, that
I always plucked a thistle and planted
a flower where I thought a flower would
grow." A. Lincoln

Seeing Lincoln

By Ziba Roberts, Jr.

Vol. VIII

3-5-86

No. 8

Ziba Roberts, Jr. was born on a farm near East Shelby July 31, 1840. On Nov. 8, 1861 he enlisted in Company D of the 28th N.Y. Infantry and served 19 months during the Civil War. He was with the Army of the Potomac and was taken prisoner of war in the Shenandoah Valley during Bank's retreat May 25, 1862. He was taken to Lynchburg and kept there until Aug. 8, 1862 when he was transferred to Belle Island until Sept. 14. At that time he was paroled and afterwards, exchanged. He was mustered out of the Union Army in May 1863. At that time he returned to his native East Shelby where in 1867 he married Cynthia Dewey. They had seven children. Mr. Roberts was a Commander and Chaplin of the S.J. Hood GAR Post in Medina and was very active in the East Shelby M.E. Church. In his latter years Ziba Roberts wrote an account of seeing the Great Emancipator which follows:

"The first and only time that I saw Abraham Lincoln was in the Spring of 1863 when he came out to review the Army of the Potomac. He was on horseback. He was a man several inches over six feet tall, and wore a stove pipe hat which made him look very tall beside the other men that rode with him. As none of you have ever had the privilege of seeing anything of the kind I will try and tell about it. In this army there were as near as I can remember 40,000 or 50,000 soldiers, who when in line of march, would reach four or five miles in length. In the first place, President Lincoln and staff sat on their horses and we marched past where they stood which took two or three hours and after we had all marched by, then we were formed in line in the different Army Corps, and then the President and staff rode by us, and as he rode past each regiment, we would receive orders to salute which was done by holding our guns in an upright position in front of us, and the President would respond by taking off his hat which would give us a good view of his face. Always when on the march we were four abreast, and when we were standing in line there were two lines of men. The rear line was 13 inches behind the front line, a position which we had while in battle.

"I will try and tell you of some things which happened during the war which had to do with the President. The penalty for a soldier getting to sleep while on picket duty was death. There was a soldier by the name of Benny -- who was caught asleep while on the picket and it was in the paper that he was to be shot at a certain day. Now Benny had a little sister who saw the item in the paper and unknown to her parents took the train to Washington to see the President, and was permitted an interview with him. She told how Benny had been caught asleep on his post and how much he was to his parents, etc., and after she had finished, the great and good Lincoln sat down and wrote a few lines and gave it to the girl, and then rang a bell and a man appeared in uniform. The President told him to take the girl to where Benny was as quick as possible, as there was no time to waste. The paper that the girl held in her hand was a pardon and a furlough for