

Lincoln - 2016

Edited 5/15

Wait for the Wagon

Callie and Allen enter from opposite sides of the stage, meeting center)

Callie: *(Holding a book)* Allen, have you been reading this new biography of President Lincoln by Ward Hill Lamon? (Lamon = lay-men)

Allen: Ah, the book Harvey gave us for our anniversary? *(Callie nods and holds up the book)* Not yet my dear. Are you enjoying it?

Callie: Oh, yes! Mr. Lamon's anecdotes about the President are simply wonderful.

Allen: As I recall, Lamon was Lincoln's law associate back in Illinois before they traveled to Washington together for the Presidential Inauguration in 1861.

Callie: Yes. It turns out that shortly after his death, Lamon's daughter collected and edited many of his unpublished writings about Lincoln and has just published "Recollections of Abraham Lincoln."

Allen: I will definitely have to give it a read. Wasn't Lamon a bit of a musician, as well?

Callie: He certainly was. And Mr. Lincoln had a special place in his own heart for music. It seems that was the reason he invited Mr. Lamon to accompany him on that pre-inaugural trip to Washington; Lamon provided some musical entertainment along the 14-day journey. *(Points to a spot in the book)* It says here that when possible, Mr. Lincoln tried to avoid talking to assembled crowds by calling for music from a local band. Mr. Lincoln professed that his knowledge of music was limited. He claimed "I know only two tunes, one is 'Old Hundredth,' ---- and the other isn't."

CUE: OLD HUNDREDTH

Callie: It seems as though their train trip from Springfield to Washington was quite a journey. They made stops all along the way. Indianapolis, Columbus, Pittsburgh, Buffalo and New York City. They were greeted by almost 100,000 spectators in Philadelphia.

Allen: And they also traveled through Baltimore, Maryland but they did not stop there. Two conspiracies to assassinate Mr. Lincoln were uncovered there by Mr. Pinkerton, They traveled through the city on a special train in the dead of the night. *(Callie agrees)*

Allen: And of course, our own Dodworth Band serenaded the President –elect in New Jersey with a stirring rendition of "Hail to the Chief!"

CUE: HAIL TO THE CHIEF

Callie: Once in Washington, Lamon continued his practice of providing musical diversion for Mr. Lincoln. He writes, "I had often recalled him from a pit of melancholy into which he was prone to descend, by a jest, a comic song, or a provoking sally of a startling kind; and Mr. Lincoln always thanked me afterward for my well-timed rudeness 'of kind intent'. This reminds me of one or two little rhythmic shots I often

fired at him in his melancholy moods, and it was a kind of nonsense that he always keenly relished. One was a parody on ‘Life on the Ocean Wave.’”

Allen: (*He sings a cappella*) ‘Oh, a life on the ocean wave, And a home on the rolling deep! With ratlins fried three times a day And a leaky old berth for to sleep; Where the gray-beard cockroach roams, On thoughts of kind intent, And the raving bedbug comes, The road the cockroach went.’

Why, I used that very melody in my arrangement of the Ocean Wave Quickstep!

CUE: OCEAN WAVE QUICKSTEP

Callie: Lamon also writes, “Mr. Lincoln would always laugh immoderately when I sang this jingling nonsense to him. It reminded him of the rude and often witty ballads that had amused him in his boyhood days. He was fond of negro melodies, and ‘The Blue-Tailed Fly’ was a favorite. He often called for that buzzing ballad when we were alone, and he wanted to throw off the weight of public and private cares.”

CUE: THE BLUE-TAILED FLY (vocal)

Allen: I recall seeing the president at the theatre many times and a comic song always restored Mr. Lincoln’s cheerful good-humor.

Callie: Yes dear, but Lamon writes, “While he had a great fondness for witty and mirth-provoking ballads, our grand old patriotic airs and songs of the tender and sentimental kind afford him the deepest pleasure. ‘Ben Bolt’ was one of his favorite ballads.”

Allen: A lovely melody and such touching lyrics:

Oh don’t you remember sweet Alice, Ben Bolt
Sweet Alice whose hair was so brown
Who wept with delight when you gave her a smile
And trembled with fear at your frown.

CUE: BEN BOLT

Callie: Well, Mr. Lincoln surely had an affinity for music. I am glad that Mr. Lamon was able to bring that to light when writing about his days with the President.

Allen: It is very satisfying to be in the business of making music, especially when our beloved President so often promoted it. I remember when he said – “all other pleasures had a utility, but that music was simply a pleasure and nothing more, and that he fancied that the creator, after providing all the mechanism for carrying on the world, made music as a simple, unalloyed pleasure...”

Callie: Yes, it seems music was an integral part of life for him. I will always remember when news of the Rebels’ surrender at Appomattox came out and people flocked to the White House lawn to celebrate, Mr. Lincoln spoke to the crowd briefly and then asked the band, that was among the revelers, to play one of his favorites: Dixie’s Land.

CUE: Dixie’s Land