

"Yes, I Talked With Lincoln"

By Robert L. Kincaid

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FEW people are living today who knew Abraham Lincoln. The thinning ranks of that distinguished group who can claim the honor of having spoken with the great Civil War President will soon be gone altogether, yet here and there are a few who can proudly say, "Yes, I talked with Lincoln."

When I was in Gettysburg from July 1 to 3 for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the battle, I tried to find out who among the 2,000 Union and Confederate soldiers attending that last reunion had known Lincoln personally. Only one such veteran was discovered. There may have been others, but of the hundreds interviewed, I could not learn of anyone else.

Mr. Frederick Buy, 94, of Danville, Illinois, told me that he had talked with Lincoln. I tried to gain from him all that he had known about Lincoln. I planned to use his picture in the Lincoln Herald and a story of his interview with Lincoln. I thought that it would make him happy, and he agreed to send his picture to me after he had returned home.

What a feeling of deep sorrow did I have when I recently received a letter from Mrs. Edward Atwood, his daughter, saying that her father had lived only twelve days after he returned from Gettysburg! The kindly old veteran had contracted a cold while on his trip, and went to bed as soon as he returned home. He told Mrs. Atwood of his interview with me, and his desire to send the picture. He said that he would attend to it as soon as

he got well. He did not recover, but I will keep faith with this grand old veteran and tell of his interview with Lincoln just as I had planned.

We were sitting in the shade, in front of his tent. He appeared to be resting easy and was perfectly contented; his hearing was good, his eyesight was keen and he talked with strength and ready understanding. I can see him now as he reclined in his canvas chair and talked fondly of that day in Illinois about 1858 when he saw for the first time the man who was to become to him the greatest man in all the world. This is about the way he told it to me:

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"I was about 15 years of age as I remember. I had just come from New York. I was born on October 23, 1844, in Prussia, Germany, and came across the water with my parents to try out the new world. It took thirty-six days to cross from Hamburg to New York City. Not

long after that I pushed further west and came to Danville. I got a job in a woolen mill. I was working near a machine when a tall man with kindly eyes and friendly manner came into the factory and walked along, looking at different workmen. He stopped beside me and watched for several minutes before he spoke. Then he said:

"Boy, what are you doing there?"

"I replied, 'I am pitting wool.' I explained to him what I meant by that.

"Then he said:



Frederick Buy, 94, of Danville, Illinois, who happily gathered with his comrades in Gettysburg, proudly telling of his personal talk with Lincoln, and who lived only twelve days after his return home.

