

Horace Greeley

See - Greeley's Recollections of a Busy Life.

Page 405 - Only Story Greeley ever heard Lincoln tell

New York, Oct. 21, 1929.

### LINCOLN AT THE WIRE.

Military Telegraph Got Most of President's Attention.

To the Editor of The New York Times:

A recent news item in THE TIMES refers to a historic chair reposing in one of the rooms of the Navy Department, used, according to tradition, by President Lincoln when he spent evenings there awaiting dispatches over the navy telegraph system. This tradition may possibly have some foundation, but it was the military telegraph that handled most of the official messages during the Lincoln Administration, the Washington office being in the War Department.

My father, enlisted in that service, was attached to this office for nearly two years and was one of the operators who sent out the Emancipation Proclamation. I have his wartime diaries and papers in which he records frequent visits by Lincoln to read dispatches fresh from the field, especially when the armies were known to be in action.

During the Battle of Fredericksburg, which began at 8 o'clock on a Sunday morning, the President came into the office in his slippers and remained all day and far into the night.

Another morning he came in just as the operators were scanning a copy of Leslie's Weekly containing a cartoon representing Lincoln as a butcher, with sleeves rolled up, cutting off the head of General Burnside, who, a moment later, also entered. "Here is your head," said the President, pointing to the picture, and all joined in a hearty laugh.

After the Battle of Antietam, which annoyed him greatly because of failure to follow up the advantage, Lincoln, at the side of the operator, sent General McClellan dispatch after dispatch to hurry him.

As nearly all the fighting took place on land, President Lincoln naturally kept his close contact with the War Department telegraph rather than with the navy.

VICTOR ROSEWATER.  
Philadelphia, Pa., Oct. 21, 1929.

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