

During the year 1862 I got a furlough to visit my family, who were living at Montgomery Lycoming County, Pa., where I owned a home. While at home on this trip, Seth Kinman, the old California hunter and trapper, came to my place. He was a first cousin of mine, my mother being a sister of his father. Mr. Kinman had with him the famous elk horn chair which he had made for President Lincoln. On my return to the army Kinman went with me for the sole purpose of presenting the chair to the President. I had the extreme pleasure of being one of the men who carried the chair to Mr. Lincoln at the White House, and it was an occasion that I will never forget. Mr. Clinton Lloyd, a prominent attorney from Williamsport, Pa., made the presentation address. I will always remember Mr. Lincoln's remarks on that occasion. Kinman's father and Abe Lincoln had been in the Black Hawk war together in Illinois, and Seth had with him an old flint-lock rifle which his father had used in that war. Mr. Lincoln took up the old rifle and, taking sight over the long barrel, said: "Mr. Kinman, I believe these are the best guns yet." Another incident that occurred at the presentation was this: I had in my hand a violin which Mr. Kinman had made out of an old mule's head. He was a genius, and was next to Ole Bull on a violin. He told Mr. Lincoln this little bit of its history: When he crossed the plains in an early day to California he camped at the same place where old Dave's body had been left. Of course there was nothing to be seen but the bones. He turned old Dave's skull over and thought to himself, "I will make something out of old Dave yet." So he took the skull and rib along with him and afterwards made this violin out of it. He boiled and scraped the old skull until you could have seen yourself in it, and from the rib he made the bow. Old Dave had always been a great lover

of music. Kinman always carried a violin with him, and when ever he would play old Dave would invariably come up to the camp fire.

After Mr. Lincoln sat down in the chair and tried it all over, he said: "Mr. Kinman, you got my measure pretty well; it just fits me."

Mr. Kinman now said: "Mr. President, I have something else here that I want to show you." "What is it?" inquired Abe. Just then I stepped forward from the rear of the room and handed the violin to Kinman. Mr. Lincoln viewed it all over and asked: "Now, Mr. Kinman, will it make any music?" Seth took the violin and said, "Mr. Lincoln, I will play you two tunes. One is the "Essence of Old Virginia" and the other is "Root, Hog or Die." He also played "Away Down in Dixie." Well, when Kinman drew the bow across those strings it took old Abe so down that he laughed until his stove pipe hat fell on the floor. I never saw a man enjoy anything like Mr. Lincoln did that music. When the music ceased, Mr. Lincoln said: "Now, Mr. Kinman, I will take the chair and you take the violin; for I can sit in the chair but can't play the violin." This ended the presentation of the buck horn chair.

-----John G. Huntington.

From pamphlet - "Reminiscences of
John G. Huntington; &
a Pioneer of Kansas and the
Two Mexicos.
Sent by student in Biography
Course at Bucknell Nov 1930