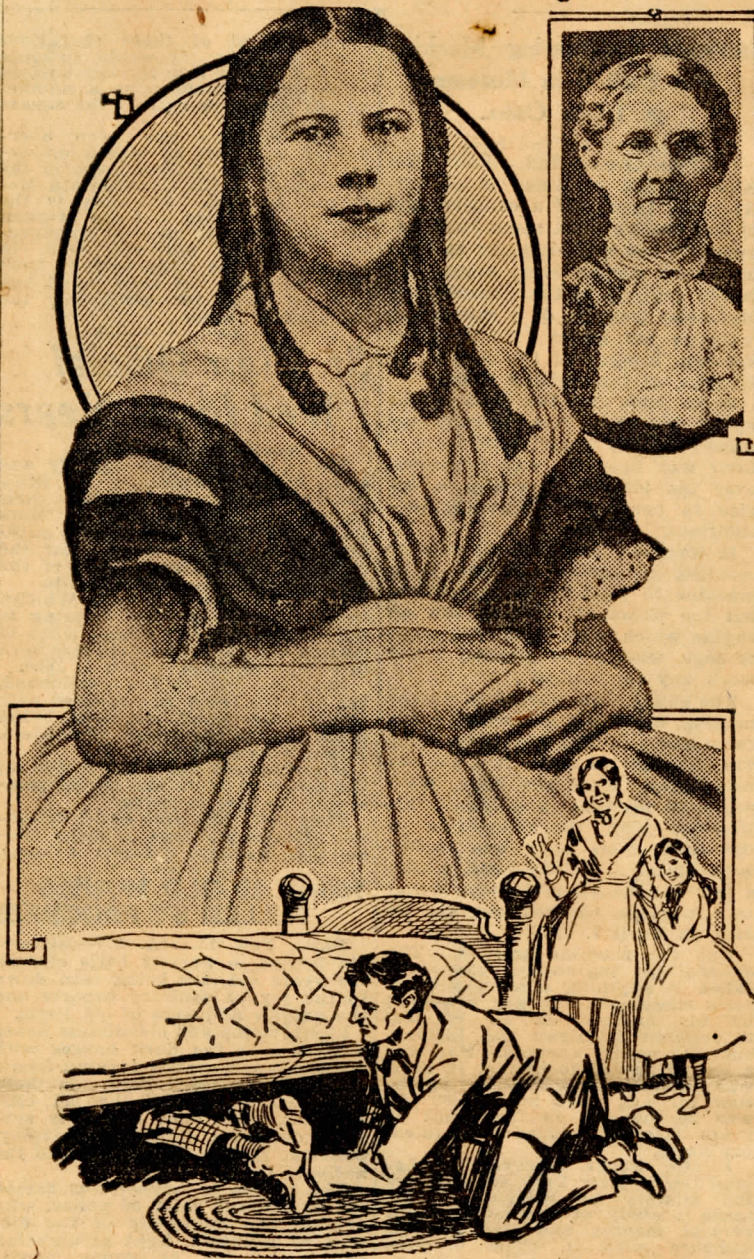


Old Neighbor Recalls Lincoln's Kindly Acts



MRS. OLIVIA WHITEMAN AS A YOUNG GIRL, AND TODAY.

'Abe' Used to Fill Her Wood Pile, Girl Who Lived Next Door Says.

Vandalia, Ill., Feb. 11.—Mrs. Olivia Whiteman, of Vandalia, is believed to be the last surviving neighbor of Abraham Lincoln. When the great emancipator was practicing law at Springfield, Ill., she was a young school girl and knew Lincoln, not as did others who claimed such honor through the contacts of law, politics, or business affairs, but as a neighbor and friend.

As Olivia Leldig, made an orphan at an early age, she came to Springfield to make her home with an aunt, who resided next door to the Lincoln homestead.

This aunt, Mrs. Julia Ann Spriggs, was an intimate friend of Mrs. Lincoln, and they daily exchanged confidences.

Favorite With Lincoln.

Miss Leldig was a favorite at the Lincoln residence, coming and going with the freedom of a member of the family. "Monkey Tad" Lincoln, the favorite son of the war president, was equally at home in the Spriggs' house, and when Tad was missing, the chances were that he would be at the Spriggs'.

Mrs. Whiteman recalls that Lincoln would stride across the lawn and knock at the door, and solemnly ask: "Where is that bad boy?" The twinkle in his eye would indicate that he was not in earnest.

Mrs. Spriggs would indicate the hiding place of the irrepressible lad, usually under a bed, and Lincoln would get down on his knees and drag the lad out of his retreat, all enjoying the scene.

Lincoln's Consideration.

The Lincolns were considerate neighbors, and Mrs. Whiteman recalls that frequently the Spriggs wood pile was replenished through the thoughtfulness of the vigorous young attorney.

"Just had more than we needed," he would explain. "Had it sent over because it was in the way."

This harmless deceit was fully and gratefully understood by the widow. It was the same during the summer months, when he would almost daily send over a piece of ice for a cooling drink, explaining that there was a surplus that the Lincoln family did not need.

Then the circus days. It was Lincoln who always insisted that the children of the neighbors accompany himself and his family.

Her Views of Mrs. Lincoln

"Mrs. Lincoln," Mrs. Whiteman recalls, "was, perhaps, excitable, and said many things that were caustic, but she was proud of her husband and children, and entertained an ardent belief that the husband would some day be president. She made no effort to conceal her ambition and belief. She was a beautiful woman, always well dressed, and in marked contrast to her husband, who was inclined to be careless about his attire, preferring comfort to style."

Mrs. Whiteman has been a resident of Vandalia since the Civil war.

DETROIT FREE PRESS
Sunday, Feb 12, 1928