

LINCOLN'S GRAVE ROBBERY LINKED TO BOYD'S ARREST IN FULTON, IL

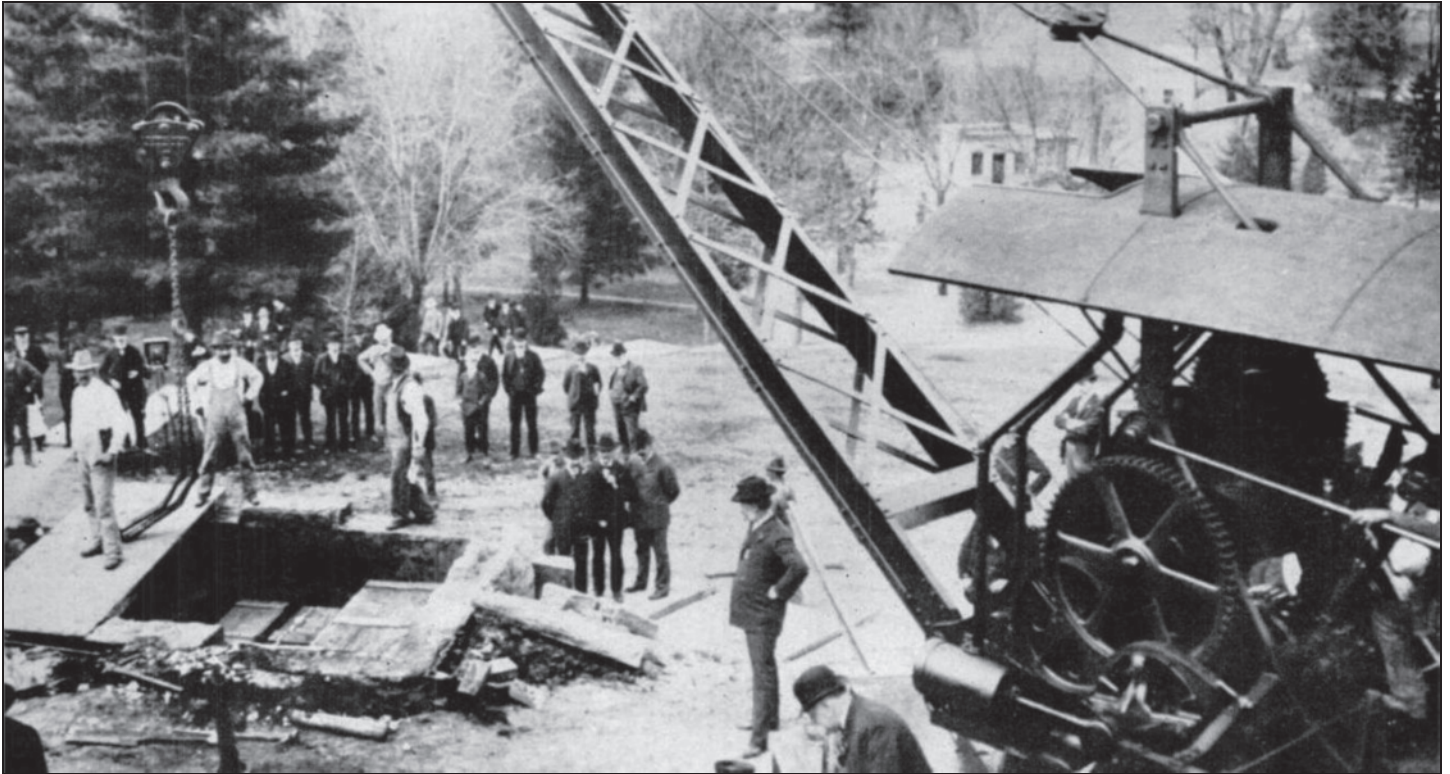


Photo: On September 26, 1901, a crane lifted the coffins of the Lincoln family from their temporary vault for reburial in the reconstructed Lincoln Monument, under the direction of Robert Lincoln, President and Mrs. Lincoln's only surviving son.

By Barbara Mask

PART TWO

This writer of Fulton History: Did You Know? would have preferred to write an article that President Abraham Lincoln had spoken here, slept here or performed some legal service as a circuit-rider-lawyer in Fulton, IL, 'but history is, what it was.' The arrest of Benjamin Boyd by the Secret Service in 1875 and the national consequences is a page of Fulton's history.

This is the rest of the story of Benjamin Boyd's arrest by federal agents in Fulton, IL in 1875 and the ghoulish consequences that ensued.

Boyd, a master engraver of counterfeit money, was arrested on 13th Avenue on October 21, 1875. An article, dated March 27, 2013, recalled accounts of the arrest and activities leading up to the capture that were detailed in Fulton Journal articles and notes taken from a in depth daily journal written by Chief Operative Officer Patrick Tyrrell.

The counterfeit ring was at a loss without the engraving skills of Boyd who was incarcerated in the Joliet State Penitentiary following his arrest and conviction at trial. Counterfeit ring leaders, such as Jack Hughes and Terrence Mullen, plotted to steal President Lincoln's body so that his remains could be used as a ransom to free Benjamin Boyd from prison. The punishment for grave robbery was a small fine and minimal jail sentence was one reason for choosing this method for ransom and targeting President Lincoln would assure them of Boyd's release, was their rationale.

The initial plan, set for July 3rd, was plotted by the Logan County Gang; specifically in a tavern in Lincoln, IL; coincidentally named after the 16th President. One of the gang, while drunk, bragged about the upcoming plan and that attempt was thwarted.. A plaque, identifying the Lincoln, IL location of planning the robbery, remains in place today.

The heinous crime, grave robbery, was prevalent in the mid-1800s. Medical colleges were always in need of cadavers and skeletons for human anatomy classes. The punishment was not severe and the income derived (schools were willing to pay cash for bodies, no questions asked) from the dastardly deed was substantial so the grave robbing crime rate was high.

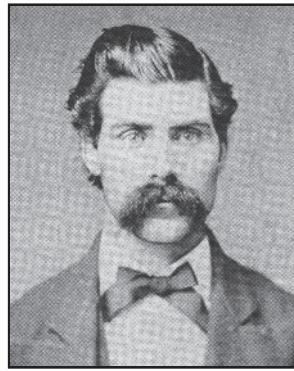
While the counterfeiting business was languishing without Boyd's engraving skill, the ring leaders plotted another attempt to steal the President's remains. This plan was carefully plotted in a saloon in Chicago, named 'The Hub,' owned by Jack Hughes; one of the counterfeiter's ring leaders. The next target date was November 7. It was election day and the gang thought that attention would be elsewhere away from the Oak Ridge Cemetery. The robbers arrived, but word had leaked again about the attempt to rob the grave, and the Secret Service Agents were also positioned at the tomb. A gun, fired unintentionally by one of the agents, alarmed the robbers.

They had been successful in removing the marble sarcophagus lid before the gun frightened them away from the scene.

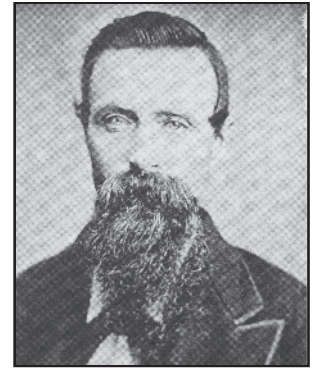
It would take many years and several plans to ensure that the President would be safe from robbers any time again. In 1901, under the supervision of Robert Lincoln, the President's only living son, a new concrete tomb was erected. He had worked as a lawyer for George Pullman, owner of the Pullman Railroad Company and Pullman community, whose body was also threatened by robbery attempts, and modeled his parents and brothers graves to be entombed in the manner of Pullman's.

Boyd served his years of imprisonment and while the counterfeiting business did not prosper for several years, it did revive and continues today to be an important mission for the United Secret Service Agency.

Sources: Caughwell, Thomas, J., STEALING LINCOLN'S BODY; Sheinkin, Steve, LINCOLN'S GRAVE ROBBERS



**Terence Mullen
Counterfeiter**

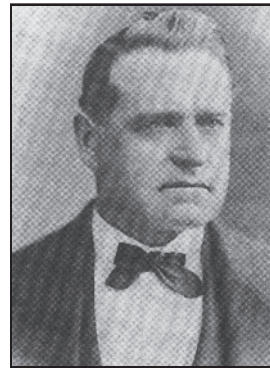


**Jack Hughes
Counterfeiter**

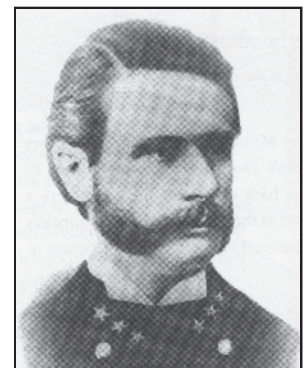
THE SECRET SERVICE AGENCY



Photo of Secret Service Agents in 1865, the year the bureau was created.



Technically, Secret Service detective Patrick D. Tyrrell's job was to hunt down counterfeiters. Because the grave robbers in this case were involved in counterfeiting, however, Tyrrell's superiors authorized him to take on the case.



First Chief of the Secret Service, Elmer Washburn, directed Terrell to arrest Boyd in Fulton and to take his prisoner to Chicago to await trial.

President Abraham Lincoln signed the document that created the U. S. Secret Service Agency on April 14, 1865; the date of his assassination. It remains one of those unique historical coincidences. The newly-formed commission, however, had only one mission at inception and that was to combat and suppress the counterfeit activity that was rampant in America during and after the Civil War. Resources state that about one-third of the U.S. currency was counterfeit and posed a serious threat to the fragile banking industry.

The Secret Service Agency was the first federal law enforcement division. Its first director was Elmer Washburn, who

ordered the Chief Operative Agent Patrick Tyrrell to arrest Benjamin Boyd in Fulton and take him as prisoner to the Milwaukee Depot. The Secret Service preceded the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Because of its financial nature, it was organized under the Treasury Department.

It wasn't until 1901, following the assassination of William McKinley, that Congress added the protection of the President of the United States as the second mission of the Agency. It added protection for their families in 1951. Later, the Agency responsibilities included safeguarding visiting state dignitaries.. Lin-

coln was assassinated in 1865, Chester A. Garfield in 1881 and McKinley in 1901. Presidential candidates began receiving protection by the Secret Service following the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy in 1968.

The Agency continues to focus on counterfeit activity, its original mission, as incredible amounts of money continue to invade the currency system in the United States.

On March 1, 2003, the United States Secret Service Agency was transferred to the Department of Homeland Security from the Treasury Department.