Starke County 19b

"Tidbits of Starke County History".....

Many of you have written back about the Starke County Tidbits, adding more information about the subject. Since the nation is celebrating the 200th birth of Abe Lincoln, I thought the following was an interesting story about John Tierney (who donated the land on which "The Little Company of Mary" facility at San Pierre was built) that I should pass it on to everyone.

John Origer writes:

"I enjoyed the Little Company of Mary article and the information about Mary Potter and John Tierney. Your article prompted me to share a story related to John Tierney that my dad, Joseph Origer, told me that I hope you find interesting, if not fascinating.

When my mom was a resident of Holy Cross (Little Company of Mary) Nursing Home about 10 years ago my dad told a few of the nuns a story that made their mouths drop and scurry to get pen and paper.

My dad said, "There probably are few people alive that can say they knew someone that attended Abraham Lincoln's funeral." He went on to explain.

It was the week between Christmas and New Year's, 1940. My dad and mom had just been married in November of that year. My dad, a lifelong farmer, was doing some carpentry work on the side. He and brother-in-law, Joe Dolezal, were finishing the installation of flooring at John Tierney's home in San Pierre. They were gathering their tools and materials in a bit of a hurry as they knew people were coming over very soon to help celebrate John Tierney's 90th birthday.

The nuns caring for Mr. Tierney insisted that dad and Mr. Dolezal stay for cake. Sheepishly, they sat down at the table. After a bit, the conversation focused on some stories of John Tierney's life. One story he told was about the Lincoln funeral train that went through San Pierre.

John Tierney was 15 years old that day the train came to San Pierre. When he first heard the train would be coming, he became determined to attend Mr. Lincoln's funeral in Springfield, Illinois. He managed to hop the train as it was leaving, unnoticed by the train personnel, but found shortly after he was on the train. Even though John Tierney believed the train was headed directly to Springfield, it was destined for Chicago for exhibition, along with many other short stops on the way. It would be several days before the train would reach Springfield. John Tierney, after explaining his sincere wish to pay his respect to the much admired Lincoln, and the fact that he was the only individual up to that point that had successfully boarded the train, was allowed to continue the ride.

My dad does not recall how John Tierney returned to San Pierre (If the train company paid for his ticket back or if Mr. Tierney hopped another train) and he doesn't recall any specifics about the funeral other than Mr. Tierney said he was able to attend it.

My dad will be 95 next month. On that day in 1940 he was intently listening to the "old guy of 90 tell stories." When you think of someone saying he knew someone who attended Lincoln's funeral of 144 years past, (2009-1865) that does catch one's attention."

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http://www.starkehistory.com http://www.scpl.lib.in.us/historical/

(If you do not wish to receive "Tidbits of Starke County History" in the future, please let me know.)