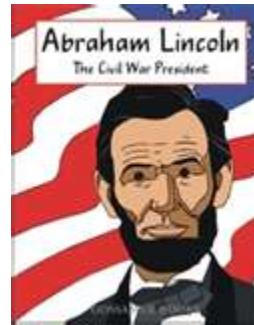


My Chat with Mr. Lincoln



by Paul O'Beirne
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One day, I was in New York City to see the New York Knicks play at Madison Square Garden. I just got off the train at Penn Station from Cold Spring Harbor. While walking through Penn Station, I saw a sign that said “2 for 1 Hebrew National Hot Dogs.” It was such a good deal that I got on line to buy some. In front of me was a tall thin man. He had a beard and a sad face. He wore a top hat and a dark suit. The man looked way down at me and said, “Why is this line not moving? What’s it for?” I told him that the vendor sells so many hot dogs that he probably had to cook more to keep up with the demand for them. I told him that he looked familiar. He asked me, “What is your name?” I said, “My name is Paul. You look like Abraham Lincoln.” I was in shock when he said, “I am Abraham Lincoln.”

We were at the 7th Street entrance outside Madison Square Garden, still waiting on line for the hot dogs. Mr. Lincoln and I talked to each other. He asked me so many questions about different things. His head turned whenever he heard cell phones ringing. I told him, “Those are cordless portable phones that people use to talk to each other. You can talk to people around the world.” He said, “When I was a young boy there weren’t phones. People wrote and sent letters to each other. It took weeks to get mail from other people.” He then asked, “What are those boxes that people are sitting in that move in the streets?” I told him they were cars, taxis, minivans, SUVs, buses, limos, trucks, and motorcycles. He told me, “When I was a boy, I rode horses because there was no such thing as automobiles.” I told him “Vehicles come in many colors. They have radios and CD players, power windows and seats, seat warmers, and windshield wipers. Many of them have televisions and play movies.” He said, “I can’t believe they come in green, yellow, and red.” He was shocked to hear what a GPS navigation system was too. I had to explain what McDonalds and other fast food places were too. He was amazed to see so many stores, skyscrapers, and street vendors.

Afterwards, I asked him if he wanted to go to a Knicks game with me. He said, “What’s that?” I had to explain basketball to Mr. Lincoln. During the game, Mr.

Lincoln looked around the court and stands. He asked so many questions about basketball, the scoreboard, the dancers, and the music that was played. He said, "Where's that music coming from? What are the people eating and drinking?" I had to explain to him about American food like hot dogs, pizza, soda, cotton candy, and nachos. I told him what rap music was. He didn't like it.

After the game, we walked on 6th Street when he asked about other transportations. He saw some things flying in the sky and asked me "What are those noisy things?" I told him one was a helicopter, and the other was an airplane. Then he felt the ground shake. I told him "Don't worry. It's just a subway passing." I had to explain that a subway is a fast moving train that goes underground. I saw that he was staring at people walking by us. I asked him, "What are you looking at?" He asked me, "Why do people dress so funny?" He saw people wearing t-shirts, jeans, guys wearing earrings, and women wearing mini skirts and tank tops. He noticed that nobody was dressed like him. I said, "Don't worry about it. People wear whatever they want." Even though people wear whatever they want, I was a little surprised that people were not staring at him.

Now, we were on 5th Avenue in front of a Dick's Sporting store. Mr. Lincoln looked in the window and asked if we could go inside and look around. I said, "Sure." He saw lots of sports equipment divided by sports. He then led the way to the baseball area. He picked up an infielder mitt made by Rawlings. I showed him how to wear it and use it. Then, I picked up a baseball and said, "Let's play catch." He never heard of baseball so I had to explain the sport to him. He was interested in baseball game rules and where people watch it. We played catch until a salesman came over and said, "You can't play ball in the store. You can only buy it here." Mr. Lincoln walked over to the basketball area and picked up a Spalding TF-1000 basketball. He threw it like a baseball to me. Luckily, I caught it and shot it at the hoop. After he saw how I scored baskets, he scored them too. Since Mr. Lincoln was so tall, he didn't have to jump up too far to sink baskets. Lincoln said, "I never played any of these sports. I wish they were around when I was a boy."

We left Dick's and were now walking on 21st Street when Mr. Lincoln said, "What jobs do people have today?" I explained that there were many careers. I listed many jobs like salesman, computer programmer, TV repairmen, police officers, dentists, and electronic sales people. I told him, "Professional athletes make millions of dollars each year just playing in games. They make millions of dollars more from endorsements." I had to explain what that meant. I told him that actors and movie stars make millions too. He asked, "Why do they make more money than doctors and teachers who help people?" I said, "Because they have agents and managers." Mr. Lincoln looked more and more surprised as he learned about what life is like today.

After a long walk around New York City, we were now walking back to Penn Station.

He looked into the Best Buy store window. He asked, “What are those moving pictures and sounds? What are those machines with screens?” I had to explain to him what TVs, PlayStation 360, iPods, and computers were. He liked listening to Mick Jagger on the iPod, hearing people talk on their cell phone, and playing PlayStation games. He said, “I don’t want to leave. I’m having so much fun.” We had to leave the store so I could catch the 10:13 train back to Cold Spring Harbor. I said, “Goodbye” and told him he could call me anytime he had questions or wanted a tour around the city.

I left Mr. Lincoln at Best Buy. He was playing a Spiderman game on PlayStation. I was so happy to meet Abraham Lincoln. I learned a lot about him and life back when he was growing up. It was a great experience. I think he left New York feeling overwhelmed by the new inventions and technology that we have today. After our adventure, if Mr. Lincoln were alive today, he’d probably be home watching The History Channel or the New York Knicks on cable TV.

Some of the Things Mr. Lincoln Saw in New York City

Penn Station



Hot Dog Vendor



City Street



NY Knicks



Madison Square Garden



Electronics



Skyscrapers



Taxis and traffic



Rappers

