

The Soldier Who Knew Lincoln 100 Years Old Monday

By Hubert D. Bliss

Dr. John A. Jones of the Town of Allen is Allegheny county's Grand Old Patriarch. His age and the fact he is the last survivor of the Civil War in the county entitle him to that formal distinction. When he embarked upon his second century of life at his home in Fink Hollow, much ado marked the occasion. But the family interceded against a big celebration lest too great excitement prove a strain on the centenarian.

Official recognition came in the greetings from the Board of Supervisors, patriotic tribute was paid in the gift of 100 roses by the Fillmore American Legion Post and popular acclaim found expression in personal calls and an avalanche of mail from far and near. That much one learns from the news of the birthday up Fink Hollow, details of which do not fit into this story since the quest here is for a composite picture that covers the amazing total of 36,525 days.

Rather, it is as the soldier who knew Lincoln that Dr. Jones epitomizes a rare Allegheny county heritage thru more than two-thirds of its settlement by white people. Hardly a man is now alive who remembers the Great Emancipator—and where is there another than Dr. Jones that fate has spared who can recall a conversation with him?

As a sergeant in the Civil War, Dr. Jones saw Lincoln several times and shook his hands as opportunity offered. But the meeting that struck fire in the soldier of '61 has endured in the memory of the staunch-hearted centenarian of today as indeed more than a handshake. That story as recounted in Dr. Jones' own words in an accompanying column, certain ranks as one of the few last personal talks with Lincoln that will ever be recorded anywhere.

Dr. Jones seized the limit that came of human freedom which butted so deeply into the soul of the Allegheny people as to win for the county the name of Cradle of Liberty. His service was with the 84th New York Regiment, under whose colors hundreds of Allegheny young men laid down their lives in battle or succumbed to the greater horror of disease in Andersonville Prison in Georgia.

"Three times doctors have given me up as dead," recounted the Fink Hollow veteran. "One of those was from illness in my home here, another from a war wound whose bullet I still carry and the other from the Andersonville hardships. I weighed 200 pounds when I was taken prisoner. When I was freed I had shrunk to 80 pounds. But I came back to see still further service for the Stars and Stripes."

While years have obliterated rancor from the mind of the 100-year-old man, his espousal of the Union cause is as vigorous as ever. Long active in the G. A. R., he attended numerous county and state encampments in days gone by. In 1914 he went to the dedication of the New York State Memorial Monument at Andersonville.

Dr. Jones also boasts kinship to one of Allegheny County's great Civil War leaders, General Thomas Jones Thorp, his cousin. A resident of Short Tract, he was wounded while an officer of the 85th Regiment. He recruited hundreds of Allegheny soldiers for the 1st New York Dragoons and achieved high distinction with that regiment. He was a member of the Thorp family in the town of Granger that made conspicuous contribution to the abolitionist cause in the Kansas raids and in the war.

Except for his war service and visits to other states, Dr. Jones has passed his entire life in Fink Hollow. He was born April 22, 1840, only a short distance from his present home which he built many years ago. One does not arrive in Fink Hollow by chance, as it is off the main routes in the northeastern corner of the town of Allen. So having definitely sought the place, one falls quite naturally into a conversation that accounts for many, many topics.

"You beat anything I ever knew" observed Dr. Jones as I was leaving. "You are full of more things than anybody I ever saw. How did you happen to get here?"

"Oh, no," I protested, "You are the one who is full of so many things—I am just full of curiosity." Which rather cryptically summed the facts up. Because Dr. Jones is full of such a diversity of things it rather baffles even a veteran interviewer as how to catalogue them. Not that he professes great wisdom or achievements. Indeed, he never has made professions of talent and has turned his hand to the tasks that accounting for a busy life, now tally up to the longest record in the

Dr. Jones' own centennial story of his talk with President Lincoln:

"Right at the start I was in the war. I went out of here with other Allegheny county volunteers to Elmira. From there I went to Washington in a cattle car. Those of us freed most with the Union cause had drilled some in Short Tract. My zeal had won me a sergeantcy and a prized sword from our drill master.

"Still unattached to any company when I reached Washington, I was somewhat on my own and so started from the railroad toward the capital center. Of course, Washington was not like it is now. It was all spread out, with board walks lining its streets. I saw some one approaching on the same walk. I then realized that it was President Lincoln. As he came near, I stepped from the walk, awed as I was by the thought that I must not crowd the President of the United States from such a narrow place.

"This act and my prized sword must have gained his attention. He stepped off the walk and greeted me warmly. He asked where I was from, what regiment I belonged to and other things about myself and how people felt about the war back home. For 20 minutes we talked. Oh, yes, he was as homely as they tell about—but I guess Lincoln needs no praise from me to fix him as a great spirit such as stirred the heart of a farm boy soldier from Allegheny county.

"That marked Lincoln as a man I saw every time possible. Since I did not have a strict attachment much of the war, I moved around a lot and under conditions that permitted me to see him again after

shared of fruitful experience of one body in the county.

That curiosity which I had indulged as prompting my visit had a natural origin from the fact that could carry greetings from another of Allegheny's oldest residents—my grandmother, Mrs. Mary Crandall Bliss of Bolivar, who observed her 98th birthday April 14.

After the war Dr. Jones turned his time to farming and horses. The title "doctor" comes from that, and as a veterinarian he traveled over

a wide section. He arrives at the century milestone with his interest in life undimmed, keeping touch with events by radio and what his family relates from the daily papers.

"It seems that the world thinks the only thing its young people are good for is cannon fodder," he remarked, as his avowal for peace.

But he does not espouse the role of a prophet just because he attained a remarkable age.

"Old age tells me it is best to keep my mouth shut and make my peace with God," he phrased it.

Dr. Jones—the A in his name is for Ariza, of Biblical theme—was the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Jones. His wife was Frances Minard of Fillmore. She was the youngest sister of John Minard, Allegheny county historian who compiled the centennial year county history in 1895. Mrs. Jones died 35 years ago and her well-cared-for grave is just across the road in the Fink Hollow cemetery.

"I am going to be buried within four feet of her grave," Dr. Jones remarked, with a ring in his voice that bespoke a devotion to a mate undimmed by the lapse of years.

There are three sons in the family: John M. of Vashon, Wash., Harold, who lives on the farm across from his father, and Clifford B., with whom he makes his home. There his sunset days are made carefree in a home kept trim and spotless inside and out, with Mrs. Clifford Jones the guiding genius that has enabled Dr. Jones to grow old gracefully in the well-ordered manner of life that must always have been a part of him. There are three grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Dr. Jones never has drunk alcoholic liquor or smoked. He said that whiskey was too vile a common vice of people in his boyhood to ever invite him to its use. His good habits and active, hearty spirit have added much to his enjoyment of good health most of his lifetime.

Yes—from the Soldier of '61 who talked with Lincoln to the Grand Old Patriarch of 1940—Dr. John Aziza Jones at the century mark is worthy of the title of "First Citizen."

Kennel Club to Hold Sanctioned Match

The Southern Tier Kennel Club is making plans for a sanctioned match on Sunday, June 23, to be held at the farm home of Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Middleton of Canisteo. Charles Craig is general chairman of the affair.

A sanctioned match is an informal meeting at which purebred dogs may compete but not for championship points. Any owner of a purebred dog, whether a member of the club or not, may show his dog.

Folly has a fall before it.

ASK The Scientist

If you have a question for the scientists, mail it to the New York Press Association, The Castle, Syracuse University's Radio Workshop will answer in those columns each week timely and interesting.

QUESTION 1.—Does mental effort require as much energy as physical effort? **ANSWER.**—If a person can remain completely relaxed while engaged in mental effort, he requires far less energy for such work than he would for physical effort. Mental effort, however, is ordinarily accompanied by a great deal of muscular tension. This is especially true when a person is doing things that require much concentration.

One can demonstrate the muscular tension which often accompanies mental effort by adding a column of figures very rapidly and noticing how tense his muscles become. The muscles under these conditions are expending a great deal more energy than the nervous system is using for the mental process.

The more a person can relax for a mental effort the less energy will be expended and the longer he can work before becoming fatigued. Men such as the late Thomas Edison who was famous for his ability to work an unusually long number of hours in a day apparently learn to relax under mental effort. A person uses more energy when he works hard physically than when he works hard mentally. —Dr. Verbe Lindeman, physiologist.

QUESTION 2.—What was the origin of Lake Iroquois, the great body of water which once covered much of Central New York? What was its elevation and where were its shorelines? Why did the lake retreat? **ANSWER.** Lake Iroquois might be thought of as the predecessor or ancestor of the present Lake Ontario. It was formed at the end of the glacial age which was the geologic period just preceding the present.

When the ice was slowly moving back across New York State, it stayed over the St. Lawrence valley for a great many years, thus blocking the outlet of the waters from the Lake Ontario basin and raising the level to a much greater extent than that of the present Lake Ontario. Although the lake stood at several levels during its slow recession, it was 300 feet or more above the present Lake Ontario level.

Lake Iroquois shorelines thus extended around the three flanks of the Adirondacks, roughly, north, south, and west; and west across New York State along the northern edge of the Allegheny plateau, that is, that range of hills which runs across the state from east to west.

If you could go to the western entrance of the Syracuse University stadium, you would be standing on what was approximately the ancient beach of Lake Iroquois.

The lake finally receded slowly, the water level dropping as the ice melted back and uncovered the St. Lawrence basin, thus permitting the waters of Lake Ontario to flow out thru their present channel, the St. Lawrence River. —Dr. Sidman Poole, geographer.

QUESTION 3.—May cold water from a kitchen faucet be put safely into an automobile battery or should one use distilled water? **ANSWER.**—It is common practice to use tap water in the storage battery of automobiles when the inorganic salt content of tap water is low. Use of tap water that has high salt content is not recommended. Melted snow would be all right to use because snow has very low inorganic salt content. —Dr. Albert L. Elder, chemist.

QUESTION 4.—If horses are colorblind, how is it that horses on milk wagons seem to know to stop on a red traffic signal and go on the green? **ANSWER.**—Only men, monkeys, and possibly rats see colors so far as we know. Other animals may distinguish colors by detecting differences in densities of light, by seeing different shades of gray.

Assuming that it is true that milk wagon horses behave as described in the question, the animal's behavior may be explained either on the basis

of the position of the light or by different densities of the light. The horse, which is a rather intelligent animal, learns to stop and go when he sees the position of the light, and so, traveling over the same route a number of times and having to stop at certain densities of light or at lights in a certain position he learns to behave as though he could distinguish which is red and which is green. —Dr. Lindeman.

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