

## HISTORY RELIVED

(The following article was taken from the Eagle Beacon, newspaper of Wichita, KS, January 18, 1999. Roy Wenzl, columnist wrote an article entitled, "From the Grave, A Cry of Treason.")

Standing tall in a prairie graveyard outside Attica, KS, is the grave marker for Nathaniel Grigsby, who died April 16, 1890. The inscription reads: "Through this inscription I wish to enter my dying protest against what is called the Democratic Party. I have watched it closely since the days of Jackson and know that all the misfortunes of our nation has come to it through this so called party. Therefore beware this party of treason."

Leading Democrats like Jefferson Davis led the southern states out of the Union. Republicans accused Davis and other Democrats of treason. Among those Republican accusers was Nathaniel Grigsby, a close and personal friend of Abraham Lincoln.

Recently our Nation went through a period of polarized political decisions (no judgment intended with the decisions that were ultimately made). It divided a nation over something so trivial. "In contrast Grigsby lived through a national argument that killed 618,000 men." Nathaniel Grigsby had fought, at age 53, as an Indiana cavalryman. He lost a son and many friends, the last who died in 1865.

Of Abraham Lincoln, Nathaniel Grigsby said he talked of politics "until he wore the subject out." A friend and more, Nathaniel was the brother of Aaron Grigsby who married Abraham Lincoln's sister. From the article Mr. Wenzl says:

They met again one day just before the war, in 1861 when Grigsby walked into Lincoln's law office in Springfield, IL. His friend looked up with delight.

"Nattie," Lincoln said.

Lincoln was recently elected; the country was splitting apart. Democrats like Davis were leading states out of the Union. Men like Grigsby were calling them traitors.

"A great many people were calling on (Lincoln), warning him of the danger of assassination and pleading with him to protect himself..." Grigsby's son J.W. Grigsby later remembered.

Grigsby and Lincoln spent several days together as Lincoln prepared to move his family to Washington.

As they parted, Lincoln offered to appoint Grigsby and his sons to government postal jobs.

"No," Grigsby replied. "We are going to have a war, and I have myself and three sons to offer for the country's service."

"I am in hopes when I get to Washington, I can do something to prevent it."

Grigsby then asked his friend to protect his own life. Lincoln shook this off.

"The man who seeks my life can get it," he said. "With what I have to do, I couldn't prevent it...I am going to do what I have to do regardless of consequences."

The consequences caught up with Lincoln on April 14, 1865.

Twenty years later, Grigsby and several of his sons moved to farms near Attica, KS, where his great-granddaughter still lives.

Grigsby, on his deathbed, asked a son to see to the carving of the message on the stone.

It was a parting shot -- at treason, at Democrats, at those he thought had helped kill family and friends.

(Read more about Nathaniel Grigsby in Memorabilia I, pp. 140 - 149.)