Lincoln's Sense of Humor

Lincoln is best known for his policies on abolishing slavery and his belief in self-government; he took his job as president very seriously. About the night he knew he'd won the election he later said, "I went home, but not to get much sleep, for I then felt as I never had before, the responsibility that was upon me."

Lincoln had another side to his personality; he had a good sense of humor and liked to make jokes. Here you can see Lincoln's "business card," a joke that the opposing Democratic party played on him during the 1864 presidential election. The card says that Lincoln will be returning to Springfield, Illinois, to his law practice, where he will be ready to "swap horses, dispense law, make jokes, split rails, and perform other matters." As it turned out, Lincoln and the Republicans had the last laugh on this joke because he won reelection as president in 1864. What other things do you think Lincoln joked about?
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Lincoln liked to tell tales about his experiences. After his time as a soldier in the Black Hawk War, Lincoln joked that he had seen no "live, fighting Indians" during the war but had "a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes." He knew that laughing with visitors helped break the ice and that he could tell a funny story to avoid a reporter's difficult question. His sense of humor was well-known. Here are the words to a song that was inspired by Lincoln, called "Hey! Uncle Abe, are you joking yet?" Keep in mind that it was written by members of the political party that opposed Lincoln's reelection.

The words to the song, "Hey! Uncle Abe, are you joking yet?"