Puppy Love

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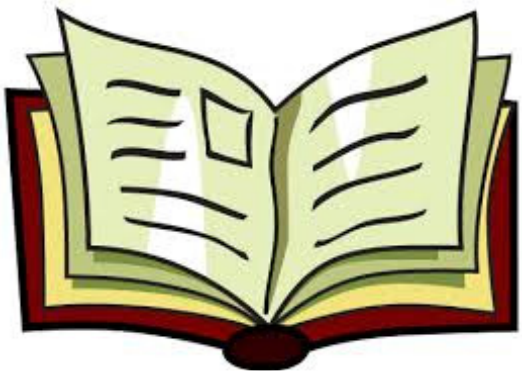

History ~ A Moment in Time

There is no more clichéd name for a dog than *Fido*. So, how did *Fido* gain such a firm grasp in the American language that it went from a proper name to a generic name? The surprising two-word answer is Abraham Lincoln. It turns out that when Lincoln was a lawyer in Springfield, Illinois he had a dog named *Fido*.

According to canine historian, Stanley Coren, *Fido* was almost always with Lincoln, usually walking behind him carrying a package tied up with string. Frequently, Lincoln stopped at Billy's Barber Shop to get a haircut. *Fido* waited patiently outside where he became a frequent playmate for children passing by the shop. In a manner of speaking, *Fido* became Lincoln's furry, much loved mascot around town.

During Lincoln's first presidential run his political handlers worked hard to package this brilliant, ambitious lawyer as a "man of the people." They constructed the still-familiar Lincoln legend: living in a log cabin, splitting rails and being a self-taught candle-reading youth. To further enhance the image of Honest Abe they added Lincoln's loveable, floppy-eared dog, *Fido* to the growing, popular legend.

As *Fido's* owner became one of the most famous men in America, *"Fido"* caught on among dog owners and remained a popular name for generations to come. However, the name is so overworked people no longer name their dogs *Fido*. You will no longer find the name *Fido* on the "Most Popular Names for Dogs" lists.

Scout is much loved by his family in SC.

Semper Fidelis

The name *Fido* derives from a Latin word that means "to trust, believe, or confide in." Historian, Stanley Coren states, "It is equivalent to calling a dog Trusty or Faithful. It can be compared to the Marine motto, 'Semper Fidelis' ~ Always Faithful." It is highly probable that Lincoln became familiar with the meaning of the words while devouring books in preparation for his profession in law.