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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.



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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Lincoln, ABRAHAM, sixteenth president of the United States, was born in Hardin county, Kentucky, 12th February 1809. He was descended in the sixth generation from Samuel Lincoln, who emigrated from Norwich in England to Massachusetts about 1638. Samuel's grandson removed to Berks county, Pennsylvania, and died there in 1735. The family history henceforward marks the advancing wave of settlements, first south-westward, skirting the eastern slope of the Alleghanies, then surmounting these mountains and spreading over the Ohio valley. Samuel's great-grandson rested in Virginia; his son, Abraham, followed the pioneer Daniel Boone to Kentucky, and while clearing a farm in the forest was killed by Indians in 1784. Abraham's son, Thomas, then but six years old, grew up without education, and in 1806 married Nancy Hanks of the same pioneer stock. Abraham, the future president, was their second child, but lost his mother before he was ten years old. His restless father had crossed the Ohio in 1816, and made a new home in the forests of Indiana, just before its admission as a state. In 1819 he brought

from Kentucky a second wife, Sarah (Bush) Johnston, a worthy woman, who trained her step-children as faithfully as her own. Abraham learned the little that was taught in the backwoods schools, and was employed in rough farm-work until at the age of nineteen he took on a flat-boat a cargo to New Orleans. His first close view of slavery made a lasting impression on his mind.

When Lincoln was twenty-one his father removed to central Illinois, where the son assisted in felling trees, building another log-cabin, and splitting rails for fences. After a second trading voyage to New Orleans he returned to be a clerk in a country store at New Salem, Illinois. When the Indian chief Black Hawk disturbed the northern part of that state in 1832 Lincoln served a few weeks as captain in an uneventful campaign. Being defeated as a candidate for the legislature, he purchased a small store, but its failure left him burdened with debt. However, he was made village postmaster, and also deputy to the county surveyor, and the light duties allowed him time to study law and grammar. Elected to the legislature in 1834, he served until 1842, when he declined further nomination. He had become leader of the Whigs, and was influential in having the state capital removed in 1839 from Vandalia to Springfield, where he had fixed his residence. Thither, too, came Mary Todd (1818-82), the daughter of Robert Todd of Lexington, Kentucky, and in November 1842 she was married to the rising lawyer. In 1846 Lincoln was elected to congress, but his service was limited to a single term. Professional work was steadily drawing

him from interest in politics when in 1854 Stephen A. Douglas, by his Kansas-Nebraska bill, repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, and reopened the question of slavery in the territories. The bill roused intense feeling throughout the North, and Douglas resolved to defend his position in a speech at the state fair at Springfield in October. Lincoln, invited by his Whig friends to reply, delivered on the same day a speech which first fully revealed his power as a political debater. Against his wish 'Honest Abe' was then elected to the legislature, and the Whigs of that body endeavoured to send him to the United States senate, but finally at his request joined in electing Lyman Trumbull, an anti-Douglas Democrat. When the Republican party was organised in 1856 to oppose the extension of slavery Lincoln was its most prominent leader in Illinois. At its first national convention in the same year the delegates of his state presented him as a nominee for the vice-presidency. But he did not attain a national reputation until 1858. Then Douglas, seeking re-election to the United States senate, began a canvass of Illinois in advocacy of his views of 'popular sovereignty.' Lincoln, as candidate for the same position, arranged with Douglas for a series of debates. The contest attracted the attention of the whole country; but though the general verdict was in favour of Lincoln and his cause, the peculiar arrangement of the legislative districts gave Douglas the immediate advantage, and secured his election.

In another memorable oration in the Cooper Union, New York, in February 1860, Lincoln proved that

the founders of the republic had desired the restriction of slavery. In May of that year the Republican convention was held in Chicago, and on the third ballot nominated him for the presidency. The Democratic party held its convention in Charleston, but was unable to agree on a candidate. Douglas was nominated by one wing, Breckinridge by the other. After an intensely exciting campaign Lincoln received a popular vote of 1,866,462; Douglas, 1,375,157; Breckinridge, 847,953; and Bell, 590,631. Of the electors Lincoln had 180; Breckinridge, 72; Bell, 39; and Douglas, 12.

The pro-slavery leaders forthwith put in execution their plans for the secession of their states. South Carolina moved first, and with the six Gulf states formed, in February 1861, the Confederate States of America. Lincoln, leaving Springfield on 1st February, passed through the principal northern cities, making brief addresses at various points, and reaching Washington on the 24th. His inaugural address on 4th March declared the Union perpetual, argued the futility of secession, expressed his determination that the laws should be faithfully executed in all the states, deprecated the impending evils, and made a touching appeal to all friends of the Union. Of the seven members of Lincoln's cabinet four had been Democrats, three Whigs; two were from border slave-states. The chief places were given to W. H. Seward of New York (secretary of state), and Salmon P. Chase of Ohio (secretary of the treasury). Edwin M. Stanton was made secretary of war in 1862.

On April 12, 1861, the Confederate general Beau-

regard attacked Fort Sumter in Charleston harbour. The civil war being thus commenced, Lincoln called a special session of congress, summoned 75,000 militia for three months, and ordered the enlistment of 65,000 regulars for three years. He proclaimed a blockade of the southern ports, and endeavoured to make it effective. The Southern Confederacy soon had control of eleven states, and put in the field 100,000 men. The first important battle was fought at Bull Run, Virginia, July 21, 1861, and resulted in a disgraceful rout of the Union army. Further account of the military and naval events of the war belongs to general history. The struggle which sanguine statesmen predicted could be ended in a few months was prolonged over four years, with dreadful sacrifices of men and means. Foreign intervention, which seemed imminent at the outset, was with difficulty averted. After sixteen months, in which the disasters to the Union army had outnumbered the victories, Lincoln declared to Horace Greeley the line of his conduct: 'My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.' One month later the time had come for decision, and on September 22, 1862, just after McClellan's victory at Antietam, Lincoln proclaimed that on and after January 1, 1863, all slaves in states or parts of states then in rebellion should be free. On the following New-year's Day the final proclamation of emancipa-

tion was made. This greatest achievement of his administration, wrung from him by the exigencies of civil war, was completed and made immutable by the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment of the Constitution, which he planned and urged, though it was not fully ratified until December 1865.

In July 1863 Grant's capture of Vicksburg restored to the Union full control of the Mississippi River, while Meade's defeat of Lee at Gettysburg destroyed the last hope of the Confederates to transfer the seat of war north of the Potomac. In November of that year, at the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, Lincoln delivered a brief address, closing with these words: 'We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.'

General Grant was called to the chief command of the Union army in March 1864, and entered upon that policy of persistent attrition of the Confederate forces which finally brought peace. In the Republican Convention at Baltimore in June Lincoln was unanimously nominated for a second term. The Democrats at Chicago in August declared the war a failure, yet nominated General McClellan. In November Lincoln received of the popular vote 2,216,000, and McClellan 1,800,000; of the electoral votes Lincoln had 212, McClellan 21. In his second inaugural address, in March 1865, Lincoln rose above the ordinary range of such occasions, and like an inspired prophet set forth the profound moral signifi-

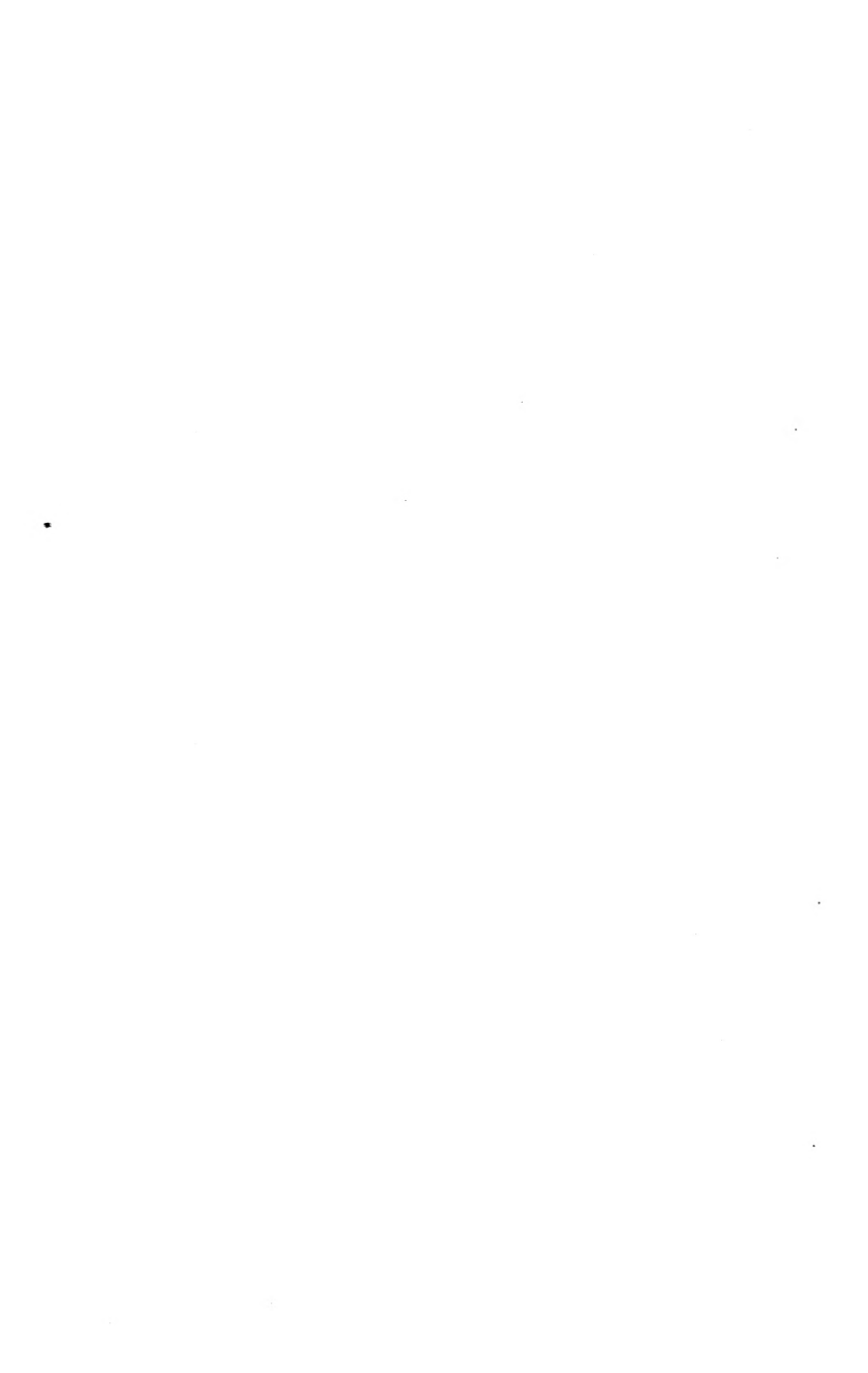
cance of the tremendous war which he saw drawing to a close. A month later he had entered Richmond, from which Grant had driven Davis and Lee. Lincoln returned to Washington to consider the new problems presented by the overthrow of the Confederacy. But his work was already finished. While seeking relaxation with his family at Ford's Theatre he was assassinated by J. Wilkes Booth, an actor, and died on the next morning, April 15, 1865. The national rejoicing over the return of peace was turned into grief for the martyred president. The whole civilised world joined in expression of sorrow for his fate.

Lincoln was 6 feet 4 inches in height, with long limbs and large hands and feet, dark complexion, broad, high forehead, deep-set gray eyes, and coarse black hair. He was slender, wiry and strong, mild and patient, fair and direct in speech and action, scorning all tricks and subterfuges, steadfast in principle, sympathetic and charitable. He was a man of strict morality, abstemious, and familiar with the Bible, though not a professed member of any church. His public life was devoted to the good of his fellow-men, and his fame is established as the saviour of his country and the liberator of a race.

Of his four sons, Robert Todd Lincoln, born August 1, 1843, was the only one to reach manhood. He was secretary of war in the years 1881-85, and was appointed United States minister to England in 1889.

See Arnold, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (1885); Herndon and Weik, *The History and Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln* (3 vols. 1889); Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History* (published in *The Century*, 1886-90).







R.H.H.



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