

Facsimile of

autobiography of

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Written for

Jesse Fell of

Bloomington

1858



Shortly after the campaign in 1858, Mr. Lincoln was attending court in Bloomington, and as Mr. Fell had conceived the idea that it would be a good policy to have something in the form of a short biography of him for publication in the eastern papers, he called on him at the court room and suggested to him the propriety of preparing a statement of the leading incidents of his life for publication in the east. The result was that at the instance of Mr. Fell, Mr. Lincoln, while, sitting at a desk in the old court room, prepared that short yet comprehensive autobiography, as it may be called, which has been so extensively published since his death.—From paper on the life of Jesse Fell, written by Judge Lawrence Weldon.



Courtesy of
The Daily Pantagraph

I was born Feb 12, 1809, in Hardens County, Kentucky,
My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished
second families, perhaps I should say
quaker families. My mother, who died in my
tenth year, was of a family of the name of Parks,
some of whom now reside in Adams, and others
in Macou Counties, Illinois. My paternal grand-
father, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rock-
ingham County, Virginia, to Kentucky, about 1781 or
2, when, a year or two later, he was killed by
Indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when he
was laboring to open a farm in the forest -
His ancestor, who was quaker, went to Virginia
from Berks County, Pennsylvania. An effort to
identify them with the New England families
is in nothing more definite, than a similarity
of Christian names in both families, such as
Enoch, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and
the like.

My father, at the death of his father, was
but five years of age; and he grew up,
literally without education. He removed
from Kentucky to what is now Spencer County, In-
diana, in my eighth year. We reached our new home
about the time the State came into the Union. It
was a wild region, with many bears and other
wild animals, still in the woods. There I grew
up. There were some schools, so called, but no
qualification was ever required of a teacher, beyond
"Reading, writing, and ciphering"
~~Reading, writing, and ciphering~~ to the Rules of
Three. If a struggle happened to sojourn in

the neighborhood. he was looked upon as a
wizzard - There was absolutely nothing to partic-
ularly amittion for education. Of course when I came of
age, I did not know much. Still somehow, I could
read, write, and cipher to the Rule of Three, but
that was all - I have not been to school since -
The little advances I now have upon this stow of educa-
tion, I have ~~been~~ picked up from time to time under
the pressure of necessity -

I was raised to farm work which I continued
till I was twenty-two - At twenty-one I came to
Illinois, and passed the first year in Illinois
Waco County - Then I got ^{to} New Salem ^{at that time} (then
in Sangamon, now in Menard County, where I per-
maned a year as a sort of black iron
stow - Then came the Black Hawk war
and I was elected a Captain of Volunteers -
a success which gave me more pleasure
than any I have had since - I went the
campaign was elected ran for the Legislature the
same year (1832), and was beaten - the only time
I ever have been beaten by the people - The next
and three succeeding biennial elections, I was elect-
ed to the Legislature - I was not a candidate
afterwards. During this legislative period I had
studied law, and removed to Springfield to
study, practiced it - In 1846 I was once elected
to the lower House of Congress - Was not a can-
didate for re-election - From 1849 to 1854 was

unknown, practical law (now unanimously there) was
before. Always a whig in politics, and generally
in the whig electoral tickets. (making serious con-
vices. I was losing interest in politics, when
the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused
me again. What I have done since then is
truth will know.

If any personal description of me is thought ~~worth~~
desirable, it may be said, I am, in height, six
feet, four inches (nearly); lean in flesh, weighing on
an average, one hundred and eighty pounds; dark
complexion, with coarse black hair, and grey eyes -
no other marks or scars recollectible -

Wm. J. W. Allen.

Yours very truly
A. Lincoln



Washington, D.C. March 26, 1852

We the undersigned hereby certify that the
foregoing statement is in the hand
writing of Abraham Lincoln.

David Davis
Lyman Sumner
Charles Sumner