

# 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 Mason 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, Iowa  
and, 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 <sup>supposed to understand Latin</sup> happened to sojourn in

the neighborhood. he was looked upon as a  
wizzard - There was absolutely nothing to excite  
ambition 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 slow 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 <sup>to</sup> New Salem <sup>at that time</sup> (then  
in Sangamon, now in Menard County, where I per-  
maned a year as a sort of black iron  
store - Then came the Black. War and  
soon 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 slated, 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 got 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

inclusion, 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 since 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 recollective -

Geo. 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