

Lincoln Lore

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LINCOLN AND THE CHILDREN

With the opening of school, the children of the land become the center of interest. Lincoln's love for children is evident from the time he rocked the cradle of the Armstrong baby in the New Salem home, where he was boarding, until he lavished upon his youngest child, Tad, all the affection it was possible for an adoring father to show. With four boys of his own, it is not strange that his house became the gathering place for the children of the whole community. It is the purpose of this issue of Lincoln Lore to present, as briefly as possible, a few of the interesting incidents in the lives of his own children and others whom he came to know.

Bob Lincoln

On August 1, 1843, the first child of Abraham Lincoln was born in the Globe Tavern, at Springfield, where the Lincolns had secured quarters immediately after their marriage. When Robert was a small boy he was asked what his father's profession was and he replied, "a railsplitter." At the time the Lincolns entered the White House, Robert was a student at Harvard University. Here he had been dubbed by his associates, "The Prince of Rails."

Eddie Lincoln

The second son of Abraham and Mary Lincoln was born March 10, 1864, and named Edward Baker. About a month after his fourth birthday he passed away. On February 23, 1850, Lincoln wrote these words to John D. Johnson: "As you make no mention of it, I suppose you had not learned that we lost our little boy. He was sick fifteen days, and died in the morning of the first day of this month. It was not our first, but our second child. We miss him very much."

Willie Lincoln

William Wallace Lincoln was born on December 21, 1850. He was of a quiet and gentle disposition and a very lovable child. His death in the White House on February 20, 1862, at twelve years of age is said to have been the most crushing affliction Mr. Lincoln had ever been called upon to pass through. His grief over the loss of this child was pathetic. On the day of the funeral the government depart-

ments were closed. This was the first time in the history of the country that the death of a child had been so observed.

Tad Lincoln

Thomas, or Tad as he was called, was the youngest child of the Lincolns. He was his father's close and constant companion. One of the most amusing episodes, in the long series of stunts in which he was continually engaged, occurred when Stanton had jokingly commissioned him a lieutenant. Tad ordered some muskets, put the servants and gardeners to drilling, and then dismissed the guard at the White House. His many pranks kept the household, including the father and mother, ever on the alert.

Willie Arthur

Three doors from the Lincoln home lived the Arthur family. One of the children, William, was three years younger than Robert Lincoln and was his particular chum. One of the incidents he remembers most vividly was the breaking of a rope on the swing which Mr. Lincoln had put up for them, and which gave them both a bad spill. William also was an admirer of Mrs. Lincoln's cooking and she often made cookies for them.

Charlie Riehle

A letter recently received by H. E. Barker, of Los Angeles, from Charlie Riehle, contains this reminiscence: "There were two boys in our family at the time Mr. Lincoln lived near us. One morning after his usual handshake, Mr. Lincoln said to my brother, 'Eddie, I believe you eat all the breakfast and Charlie doesn't get any; that is what makes you so fat and Charlie so lean; you must divide with him.' One Fourth of July morning he stopped, pinned a flag on each of our little waists and demonstrated to us the manner in which we should always salute our country's flag when we came into its presence. The day was lost to us both if we missed the smile and greeting of this great man."

Ep. McIntosh

For some time Mr. Lincoln noticed a small boy parading up and down the alley back of his house with a paper hat on his head, and beating time on a tin pan. When Christmas came around, Epenetus found that the tall Santa Claus who lived in the big house had left a real drum for him. Later on, this same lad became an office boy for Lincoln working for him for about two years.

Oliva Ledig

Next door to the Lincolns lived a family by the name of Spriggs. Into their home came an orphan girl by the name of Oliva. Tad Lincoln often played with her at the Sprigg home, and she remembered how on many occasions, when Tad had stayed too long his father would be obliged to come after him and drag his son from his favorite hiding place under one of the

beds. He would then be carried home in triumph upon the shoulder of his tall parent.

Freddie Dubois

On Eighth street in Springfield, just below Mr. Lincoln's home, lived the Dubois family. Freddie's most distinct memory of Lincoln is hanging on to him with the rest of the boys, while he partly carried them down to Webster's grocery where he would treat them to nuts and candy. According to this boy, "Lincoln was never too busy or so worried that he did not have time for a frolic with the boys of the community."

Bert Green

After a hard journey, Gilbert Green delivered to Abraham Lincoln some legal papers which he had brought that day from Jacob Strawn, of Jacksonville. When Lincoln took the documents he said, "Didn't think that old codger would send a horse out such a day as this." Learning that Gilbert had no money with him he wrote on the margin of an old newspaper in a line eight inches long, "Take care of this boy until tomorrow or longer if the weather is bad and send the bill to me."

Willie Stemmans

One day, when Will was nine years of age, he was playing marbles in the court yard at Paris, Illinois, when a tall figure joined the group and wanted to have a hand in the game. Will said that Abraham Lincoln looked funny down on his knees in the midst of a bunch of boys, and "whenever Lincoln made a good shot he chuckled."

Grace Bedell

The best known incident in Lincoln's life in which he is associated with a child, other than his own, is his correspondence with Grace Bedell. She had written him in October, 1860, that she thought he would look better if he wore whiskers. He replied as follows: "My dear little Miss, Your very agreeable letter of the fifteenth is received. I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughter. I have three sons, one seventeen, one nine, and one seven years of age. They, with their mother, constitute my whole family. As to the whiskers, never having worn any, do you not think people would call it a piece of silly affectation if I were to begin now."

Willie Bladen

Willie was only thirteen years old, but had already seen service on a gunboat. He desired an appointment to the naval school but, on account of his youth, feared that he would have to wait a year. A friend of his father escorted him into the presence of Mr. Lincoln. After the boy had been introduced and had made a graceful bow, Mr. Lincoln said, "Bless me! is that the boy who did so gallantly in those two great battles? Why I feel I should bow to him and not he to me."