

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN EULOGIZED BY THE PRESIDENTS

The editor of Lincoln Lore was one of the many admirers of Abraham Lincoln who attended the rededication of the Lincoln tomb at Springfield, Illinois, on Wednesday, June 17.

President Hoover's dedication tribute to Abraham Lincoln suggested the availability of eulogies pronounced by other presidents. Those presented here are but excerpts of some of the words of praise which have been pronounced in honor of the best loved of our presidents.

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Andrew Johnson.

"Our thoughts next revert to the death of the late President by an act of parricidal treason. The grief of the nation is still fresh; it finds some solace in the consideration that he lived to enjoy the highest proof of its confidence by entering on the renewed term of the Chief Magistracy, to which he had been elected; that he brought the civil war substantially to a close; that his loss was deplored in all parts of the Union; and that foreign nations have rendered justice to his memory."

—Message of the President to the Congress, 1865.

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U. S. Grant.

"He always showed a generous and kindly spirit towards the southern people and I never heard him abuse an enemy. . . . I knew his goodness of heart, his desire to have everybody happy, and above all, his desire to see all the people of the United States enter again upon the full privileges of citizenship with equality among all."

—Personal Memoirs.

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Rutherford B. Hays.

"Lincoln's fame is safe. He is the darling of history forevermore. His life and achievements give him titles to regard second to those of no other man in ancient or modern times. To these, this tragedy now adds the crown of martyrdom."

—Letter to Sardis Birchard, April 16, 1865.

James A. Garfield.

"The man who presided over that council, who inspired and guided its deliberations, was a character so unique that he stood alone, without a model in history or a parallel among men. . . . gifted with an insight and a foresight which the ancients would have called divination, he saw, in the midst of darkness and obscurity, the logic of events, and forecast the result. . . . He was one of the few great rulers whose wisdom increased with his power, and whose spirit grew gentler and tenderer as his triumphs were multiplied."

—From address delivered in Washington, Feb. 12, 1878.

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William McKinley.

"A thousand years hence no story, no tragedy, no epic poem, will be filled with greater wonder than that which tells of his life and death. If Lincoln was not inspired of God then there is no such thing on earth as special providence in the interposition of divine power in the affairs of men. A noble manhood, nobly consecrated to man never dies. The Martyr to Liberty, the Emancipator of a race, the Savior of the only free government among men, may be buried from human sight but his deeds will live in human gratitude forever."

—From address before Marquette Club of Chicago, Feb. 12, 1896.

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Theodore Roosevelt.

"He lived in days that were great and terrible. . . . At such times men see through a glass darkly; to only the rarest and loftiest spirits is vouchsafed that clear vision which gradually comes to all, but to Lincoln was given this supreme vision. . . . this whole nation will grow to feel a peculiar sense of pride for the union of his people and for the freedom of a race; the lover of his country and all mankind; the mightiest of the mighty men who mastered the mighty days, Abraham Lincoln."

—Address at Hodgenville, Feb. 12, 1909.

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William H. Taft.

"We feel a closer touch with him than with living men. The influence he still wields, one may say with all reverence, has a Christ-like character. It has spread to the four quarters of the globe. The oppressed and lowly of all peoples, as liberty and free government spread, pronounce his name with awe, and cherish his assured personal sympathy as a source of hope. . . . The harmony of his message with every popular aspiration of freedom proves his universality."

—Address in Washington, May 30, 1922.

Woodrow Wilson.

"Lincoln, nevertheless, rather than Jackson, was the supreme American of our history. . . . Lincoln was always a-making; he would have died unfinished if the terrible storms of the war had not stung him to learn in those four years, what no other twenty could have taught him. And, as he stands there in his complete manhood, at the most perilous helm in Christendom, what a marvellous, composite figure he is! The whole country is summed up in him."

—From article in Forum, Feb., 1894.

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Warren G. Harding.

"No human story surpasses the fascination and the inspiration of that of Abraham Lincoln. The Republic pays him tribute tonight, and most of the world is doing him reverence. Because of his unshaken faith the world finds its own hopes mightily strengthened. Our words are all feeble, because we are dealing with the master martyr, the supreme leader in a national crisis, the surpassing believer in a fulfilled destiny, and a colossal figure among the hero-statesmen of all the ages."

—From address delivered at Lincoln Memorial University, Feb. 12, 1923.

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Calvin Coolidge.

"In wisdom great, but in humility greater, in justice strong, but in compassion stronger, he became a leader of men by being a follower of the truth. He overcame evil with good. His presence filled the nation. He broke the might of oppression. He restored a race to its birthright. His mortal fame has vanished, but his spirit increased, with the increasing years, the richest legacy of the greatest century."

—From Lincoln Proclamation, Issued Feb. 12, 1926.

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Herbert Hoover.

"Nothing that we may say here can add to the knowledge or devotion of our people to the memory of Abraham Lincoln. Nothing that we may do can add to his stature in history. All that words can convey has long since been uttered by his grateful countrymen. . . . A nation in its whole lifetime flowers with but few whose names remain upon the roll of the world in after generations. Lincoln after all these years still grows not only in the hearts of his countrymen but in the hearts of the peoples of all the world."

—Address at Springfield, Ill., June 17, 1931.