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"TAD"

Among all the children who have lived in the White House, Tad, the youngest son of Abraham Lincoln, seems to have left the deepest impression on the American people. His memory is not kept alive primarily for what he was himself but for what he was to his parents. Brady's famous photograph of Lincoln and Tad has become our best known father-and-son portrait.

In a letter which Mrs. Lincoln wrote on November 15, 1865, to the artist, Carpenter, we have an account of the naming of the boy and the origin of his nickname. She wrote:

"Dear little Taddie was named for my husband's father, Thomas Lincoln—No T for his middle name—was nicknamed Taddie by his loving father."

As the child grew older his father called him "Tad," but his mother continued to call him "Taddie" until he was nearly grown.

Tad was the fourth and last child of the Lincolns and was born April 4, 1853. His brothers, William Wallace and Robert Todd, were one and nine years old respectively at the time of his birth, and another child of the Lincolns had passed away three years before.

On one occasion, when but six years old, he had a slight attack of what Mrs. Lincoln called "lung fever." Mr. Lincoln was in Chicago at the time, and his wife sent a message by a friend to tell Mr. Lincoln that she was feeling troubled and "It would be a comfort to have him at home" as "our dear little Taddie had passed a bad night."

As the youngest child in the family it might suggest that he would be favored, but the added fact that he had a physical handicap in the form of an impediment in his speech made him especially dear to his parents.

The inability to speak plainly was a great handicap to the child's education, and was largely responsible for his having no primary school instruction. When the Lincolns moved into the White House Tad was but eight years old.

Willie, but a little over one year older than Tad, was put under the supervision of a tutor by the name of Alexander Williamson, but Tad was allowed to play and enjoy himself. That well-known axiom of modern education, "There is no impression without expression" may tell the story

of his backwardness and lack of interest in learning.

Tad's brother, Willie, died in less than a year after the Lincolns had moved into the White House, and Mrs. Lincoln in a letter to a friend tells of the very close attachment of these two boys so nearly the same age. Willie's death would make the parents more lenient than ever with Tad. As Robert was away at school, Tad was the only child left with them. Those who picture the White House environment of the Lincoln family must not include in this portrait but one small child during more than three years of the four years they spent there.

The famous portrait of Abraham Lincoln and his son, Tad, was probably taken on February 4, 1864. Robert Lincoln says that while his father was waiting in the studio, "Mr. Lincoln picked up an album of Brady's celebrated pictures and was showing them to Tad. So impressed was Brady by the pose that he induced them to remain as they were while he took their picture.

While Tad Lincoln may have been somewhat abnormal in his ability to learn, he did know how to play, and if one-half of the pranks which he engineered are as reported he must have been a houseful by himself. It is not the purpose of this paper to go into a discussion of the nature of these escapades.

After the death of President Lincoln, the widow and her family remained in the White House until May 22, when they removed to Chicago.

Tad's physical handicap had endeared him to his parents, Willie's death had made the attachment closer, and now that Mr. Lincoln was dead the mother was drawn nearer to him than ever. In mentioning him in a letter in November, 1865, she said, "I press the poor little fellow closer, if possible, to my heart, in memory of his sainted father, who loved him so very dearly." The boy was over twelve years old at this time.

Mrs. Lincoln, the fall after the president's death, put Tad in school at Racine, Wisconsin, and she seemed very much pleased at the progress he made. Mrs. Lincoln wrote to Mr. Carpenter, the artist, in November, stating that "Taddie is learning to be as delighted in his studies as he used to be at play in the W. H. (White House). He appears to be making up for the great amount of time he lost in W (Washington)."

By January 1866 Tad was back in Chicago with his mother, and it was probably at this time that he had his first experience in the public schools. Mrs. Lincoln wrote to his former White House tutor as follows:

"Dear little Taddie goes to school and does not miss an hour. He is already very much loved in C (Chicago). His teacher speaks of him in the highest and most affectionate terms."

One can imagine, however, what a tough time Tad had in the public

schools. He was large for his age, and although thirteen years old it is not likely he was able to read. Mentally alert in other respects, it must have been a trying ordeal to be classed as he was with much younger children.

It is said that while he attended the Elizabeth Street School the children called him "Stuttering Tad."

Realizing that Tad's education would be pursued with great difficulty without some correction in his manner of speech, in 1868 his brother Robert consulted some specialists about Tad's defect. An attempt was also made to strengthen his teeth, but improvement was noted.

As early as the fall of 1866 Mrs. Lincoln had hoped she would be able to take Tad to Germany where she felt he could be educated with much less expense than it would cost in this country.

Although Mrs. Lincoln had looked forward to having Tad educated in Europe and one or two dates for sailing had been made, it was not until the summer of 1868 that she made definite plans for such a move. Mrs. Lincoln wrote to a friend in August of that year that she would sail about the first of October, going immediately to Carlsbad to "place myself under medical care and place my little son in school—somewhere in Germany."

Judge David Davis, who had been appointed guardian of Tad, opposed the trip to Europe, and at the time the question of Mrs. Lincoln's pension was before Congress she was severely criticized for taking her son to Europe for the purpose of educating him.

Upon the arrival of Mrs. Lincoln and Tad in Germany, the boy was immediately put in a boarding school, and without doubt progressed more rapidly in his studies than he had at any other time in his life. By the month of March, 1870, Mrs. Lincoln wrote to her daughter-in-law that "Taddie is doubtless greatly improving in his studies."

Mother and son did not stay long in Germany, however, and were in England by October of that year. Mrs. Lincoln wrote that she had engaged an English tutor "who comes very highly recommended, a very fine scholar and a gentlemanly, conscientious man. He (Tad) recites his lessons with his tutor seven hours each day. . . . If he improves as he is doing I shall be satisfied."

Mrs. Lincoln was quite ill during the winter and in the spring of 1871, and she and Tad decided to return home. They took up their abode in the Clifton House in Chicago.

Here Tad who had been ill in Europe gradually grew weaker and died on the morning of July 15, 1871, at the age of eighteen years, three months, and eleven days.

An obituary notice appeared in the Chicago Tribune the next day and stated that "The cause of his death was dropsy of the chest."