

LINCOLN LORE

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF LINCOLN'S LIFE IN 1000 WORDS

Abraham Lincoln was born February 12, 1809 in LaRue County, Kentucky. His parents, Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln, were typical pioneers and lived in a log cabin. Abraham attended two terms of school in Kentucky.

The family moved to Spencer County, Indiana in 1816. Two years later Mrs. Lincoln died, leaving two children, Sarah and Abraham, aged nine and seven respectively.

Thomas Lincoln married widow Sarah Bush Johnston in December 1819. Her children, Elizabeth, Matilda, and John Johnston, aged twelve, eight, and four years respectively, became members of the Lincoln household along with another youth, Dennis Hanks.

Schools taught by Andrew Crawford, James Swaney, and Azel Dorsey were attended by Abraham. His education was comparable to that of the average pioneer boy. Borrowed books and weekly newspapers were his chief sources of information. He began manual labor when eight, operated a ferry at sixteen, and piloted a flatboat to New Orleans when nineteen.

The year Lincoln became twenty-one he migrated with his father's family to Macon County, Illinois. Returning from a second flatboat trip to New Orleans, he became clerk and later joint proprietor of a store in New Salem, Illinois. In 1832 he was chosen a captain in the Black Hawk war. He announced as a candidate for the Illinois legislature and was elected to this body in 1834 and for four biennial terms thereafter.

Moving to Springfield in 1837 he became associated in legal practice with John Stuart. Later he formed a partnership with Stephen Logan, and in 1844 established the firm of Lincoln and Herndon.

Lincoln married Mary Todd at Springfield on November 4, 1842. Four sons, Robert, Edward, William, and Thomas, were born to them. Mrs. Lincoln was a highly educated woman, a daughter of Robert Todd, president of the Bank of Kentucky.

Lincoln was elected a Whig congressman in 1847 but was not a candidate for reelection. In 1856 his name was placed before the Republican convention at Philadelphia as a candidate for the Vice-Presidential nomination.

He became a leading member of the Illinois bar, and was retained as counsel by the Illinois Central Railroad. The Rock Island bridge case and his defense of Duff Armstrong greatly increased his prestige.

A Republican convention at Springfield in 1858 nominated him for the United States Senate, and his arguments in the joint debates with Douglas were widely published. His famous Cooper Institute speech put him in line for the Presidential nomination which he received in Chicago in May 1860. He was elevated to the highest national office in November, and on March 4 was inaugurated the sixteenth President of the United States.

A provisional government consisting of seven southern states had been set up by the time of Lincoln's inauguration, and on April 12 the first gun of the Civil War was fired at Fort Sumter. Three days later President Lincoln called for 75,000 militia, ordered a blockade affecting southern ports, appealed again for volunteers on May 3, and called an extra session of Congress.

The first important battle of the war was fought at Bull Run on July 21, resulting in a victory for the Confederate Army. President Lincoln issued a proclamation for a day of "public prayer, humiliation, and fasting." Through the President's wise diplomacy, a breach with England over the "Trent Affair" was averted.

Early in 1862 Stanton replaced Cameron as Secretary of War. The President, using his power as Commander-in-Chief of the armies, issued War Order Number One on January 27. The Monitor vanquished the Merrimac in March, in April the army won an important battle at Shiloh, and during the same month the capture of New Orleans was announced. The fall offensive brought the Antietam victory, but in the winter occurred the horrible massacre of Union troops at Fredericksburg.

Lincoln's original plan to save the Union, called compensated emancipation, was to buy the slaves and free them. His annual message to Congress comprised a detailed plan for its consummation. The refusal of Congress to adopt his recommendation prompted him on September 22 to issue his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, its provisions to become effective on January 1, 1863.

The chief problem which confronted Lincoln in 1863 was the leadership of the troops: McClellan had been disappointing; Burnside was replaced by Hooker; Meade succeeded Hooker. Three days after Meade's appointment, he met Lee at Gettysburg and defeated him.

Three important writings which Abraham Lincoln contributed to civilization were produced in 1863: the final draft of the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, the first annual Thanksgiving Proclamation issued on October 3, and the Gettysburg Address on November 19.

A Union convention assembled at Baltimore on June 7, nominated Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, for President, and Andrew Johnson, a Democrat, for Vice-President. Out of the 233 electoral votes in 1864, Lincoln received 212.

Lincoln made Grant Lieutenant-General on February 29, 1864. A draft of 500,000 men had been ordered and later on 500,000 volunteers were called.

Overtures for peace had been made in 1864, but the Jacques-Gilmore mission and the Greeley effort had both failed. Early in 1865, a conference at Hampton Roads between three Confederate envoys and Lincoln and Seward ended without accomplishing anything. Two days later the President called his Cabinet together and again urged a bill providing for compensated emancipation, but his pleadings were ignored.

The Second Inaugural Address, delivered by Abraham Lincoln on March 4, 1865, is the outstanding state paper of the Nineteenth Century. While it promised victory to the North, it assured charity to all. March saw Grant begin his final drive on the Confederate capital and Sherman was marching to the sea. On April 4 Lincoln visited Richmond which had been evacuated two days before, and five days later—April 9, 1865—Lee surrendered at Appomattox.

On Good Friday, April 14, 1865, with plans for reconstruction already under way, Abraham Lincoln was struck down by an assassin. He died the following day at 7:22 a.m. without regaining consciousness. His wife and two sons, Robert and Thomas, survived him.