

# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor  
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 1121

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

October 2, 1950

## HISTORY MINUS HEROES

There are rumors afloat among school men that a drastic change is to take place in our public schools in the teaching of American history. We are told that the heroes of the past will be practically ignored and that emphasis will be placed on trends and social movements. Just at the time when it was hoped that more attention might be given to the inspirational values left to posterity by outstanding statesmen it appears as if these examples of personal initiative are to be nullified.

Religious history without its recognized leadership would present a drab and colorless panorama. Judaism without a Moses, Christianity without a Christ, and the various religious bodies without their saints, martyrs and founders would be void of the elements of creative faith. The story of scientific advancement without a Darwin, an Osler, an Edison, a Burbank and hundreds of other benefactors, would lose the dramatic element which personal struggle, sacrifice and even martyrdom has provided in accounting for the modern world.

The social sciences reduced to a series of graphs showing the ups and downs of human experience and relationships may invite a keener interest in the important trends of civilization, but it will be difficult to obscure dominant individuals who were largely responsible for the curves which soar and dip. Possibly, dates, the bane of the history student, will be happily sacrificed as the time element in the expansive movements cannot be precisely measured as accurately as vital statistics record the birth and death of an individual.

Can one not observe in the dethroning of American heroes the leveling progress of regimentation where individual initiative and leadership are to be tabooed? Are we on the verge of an era where mob hysteria, herd psychology and stereotype thinking are to form a new pattern of our American method of living? What is to be gained by taking heroes out of history and supplementing economic trends, social whims, and political merry-go-rounds illustrated by conjectural graphs which are void of inspiration?

Years ago an old oriental rug dealer named D. M. Bedikian who lived in Montclair, New Jersey told the editor of Lincoln Lore the story of how he happened as a small boy to come to America. His father had secured in Armenia a story of Abraham Lincoln and became greatly enthused over the fact that there was a country where a poor boy could rise from humble surroundings to eventually occupy the most important office in the nation. The story was read to young Bedikian and from then on every effort was put forth to make it possible to migrate to Lincoln's land.

This same biography telling the story of *The Pioneer Boy* or *From Log Cabin to White House*, written by William Makepeace Thayer in 1862 was translated into Greek, Hawaiian, Finnish, German and Swedish languages. Among the great influx of worthy immigrants from these countries shortly after the Civil War, many can partially be accounted for by the urge to leave the old country for the new encouraged by the story of Abraham Lincoln.

New York state has recently appointed a commission to strengthen the history courses in the public schools. This brief Associated Press dispatch recalled the result of some examinations given forty-one applicants for positions on the New York police force. One question was stated: "Who was Abraham Lincoln?" A few of the replies in part, to this question will indicate that when these examinations were taken many years ago there was most certainly some need for more emphasis on the life of American heroes especially Abraham Lincoln.

Applicant No. 1 "He trust in god a grate deal he was at the head of many battles and fought very bravely."

No. 2 "He was shot while at a theatre by Decota (DeSota?). He had been a President for a year and six months."

No. 6 "Started life on a ferry boat on the Mississippi River and from there he went to Lincoln Nebrask to run a flat boat."

No. 8 "He did not die immediately after he was assassinated. He lived until April 14 1865 and died at his home in Long Branch."

No. 9 "He was the President that freed the South and let the Dorkey go fred and he was shot be Garfield."

No. 12 "He received his education reading a Bible and a speller."

No. 13 "At early age his father moved his family to Ohio floating down the Mississippi."

No. 15 "He was a poor boy assisting his father at work in the year 1863 when the war broke out. Mr. Lincoln was one of the first to the front. Mr. Lincoln had many engagements in war and was bound to be victorious especially at the battle of Gettysburg when he swept all before him."

No. 16 "He hasbin shout wile walking doum thir strett by a man whom did not like hin."

No. 19 "He was attending a performance in Booth's theatre in Philadelphia when he was shot in the back of the head and died."

No. 21 "If he had not been killed he might be living today to a ripe old age."

No. 25 "He was not the great man that the People taught he was and in my opinion I think he did not due the People whom elected him as much Justice as he might of done."

No. 26 "He was the man that fred all the negroes in the world."

No. 30 "After he was shot Mr. Arthur took his place as president."

No. 31 "He will always be respected by the south in setting Slaves free."

No. 32 "He faught one of the worst battles during the war that of Bauker Hill."

No. 34 "In the year 1869 he succeeded as President by Jackson and lived happy the rest of his life."

No. 35 "I will tell yours auil that I know about Abraham Lincoln that he has bin a Presented of the New York City."

No. 36 "After the war was over and all the people became peaceful once more the Republican party got together and nominated General Lincoln for President. He was elected by a very large and overwhlaning majority."

No. 37 "He was at last assassinated out of the effects of which he died."

No. 38 "The person who shot Mr. Lincoln was supposed to be a Southern Confederate name Giateau for this offense he was tried and convicted and sentenced to me be-headed."

No. 40 "Abraham Lincoln was President of the United States and was assassinated in 1877 at foards Theatrera Boston."

No. 41 "Kind Gentlemen in reference to the life of Abraham Lincoln would say that I am not pearsonally acuated with him he was Clurck in a grocery store and could like any of the village boys."