

*How Faith Shaped
an American President —
and Changed
the Course of a Nation*

THE INSPIRED
WISDOM OF
ABRAHAM
LINCOLN



PHILIP L. OSTERGARD

Philip Ostergard has given us a close reading of Lincoln's words, illuminating the connection between his public sentiments and the private stirrings of his heart. Avoiding the temptation to pigeonhole Lincoln's faith, Ostergard allows the reader to follow Lincoln on his life's journey seeking the Almighty.

THOMAS F. SCHWARTZ, PhD

Illinois State Historian

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

Philip Ostergard has compiled a most valuable study of Abraham Lincoln's knowledge and use of the Bible in his thoughts and writings. Such overt actions surely confirm Lincoln's belief in an all-powerful God who became his touchstone in his later life and presidency. This piece of Lincolniana will be an informative tool for all those who ponder Lincoln's religion.

WAYNE C. TEMPLE, PhD

Chief Deputy Director

Illinois State Archives

Author, *Abraham Lincoln: From Skeptic to Prophet*

Philip Ostergard provides an illuminating and accessible story of Abraham Lincoln's lifelong engagement with the Bible that came to fruition in his Second Inaugural Address. Speech by speech, letter by letter, the author guides us on Lincoln's journey in the rough and tumble world of politics. *The Inspired Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln* includes helpful charts that allow the reader to see how the Bible, for Lincoln, was a major source of political wisdom.

RONALD C. WHITE JR.

Author, *Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural* and *The Eloquent President*
Fellow, Huntington Library

Professor emeritus of American religious history, San Francisco Theological Seminary

Lincoln is America's Jacob, a God wrestler, wounded, clinging to a national birthright and birth-responsibility. Philip Ostergard shows how early reading in the Bible eventually supplied President Lincoln with roots to nurture him during the personal and public crisis of the Civil War.

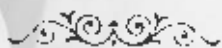
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The Inspired Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln: How Faith Shaped an American President—and Changed the Course of a Nation

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Dedicated to my grandchildren
Jensen, Parker, Bailey, Hudson, Cooper, and Peyton,
that they might place their faith in the Divine Being,
as did Abraham Lincoln,
and attain potential greatness

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I recall checking out a biography of Abraham Lincoln at the main library in Pasadena, California, as a boy of fourteen.

My serious study of Lincoln began once I had acquired and read the eight original volumes of *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. As I read, I made a card file of those quotations offering advice and wisdom for many situations in life.

My wife gave me a gift that helped make Lincoln a close-at-hand friend. It's a small statue, a maquette of the great sculpture by Borglum in Boston in which Lincoln is sitting on a park bench as though inviting those passing by to swap stories. As I sit at my desk writing letters and planning projects, that little work of art prods me to think, *How would Lincoln say this?*

I was also inspired by my visit to the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum (now called The Lincoln Museum) in Fort Wayne, Indiana. While there, I was able to visit the home of Warren, a pioneer Lincoln researcher. By then retired, Warren was devoting his time to tending his garden of a thousand dahlias. As we strolled through the vast colorful expanse in full bloom, I was humbled to listen to the words of so respected a man. His love of Abraham Lincoln ignited mine.

Dr. Thomas Schwartz of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois, encouraged me in the research for this book and granted the necessary copyright permission for the numerous quotations from *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. Dr. Wayne Temple, chief deputy director of the Illinois State Archives, and Dr. Ronald Rietveld, professor of history at California State University, Fullerton, reviewed the manuscript and made a number of helpful suggestions. Dr. Ronald White, highly acclaimed Lincoln author and scholar at the Huntington Library in Pasadena, California, has been an invaluable mentor. My friend William Yee, history teacher at Alhambra High School in Alhambra, California, has been a point of focus in my mind as my study has been to help teachers of our youth. I also render my sincere thanks to a most helpful person, Kimberly Miller, my editor from Tyndale House Publishers.

While the study of Lincoln has been my lifelong avocation, my professional life has been spent in youth leadership. My greatest hope is that today's boys and girls will learn that Lincoln overcame extreme disadvantages to become a great figure in history because he built his life on biblical principles.

A CHRONOLOGY OF LINCOLN'S LIFE

- FEBRUARY 12, 1809** Abraham Lincoln born near Hodgenville, Kentucky
- SPRING 1811** Family moves to 230-acre farm on Knob Creek, six miles east of Hodgenville
- 1812** Brother Thomas born and dies in infancy
- FALL 1817** Family moves to farm in Vincennes, Indiana
- OCTOBER 5, 1818** Nancy Hanks Lincoln, Abraham's mother, dies of milk sickness
- DECEMBER 2, 1819** Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father, marries Sarah Bush Johnston
- JUNE 1823** Father joins Pigeon Creek Baptist Church
- JANUARY 20, 1828** Abraham's older sister, Sarah, dies in childbirth
- MARCH 1830** Lincoln family moves to new home near Decatur, Illinois
- 1831** Abraham Lincoln settles in New Salem, Illinois
- SPRING 1832** Lincoln is candidate for state legislature; serves as captain in Black Hawk War
- AUGUST 6, 1832** Lincoln defeated in election; the only time he lost a popular vote.
- AUGUST 4, 1834** Elected Illinois representative from Sangamon County
- DECEMBER 1834** Takes seat in 55-member Illinois House of Representatives
- SEPTEMBER 9, 1836** Lincoln is granted a law license
- APRIL 15, 1837** Moves to Springfield; becomes law partner of John T. Stuart
- NOVEMBER 4, 1842** Marries Mary Todd
- AUGUST 1, 1843** Son Robert Todd Lincoln born
- MARCH 10, 1846** Son Edward (Eddy) Baker Lincoln born
- AUGUST 3, 1846** Elected to U.S. House of Representatives; serves 1847–1849

- JANUARY 10, 1849** Offers amendment abolishing slavery in Washington, D.C.
- FEBRUARY 1, 1850** Eddy Baker dies
- DECEMBER 21, 1850** Son William Wallace Lincoln born
- APRIL 4, 1853** Son Thomas (Tad) Lincoln born
- 1854** Aroused by signing of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Lincoln reenters politics
- NOVEMBER 7, 1854** Elected to Illinois legislature; soon resigns to become Senate candidate
- FEBRUARY 8, 1855** Lincoln throws support to Trumbull for Senate
- JUNE 16, 1858** Wins Republican nomination for Senate race
- AUGUST 21, 1858** First Lincoln-Douglas debate held
- NOVEMBER 2, 1858** Lincoln wins popular vote but Douglas, chosen by legislature, is awarded Senate seat
- MAY 16, 1860** Lincoln nominated for presidency
- NOVEMBER 6, 1860** Lincoln elected president
- DECEMBER 20, 1860** South Carolina is first state to secede from the Union
- MARCH 4, 1861** Lincoln delivers First Inaugural Address
- APRIL 12, 1861** Fort Sumter is attacked
- JULY 21, 1861** Union army defeated at Bull Run
- FEBRUARY 1862** Grant wins first important Union victories in the West
- FEBRUARY 20, 1862** Son Willie dies
- JANUARY 1, 1863** Emancipation Proclamation takes effect
- NOVEMBER 19, 1863** Lincoln delivers Gettysburg Address, commemorating July battle at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and dedication of cemetery there
- NOVEMBER 26, 1863** First national observance of Thanksgiving
- MARCH 12, 1864** General Ulysses S. Grant appointed commanding general of the Union army

- NOVEMBER 8, 1864** Lincoln wins reelection
- FEBRUARY 1, 1865** Lincoln approves resolution sending Thirteenth Amendment, which abolishes slavery, to the states
- MARCH 4, 1865** Lincoln delivers Second Inaugural Address
- APRIL 9, 1865** General Robert E. Lee surrenders at Appomattox Court House in Virginia, effectively ending the Civil War
- APRIL 14, 1865** Lincoln shot by John Wilkes Booth; dies the following morning
- MAY 4, 1865** Lincoln interred in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield, Illinois

FOREWORD

“The child is the father of the man,” declared poet William Wordsworth.

So we might say that the tall, dark-haired frontier lad scratching numbers with charcoal and reading by the light of the cabin fireplace was the father of the giant figure sitting in the marble chair in the majestic Lincoln Memorial.

Abraham Lincoln drew his first gulps of water from the Sinking Spring near his family’s Kentucky farm. He drank, too, of the common-sense wisdom of the wilderness, and his roots bore deeply into the moral principles and precepts of the Bible.

As a boy, Lincoln’s imagination came alive as he read about our country’s history. The images of seasick and storm-tossed colonists stepping ashore in the early 1600s, as well as underequipped, valiant American soldiers pressing on against the British, blossomed into feelings of patriotism that never left him.

However, when Lincoln emerged from the wilderness into the sunlight of civilization, he found that many persons dismissed the faith in which he’d been reared. As a young man newly arrived in New Salem, Illinois, Lincoln engaged in debates with humanistic and atheistic thinkers who challenged his biblically and historically based presuppositions. His philosophical mind, when confronted with these alternative views, questioned the biblical principles he’d been taught in the crude log-cabin church of his boyhood. Without question, these encounters triggered a season of doubts and skepticism. In fact, most historians agree that Lincoln wandered in doubt and uncertainty for most of two decades.

The question is, Was Lincoln’s faith in a personal, loving God ever restored? Two streams of opinion originate from two differing viewpoints. Some, such as myself, believe that his faith was rekindled. Others conclude that Abraham Lincoln never recovered from his skepticism. A few insist he used Scripture in his letters and speeches merely to gain political capital.

Discerning his beliefs is somewhat difficult. First, Lincoln never made a conclusive statement about his faith, nor was he a member of any

church. Furthermore, his life and death have become so legendary, such a cherished and integral part of American culture, that it is difficult to know him as a man.

Abraham Lincoln died on a Good Friday, a fact that in itself would have lent a holy aura to his life. Not long after his assassination, his kind deeds were exaggerated, his great deeds honored. People seemed ready to canonize him. Within a year of Lincoln's death, boyhood friends, neighbors, lawyers, clients in his law business, ministers, and politicians hastened to print their remembrances. A worldwide search for personal letters and scraps of paper with a few words in his handwriting was underway.

To written words, people added their stories: the yarns told by the young rail-splitter; tales of encounters with Lincoln in rooming houses, country housewarmings, riverboats, trains, late-night rallies, the legislature, and the White House. The stories of Lincoln were told from two different viewpoints. Those who knew him as a young adult recognized him as a gifted, popular, and trustworthy person. They also remembered that he did not attend church and kept his religious feelings to himself. Few of these acquaintances were aware of his midlife renewal of faith, and they raised questions about his beliefs.

Those who knew him as president—as well as the millions of Americans who followed his words—heard his public references to God and didn't know about his earlier doubts and questions. Many of these Americans not only believed that Lincoln was a devout Christian, they were sure he belonged to their denominations!

I believe that life's experiences and lessons caused the intellectually honest Lincoln to rethink his early teachings and nurtured him to a restored faith in the God of the Bible. In particular, the significant personal and public losses he endured during his presidency led him to reassess his view of God. To the nation the Civil War was an endless ordeal of sacrifice and blood; to the lonely man in the White House it was a smelting furnace, fashioning and disciplining every facet of his physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual being. He emerged like precious metal, refined and tensile hardened.

While the Civil War lasted “only” four years, its roots can be traced back to a great compromise forged during the Constitutional Convention, when the delegates agreed to permit slavery. In 1922, during his remarks

at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial, President Warren Harding noted that this concession in the Constitution represented “an ambiguity which only a baptism in blood could efface.”¹

For nearly one hundred years, the nation lived with the tension created by being a land established in liberty that nonetheless kept large numbers of people in chains. The Missouri Compromise, adopted in 1820, drew a line beyond which slavery would be restricted. But in 1850 powerful forces were fiercely resisting gradual extinction and aggressively expanding legal slavery in the territories created by the Louisiana Purchase. The struggle over slavery during the 1850s drew Lincoln, by then a prosperous Illinois lawyer and former state and federal legislator, back into politics.

When the man from the backwoods was elected president, he vowed to lead a people’s government: “A house divided cannot stand. . . . It will become all one thing, or all the other.” His position created general unease, even among some opposed to slavery. Multitudes of good men were inclined to live quietly and peacefully, even at the price of continued slavery. Lincoln’s task was to rally these citizens, arouse them from their neutrality, and unite them against the tyranny of those who would control the lives of others.

In the first days of his presidency, various cabinet members, congressmen, newspaper editors, and generals thought they could manipulate him, but they soon recognized that as commander in chief he was a strong, tough personality, truly a master of men. His early no-holds-barred political fights had hardened him for the political firing line.

Lincoln foresaw the cataclysmic storm that lay in the path of the nation. Though acutely aware of his lack of qualifications for leadership, he accepted the role of president, grounding his confidence in the cumulative wisdom of the people and in the Sovereign Creator who desires men to live in peace and freedom.

The historian Albert Beveridge wrote two volumes on Lincoln, which were published in 1928. He completed the first volume by reflecting on the contradictory images of our sixteenth president: a man well liked and respected yet unconcerned with his personal appearance; a man who displayed bottomless melancholy as well as boundless humor; a man who was cautious yet unflinchingly devoted to what he thought was right. In the end, Beveridge says, these characteristics helped “*make up the man*

Lincoln, who wrought the wizardry that has mystified historians of all lands” (emphasis mine).²

Lincoln possessed unusual qualities and unique personality traits; however, great deficiencies stood in the way of any possible chance of success. Deprived of an education, unused to a cultural setting, and inexperienced in administrative work, what leadership traits could he muster? How could he have achieved such resounding success?

In Lincoln’s own eyes, he possessed no *wizardry* and there was no *mystery*. He emphatically and repeatedly stated that solutions to the nation’s trials were beyond his wisdom or power and that he was merely an instrument elected by the people to be used in the hands of the Supreme Architect. He expressed his feelings many times in words similar to the following: “Without Him, I cannot succeed; with Him, I cannot fail.” (See, for example, page 120, which includes an excerpt from his farewell speech in Springfield as he headed to Washington to assume the presidency.)

Those words, I believe, are a concise summary of his faith during the last half decade of his life. His belief in an inscrutable yet trustworthy God had developed slowly, but by the end of his life was as much a part of his outlook as his belief that every American possessed a birthright of freedom and his conviction that the Declaration of Independence’s statement that all men are created equal must apply to the black slave as well as the white man.

In this book, I trace the development of these three themes throughout Lincoln’s writings. Part 1 of this book tells of the early life experiences of Abe Lincoln, which were an apprenticeship for the great work ahead. Here we see his faith in “government by the people” interwoven with his faith in common, ordinary people. In fact, it was more than campaign rhetoric for him to say that if the people could have their way, they would save their government. In Part 2, we see how Lincoln’s growing unease over the slavery question pulled him back into politics, leading to some of the most memorable and significant political debates in American history, those with political rival Stephen Douglas.

In Part 3, Lincoln emerges as a national leader who became the instrument of the Almighty. The death of a son turned a bereaved father to a Heavenly Father. The nightmare prospect of a bloody civil war that threatened to vaporize his boyhood dream of American greatness aroused,

tugged, and pulled peerless leadership qualities from the country lawyer. Yet the magnitude of the crisis also drew him back to God.



Lincoln's renewed faith is evident near the climax of his Second Inaugural Address, given in the waning days of the Civil War, as he spoke to men and women who had been broken in sorrow and confused in faith by a horrifying war that pitted American against American. "The Almighty has His own purposes. . . . Shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him?"³

Living God. Politicians may use scriptural phrases without really believing that God is actively involved in the events of the nation. Is it possible that Lincoln did the same here, or did he truly believe that God was concerned with the events of the United States, that He had allowed the war to begin, and that He had enabled the North to bring the war to conclusion?

Since we cannot settle this question from the Second Inaugural Address alone, we will study the totality of the statements in all his writings. In fact, it is the premise of my study that we should read Lincoln's words directly, as that is the only safe method of discerning his expressions of faith.

Authentically documented written statements by Abraham Lincoln are far more helpful in understanding the man than oral statements from friends and critics, recalled years after they were made. While most writers attempt to understand Lincoln's metamorphosis from his backwoods culture to eminent leadership qualities using psychological methods, in this book we trace his return to faith in the Bible in his own letters and documents.

Fortunately, in 1953, the Abraham Lincoln Association, under the editorship of Roy P. Basler, gathered and published all original documents in eight volumes and an index called *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. Two small supplementary volumes were added. In limited cases, newspaper accounts of important speeches were included.

Lincoln's *Collected Works* include revealing personal letters he wrote as a young man, as well as documents and correspondence to associates, editors, ministers, generals, and the public. Through them, we can witness

his reactions to life's challenges and disciplining experiences, as well as his maturing faith as chief executive in the crucible of a terrible war.

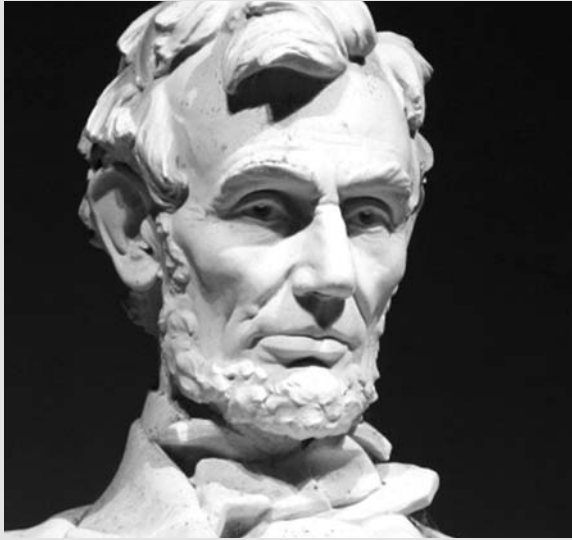
As this study uses only Lincoln documents contained in *The Collected Works*, it does not include some notable statements attributed to Lincoln by reliable secondary sources, but I make my case stronger if the reader can be certain that he or she is reading the words of Lincoln. Through nearly five thousand pages, Abraham Lincoln speaks to us without passing through the filter of those who would water down his statements or of great admirers who would magnify his image. *The Collected Works* stand as a reliable source of information. (On occasion, I do draw from other writers' insights into Lincoln and his times.)

Just a few final notes to help you navigate through the excerpts in this book. Since one of my purposes is to demonstrate how frequently Lincoln included references to God and scriptural phrases in his writings, I want you to be able to locate those easily. For that reason, such terms are in bold. Also, I give the volume and page number(s) where each Lincoln document is found in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, which is abbreviated **CW** in this text. (Please note: The wording has been reproduced exactly as it is in *The Collected Works*, so occasional misspellings and grammatical errors appear as recorded. Bracketed letters or words indicate some sort of editorial clarification or insertion.)

As an aid to understanding and appreciating the use of Scripture throughout Lincoln's writings, three appendices are included at the end of the book. They document all Scripture verses and Bible terms; biblical characters and topics; and names and terms for deity that appear in Lincoln's writings. Unless noted otherwise, Bible verses quoted are from the King James Version of the Bible, which is the version that Abraham Lincoln used.

As you sift through the excerpts from Lincoln contained in this book, my hope is that you will gain a true picture of our sixteenth president, the man who matured from a resourceful wilderness youth into a statesman with the fortitude and faith necessary to lead and reunite a fractured nation.

PART ONE



THE APPRENTICESHIP OF AN AMERICAN LEADER

Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say for one that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem.

Abraham Lincoln
New Salem, March 9, 1832

CHAPTER 1

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S OWN STORY

December 20, 1859

To Jesse W. Fell, Enclosing Autobiography

I was born Feb. 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families—second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks, some of whom now reside in Adams, and others in Macon counties, Illinois.

CW III: 511

Much about life for a boy growing up two hundred years ago in the secluded Indiana wilderness is lost to us in the shadows of time long past.

Shortly before he became president, Lincoln himself filled in some of the broad details of his family and early life. By then, he had become nationally known as a result of the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, during which Lincoln had squared off against Stephen Douglas for the Illinois Senate seat. Lincoln's friend Jesse Fell, whom he'd known since his first term in the Illinois legislature twenty-five years before, had asked him to write a brief account of his life that Fell and other Lincoln supporters could use to advance his nomination for the presidency. Though Lincoln was reluctant to do so at first, eventually he wrote a brief autobiography.

My paternal grandfather, Abraham Lincoln, emigrated from Rockingham County, Virginia, to Kentucky, about 1781 or 2, where, a year or two later, he was killed by indians, not in battle, but by stealth, when [where?] he was laboring to open a farm in the forest. His ancestors,

who were Quakers, went to Virginia from Berks County, Pennsylvania. An effort to identify them with the New-England family of the same name ended in nothing more definite, than a similarity of Christian names in both families, such as Enoch, Levi, Mordecai, Solomon, Abraham, and the like. My father, at the death of his father, was but six years of age; and he grew up, literally without education. . . .

CW III: 511

This first Abraham Lincoln had been a moderately wealthy Virginia landowner who felt the urge to follow a distant relative, Daniel Boone, over the Cumberland Mountains into Kentucky. While he was clearing a parcel of land—and while his three sons watched—a bullet shot by a Native American ended his life. One warrior ran to snatch Thomas, Abraham's six-year-old son, who was sobbing over his dead father, with the intent of carrying him into the wilderness. Fortunately, another son, Josiah, quickly reacted with an accurate rifle shot, and the future president's father was unharmed.

At age twenty-eight, Thomas married Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Though Lincoln's father has sometimes been described as shiftless, records show that he was respected as an honest and honorable person, a carpenter by trade. At the time of their first son's birth, Thomas and Nancy lived on a farm on the South Fork of Nolin Creek with their daughter, Sarah. There Thomas had built the log cabin in which the future president was born. Two years later, Thomas bought and then moved the family to another farm on Knob Creek.

Incomplete surveying and unregulated legal records caused Thomas problems in Kentucky. Furthermore, he detested slavery, which was legal in that state. So Thomas moved his family again, this time across the Ohio River into Indiana. Not long after, his wife died of milk sickness, an often fatal disease contracted by drinking milk from a cow that had eaten white snakeroot. Thomas was left to raise their two children alone.

. . . He [Thomas Lincoln] removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer County, Indiana, in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up.

CW III: 511

Not long after the death of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, Abraham and his sister, Sarah, were left alone with their cousin Dennis Hanks for weeks as Thomas sought a new wife. He chose wisely, and Sarah Bush Johnston became Abraham's stepmother in 1819. When she arrived at the Lincoln home with her own three children, she was appalled by the conditions in which her two stepchildren were living. It is clear that she made their house a home again and that Abraham was always fond of her.

There were some schools, so called; but no qualification was ever required of a teacher, beyond "readin, writin, and cipherin," to the Rule of Three. If a straggler supposed to understand latin, happened to so-journ in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizzard. There was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education. Of course when I came of age I did not know much. Still somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the Rule of Three; but that was all. I have not been to school since. The little advance I now have upon this store of education, I have picked up from time to time under the pressure of necessity. . . .

CW III: 511

All told, Lincoln probably received only a few months of formal education. Yet he was an insatiable learner. He had access to few books but devoured those he was able to borrow, including *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Aesop's Fables*. His great love for America was inspired, in part, by reading Weems's *Life of Washington* and Grimshaw's *History of the United States*.



In 1819 the Rev. Louis A. Warren was a minister in Hodgenville, Kentucky, where Abe Lincoln was born. People wrote him asking for information about Lincoln's boyhood, inciting his interest to the extent that he pursued a lifetime of research and writing about the parentage and childhood of our sixteenth president. His books offer extensive information about wilderness life, yet specific details regarding Abe's childhood and young manhood are sparse.

Still, it is obvious that Lincoln had to overcome unimaginable disadvantages to become president. Yet what we call disadvantages might in some ways have been advantages. In our minds, we see the dirt floor and feel the cold biting wind, marveling that Abe Lincoln could ever

have climbed the ladder to success. The frontier with its exposure to the elements was an efficient though harsh teacher with important lessons.

The boy Abe drew his first gulps of water from a natural spring. The young child had been rocked to sleep in the quietness of the wilderness night, with the sound of the hoot of an owl or the mating call of a lynx. Through life, many would assert that he knew no fear. As president, surrounded by arguing, unreasonable congressmen, smeared by newspaper editors, and nagged by a well-meaning wife, he would draw his clear thinking from the wisdom of the wilderness.

The hardships of the frontier disciplined its pupils into developing two great, though seemingly opposite, traits. The pioneer had to be self-reliant and, at the same time, he or she had to work with and rely upon others. We will see that these two characteristics blend beautifully. As a president presiding over a cabinet, Lincoln displayed both traits. He was unmovable in his basic decisions, and at the same time, he relied upon and elicited the best efforts of every man.

In addition to growing up in the harsh climate of the frontier, Abe endured a number of losses in his narrow family circle. A younger brother died at birth; an aunt, an uncle, and a neighbor all died of milk sickness before his mother succumbed to the same. The story is told that as a nine-year-old, Lincoln wrote a letter to a minister, asking him to stop by and pray at his mother's resting place. Not many years later, his older sister passed away in childbirth. He lost another close friend, Ann Rutledge of New Salem, who many believe was his first serious romantic interest.

Yet his wilderness upbringing also gave Abe Lincoln some advantages. Lost in the quiet of nature, undistracted by social and economic problems, the heart and mind could lift the eyes to heavenly powers. The reading of the Bible combined with the worshipful environment were nutrients in fertile soil for his faith in deity.

Abe helped to cut the timber for the building of the log cabin Baptist church of which his parents were members. His early reading of the Bible gave him a familiarity that shines forth in the many quotations of this study. Yet he never joined any church himself. Could it have been that the emotionalism of the backwoods church did not appeal to him? It is quite possible that the environment of nature contributed to his basic faith in the Bible and the Lord God, while leaving him unenthusiastic about the preaching in the wilderness church. In his mature years, he appreciated

sermons preached by men who could appeal to his keen intelligence and appreciation of literature. As he struck out on his own in his early twenties, however, he might have wondered if he were leaving his faith behind for good.

