


Boys' and Girls'
Biography

OF...

Abraham Lincoln



BY JAMES H. SHAW



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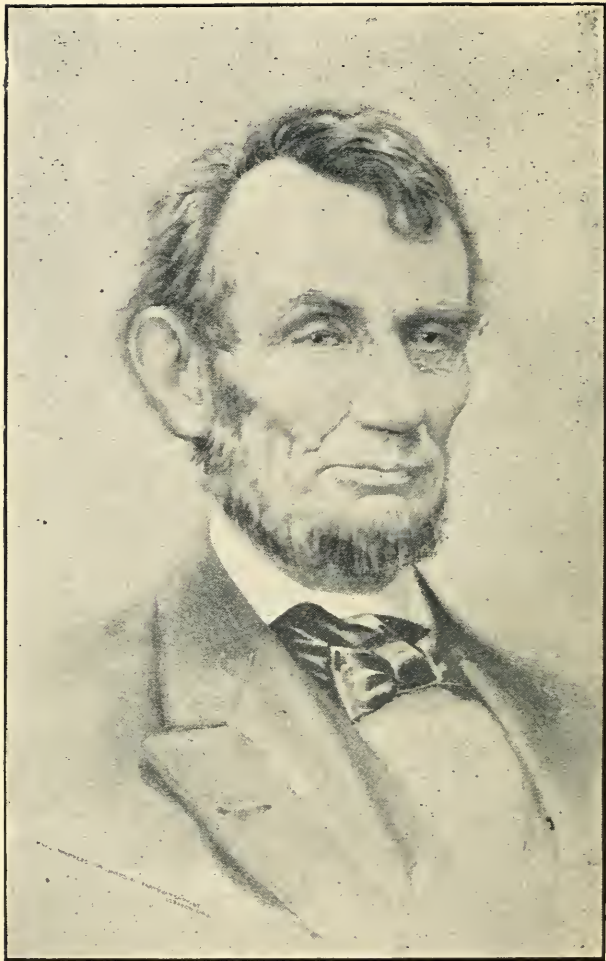
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Abraham Lincoln.

By James H. Shaw.

Evergreen City Publishing Company,
Bloomington, Illinois.

TYPOGRAPHY AND PRESSWORK BY
EARL MARQUAM,
BLOOMINGTON, ILLINOIS.



Boys' and Girls' Biography of Abraham Lincoln.

CHAPTER I.

A great English writer * in a lecture on America and the Americans said that when an American gets to heaven he will not be satisfied unless he can move farther west.

He said this because it has been so much the custom of our people to "move West." It is not so common now as it was a few years ago because the great public lands, free to those who would settle on them or plant trees, are mostly occupied.

The Lincoln family a couple of hundred years ago first "moved west" from England to Massachusetts; then they moved west again to Pennsylv-

*Charles Dickens.

nia; then west and south to Virginia; then west again to Kentucky.

Way back in the last century a man was digging in the rich soil of Kentucky. He turned up clods, planted seed and God sent the rain-drops and sunbeams and the grain sprang up and became gold. The surest gold mine in the world is our fertile soil and the surest miner is our farmer.

“Whoever plants a seed beneath the
sod

And waits to see it push away the
clod

He trusts in God.”

A little boy watched his father work and learned the lesson that man lives best by the sweat of his own brow, not by the sweat of other men's brows. While they toiled, through the shadows of the surrounding forest a savage stole secretly toward them on his soft moccasins. He paused, aimed his gun and fired. The man fell over dead; then the Indian came rapidly, caught up the boy and ran off toward the

woods with him. But his older brother, Mordecai, ran to the log hut and catching up the ever ready gun shot the Indian through the heart and sent him to the "happy hunting ground," and saved little Thomas Lincoln, who grew up to be a man and became the father of our beloved martyr president, Abraham Lincoln.

You have no doubt read of the adventures of Daniel Boone and the pioneers of Kentucky. A little boy thought these pioneers were so grand he said he wanted to be a "pioneer" when he went to heaven. But these pioneers had many hardships we do not have. They were constantly fighting the Indians and did not have the pleasant homes we have, but lived in rough log cabins, without plaster on the walls and with only the earth for floors. The snow drifted through the cracks of the logs and sometimes the children would wake up in the morning and find a little drift of snow on top of the bed quilt.

Though these Kentucky pioneers had hard times, they must have had a good place to live in after all, for some of the most honored men of our history, such as Andrew Jackson, Daniel Boone, David Crockett, Senator Benton, Henry Clay and Abraham Lincoln came from this pioneer country.

The little boy, Thomas Lincoln, who was saved by his brother Mordecai, was born in Jefferson county, Kentucky in 1778. He grew to be a man in these wild surroundings. It was common to have a fight with the Indians and many and many a time he shot deer and bears. The people did not have much beef then but the meat was mostly wild turkeys, geese, prairie chickens, quail, venison and bears' meat. Every boy learned to shoot well and nearly always carried his gun with him even when he was working in the field, for an Indian might steal up on him or some wild game pass by. A large part of the clothing was made out of the skins of wild animals.

September 2d, 1806, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married; he was twenty-eight years old and she was twenty-three. A Methodist minister, Rev. Jesse Head, performed the ceremony.

The preachers were called circuit riders then because they preached at so many places and all the places were united into what was called a circuit. This often included hundreds of miles and the preacher would only be at one of the points once in several months. He rode on horseback and carried his things in saddle bags hung across the horse's back.

Thomas and Nancy settled on Rock Creek farm in Hardin county. Thomas built a new log cabin and fixed things up. In this log cabin on the 12th of February, 1809, Abraham Lincoln was born. He had a sister two years older and one young brother who died while a little baby. Thomas Lincoln was a slow-moving man and fond of jokes. He could not read un-

til after he was married. This is not so very strange for you must remember that at that time, in Kentucky, there were very few schools. His wife taught him to read by spelling out the words in the Bible.

Nancy, Abraham's mother, was a very pretty woman. She was naturally refined and was considered well educated and had a cultivated and strong mind. Her son is supposed to have inherited his strong intellect from his mother and his fondness for stories and jokes from his father.

The mother taught her children to read and write and made them fond of books so that her son Abraham became a hard student and thus laid the foundation for his greatness. She was also a religious woman and trained the children to love God and keep his commandments.

Though Abraham grew up in very rough surroundings he did not learn to think that his words were made more emphatic or his expressions

stronger by oaths. Abraham Lincoln never swore; he did not think it manly to take God's name in vain. One time when he was clerking, a rowdy swore in the store and in the presence of ladies. When they were gone Lincoln asked the man to step outside. He then threw him down and rubbed smart-weed in his eyes to punish him for his swearing, but as he was also kind-hearted he got some water afterwards and helped wash the smart out.

Kentucky has always been a great tobacco raising state and though little Abe grew up to be quite a good-sized boy in that state he did not think, as many boys foolishly do, that it is manly to use tobacco, for Abraham Lincoln never used tobacco in any form.

His mother taught him these good things and he learned to do what his mother taught him and many years after she was dead and he had become a great man he said, "All I am or hope to be I owe to my angel mother." These incidents seem all the more

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