

JOHN G. NICOLAY

A. Lincoln. Early Years. (Not used in "Personal Traits")

item 91

Personal Traits

Extracts from Parke Godwin's Life of Bryant

1832 (?)

"The journey to Illinois was no easy one in those days, * * * While alone in these "gardens of the desert" [the prairies] he encountered a company of raw Illinois volunteers who were going forward to take part in the Black Hawk Indian War. They were lead by a tall, awkward, uncouth lad, whose appearance particularly attracted Mr Bryant's attention, and whose conversation delighted him by its raciness and originality, garnished as it probably was by not a few rough frontier jokes. He learned many years afterward, from a person who had been one of the troop, that this captain of theirs was named Abraham Lincoln. — [Vol I page 283]

A. H. McEwen - Ake L. &c - 177

"L. as a youth - sitting on the woodpile
studying law. Asked by his employer what he
was reading explained he was not reading but
studying. When told what his questioner simply
exclaimed "Great God Almighty" & passed on

"Personal Traits"

Special Order (No) Beardstowne April 28, 1832

The Brigade Inspector having inspected Captain Abraham Lincoln's Company and mustered them into service reports that thirty guns are wanting to arm the Company completely. Quarter Master General Edwards will furnish the Captain with that number of arms if to be had in his department.

John J. Hardin Brig Major

By order of Brigadier General
Samuel Whiteside

Commanding B.M.V. Illinois.

Received April 28, 1832 for the use of the Sangamon County company under my command, thirty muskets, bayonets, screws, and wipers which I oblige myself to return upon demand.

A. Lincoln, Captain.

guns	bayonets	screws	wipers
19	15	9	21
3	2	1	1
1	1	4	1
1	1		
1	1		
1			
<u>26</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>23</u>

~~X~~

~~Odell Moses Jr. M.C.~~

~~First vote for XIIIth Amendment~~

~~78~~

~~Second vote for XIIIth Amendment~~

~~83~~

From Garfield's speech on unveiling Carpenter's
Picture

"The few books that came within his reach
were devoured with the divine hunger of genius."

Leonard Sweet

Version of L. & his first
dollar —

T. Rice 458

government; but when he governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government _ that is despotism."

"No man can logically say he ~~does~~'nt care whether a wrong is voted up or voted down." "He cannot say people have a right to do wrong."

"He who would be no slave must consent to have no slave."

"Those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and under a just God, cannot long retain it."

And his immortal "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith let us dare to do our duty as we understand it."

These were battle-cries, charged with ~~an~~ earnestness ten-fold more impressive than the sallies of his earlier manner. His own growth, and the dignity of his theme were alike apparent. He was no longer ~~merely~~ a clever speaker. *talking for political ends.*

He had received his Pentecostal touch of flame, and become a teacher of ~~a new faith~~ _ a leader of men.

The Boy Lincoln.

Lincoln's early youth was spent in Spencer County, Indiana, above Rockport, a beautiful little city crowning the abrupt cliffs which frown over the Ohio River. He was faithful and industrious; but there was in him a latent indolence, which made him fond of taking his rod to fish, or, with his gun upon his shoulder, he would roam in search of game over the long, low hills bursting with red clay. There are living at present several old citizens who knew Lincoln well at that time. He was thoughtful, and his solitary expeditions probably gave him plenty of opportunity to indulge his meditative faculties. The description of his appearance then—his long, lank legs, under a diminutive body; his homely face, upon which the prominent nose stood like a handle; his long hair dangling upon his shoulders—bring up instantly the picture of Ichabod Crane in the twilight, stealing over the hills of Sleepy Hollow to pay his court to Fraulein Katrina Von Tassel. The embryo statesman was full of spirit and fond of mad pranks. One old gentleman in Rockport lives to tell the last time he saw Lincoln. He was visiting the Lincoln homestead, and, as he was coming away, they found a trespassing cow hanging about the gate. The cow had given the Lincolns much annoyance by entering their garden and committing depredations. Young Abe was dressed in a suit of jeans, without any coat, as it was summer time, and on his head he wore a broad-brimmed white straw hat, part of which was cracked and broken. Finding the cow standing hypocritically meek at the gate, young Abe leaped astride of her back, and, digging his bare heels into her sides, the astonished animal broke away down the road in a lumbering gallop. "The last I saw of Abe Lincoln," the old gentleman relates fondly, "he was swinging his hat, shouting at the top of his voice, and galloping down the road on that thunderstruck cow."

In the old country church near the Lincoln place is a pulpit which was made by Abe Lincoln and his father. There is a book case in the Evansville custom-house made by the same carpenters and taken there for preservation. Near where the old house stood is a dilapidated corn-crib with rail floor, the rails for which were split by young Lincoln. Last fall a monument was raised over Nancy Lincoln's grave through the efforts of General Yeatch, of Rockport. It is a plain slab with a plain inscription.

1861

Chapter
Lincoln

THE LINCOLN DUEL.

Another Version of the Affair.

To the Editor of the State Journal:

I notice in your columns, this morning, a "Reminiscence of Springfield," which I beg to correct in part, and I think probably the best way is to tell the whole story just as it occurred simply giving facts, dates I am now unprepared to give, but about 1842 in the spring, I was keeping the books of the JOURNAL office and collecting for Col. Ed. Baker, Abraham Lincoln, A. T. Bledsoe, I think, Drs. Henry and Merryman. All had their offices in this building, and I think in a large room adjoining the counting room, all as much the backwoods fashion as you can conceive.

The JOURNAL had been running several years and had never had a ledger. So you can form some idea of the rural simplicity.

General Shields, a native born Irishman, a very clever man and an old bachelor, wanting to get married, and seemingly very anxious, was our State Auditor. Milton Hay and James Matheny were studying law with Baker and Bledsoe. Allen Francis and Newton were younger brothers of old Simeon. At nights we were all engaged with Stephen A. Douglas and others in playing ball, running foot races, telling stories and cracking jokes at the expense of any one, we didn't care whom. Some one, I don't know who, but always thought 'twas Milt Hay, J. H. Matheny, or A. T. Bledsoe conceived the idea of having some fun at Gen. Shields' expense in the shape of love letters from an old Irish maid out near Athens, to Gen. Shields; and his reply.

The letters were published in the JOURNAL, and were talked of, laughed at and over, and everyone with any fun or ideality in his composition put in a word to make sport. Each one would have fought to the death for Gen. Shields—would not have offended him for anything; but fun we must have. The letters were written and published before old Uncle Simeon knew it, and General Ewing with General Shields came and demanded the author. Mr. Lincoln was standing at my desk reading the JOURNAL in the morning. We had just come down from Mr. Lincoln's house together, when Uncle Simeon stepped up to Mr. Lincoln and told him. Mr. L. turned his head right quick and said to him: "Tell General Shields I wrote the article."

I went off on a collecting tour, was gone some weeks—the duel had culminated, and it will now never be known how it terminated unless something should be said to the injury of General Shields or Mr. Lincoln. Major A. R. Robinson loaned Mr. Lincoln the sword with which to practice, and fight if need be.

More anon if you desire the finale.

JAMES L. HILL.

Springfield, June 23, 1873.

1861

Chapter
Lincoln**Mr. Herndon's Account of Abraham Lincoln and Ann Rutledge.***From the Boston Advertiser.*

Boston, Friday, Dec. 7, 1866.

To the Editors of the Boston Daily Advertiser:

I have just returned from a somewhat lengthened journey through the State of Illinois. While there, it was a matter of some vexation and annoyance that I could in no wise lay hold of a Boston paper. When a few hours since, a paragraph from the *Daily Advertiser*, headed "A singular story about Mr. LINCOLN," was put into my hands, my first feeling was one of intense thankfulness that in all probability it would never meet Mr. HERNDON's eyes. Did it concern any one but him, whose name thrills through every American heart—were Mr. HERNDON himself well known in New-England—we might trust to the wisdom of silence, and let the reproach sink into natural oblivion. But Mr. HERNDON is to write the only life of ABRAHAM LINCOLN which will command the attention of posterity, it is to be published by a Boston house, and I am not willing that there should be any doubt as to his qualifications or his character.

In order to understand such men as HERNDON and LINCOLN—for they were both of one type—we must have a knowledge of pioneer life such as few Eastern men possess. Travelers through the large cities of the West do not often see this class of men; they must be sought in the darkness of Egypt, in the broad stretches of the prairie, on the dismal trail of the legal circuit. Their lives are not like our lives, nor are their ways as our ways. Since the days of the old Crusaders there have been no men, I think, so blessed or so cursed, as the case might be, by the love of women. Nor is it, in those far off wilds, possible to keep the secrets of a man's life in this respect. When I saw with my own eyes, written statements from Mr. LINCOLN's own hand, and affidavits from repeated sources, as to similar statements made by him in conversation, on matters which would never have passed the lips of an Eastern man, I asked: "What does it mean—how can it be explained?" and everywhere in Southern Illinois I received the same answer—"Only by the habits of our people."

It is well to be born in Boston, well to be nurtured in a school, where "prunes and prisms" form part of one's elementary discipline, but it is also well to go away from Boston, to be purged utterly of provincial egotism and moral bigotries, and open one's eyes to the fact that God is competent to save all men, and that he specially bends to save sometimes the poor wretch whom we Bostonians leave in the gutter. When, a few weeks since, I wrote a letter to a Boston paper, from Mr. HERNDON's fireside, and stated how I could at one glance distinguish the only two "pioneers" in an audience composed of New-England shopkeepers and traders, such audiences as travelers for the most part encounter, it was not my own smartness that I desired to advertise, but the extraordinary and impassable barrier between these two races. The time is past, I think, when any one in New-England would justify JARED SPARKS in drawing his pen through the phrase "Old Put," and putting in the "Gen. PUTNAM," which restored the mythical dignity of WASHINGTON. Is there any one in this generation who knows anything of WASHINGTON, the man? Certainly, there must have been some days when he omitted to wear his starched cravat, and when his horse's heels were not duly blackened! And of NAPOLEON, where can we find a single historic sketch? The early English writers make him the father of half the illegitimate princes on the continent, including some too near of kin. The French memoirs represent him as a miracle of chastity and devotion to JOSEPHINE, while now and then a foreign newspaper tells us that some one did who was an unacknowledged son of the great NAPOLEON.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN did not believe in writing history in this way. He was a man who could neither think, nor look, nor act a lie. He was great enough to see his own relation to his times, his personal circumstances and his God, and to be willing that the world should see it also. If he was not great enough, the State of Illinois is; and knowing how Mr. LINCOLN loved and trusted WILLIAM HENRY HERNDON, it demanded at once that this man should write his life. Too impatient to wait for the slow and faithful work, which is the only work that Mr. HERNDON can do, Springfield demanded, meanwhile, a course of five lectures.

There are two millions of people in the State of Illinois, and a large portion of them know in some fashion all the facts these five lectures treat. It was Mr. HERNDON's business to put these facts into an order which would force them to illustrate each other. The lectures do not constitute the "Life" he is to publish; they are only studies toward it. The lecture which the *Advertiser* has criticised is, I believe, the fourth of the five, and supplies a necessary link in the history. It could no more be left out of a true life of LINCOLN than DANTE's love for BEATRICE, or PETRARCO's love for LARA, or SHELLEY's divorce from his first wife, could be omitted in the biographies of those poets, and still leave them intelligible. For thirty years after the period is described, his terrible sorrow continued to move him at times out of himself, and it is the only explanation of many

significant facts. The poem, which is inseparably connected with his memory, became precious to him simply for ANN RUTLEDGE's sake.

There is the story, and Mr. HERNDON, nearly 12 years Mr. LINCOLN's junior, has no more to do with it than I have as I tell it. ANN RUTLEDGE was a lady, one of the very few that had penetrated to Illinois as early as 1833. Of a family educated and aristocratic, but broken down, she was betrothed, before Mr. LINCOLN ever saw her, to a Scotch merchant. In those days Illinois was as far from New-York as Kam-schatka now is. They were soon to be married, when the Scotchman went for business purposes to that city. For months nothing was heard of him; it was supposed that he was dead or had wickedly deserted ANN. The truth was that he lay ill of delirious fever at a small wayside inn. In this state of things, while ANN's mind was tortured by suspense and disappointment, Mr. LINCOLN went to her father's house to board. In time a sort of provisional engagement ensued. There were circumstances in both lives which depressed and pained; they learned to hold each other very dear. Upon this state of things broke the rumor of the recovered Scotchman's return. The delicate nature of the woman broke under it. Betrothed to two—both of whom she loved—she had no choice but to die; she did not live to see him enter New-Salem. How he who had been absent loved her let the sequel show. He bought the farm for her sake, and lives there still a bachelor. It was his quivering hand that pointed out to Mr. HERNDON the spot where ANN RUTLEDGE died.

That this story is true, I know, for I have read every line of the autograph letters on which it depends. That it is the truth, on which the future life of Mr. LINCOLN turned, Mr. HERNDON will some time show us. Had ANN lived to be his wife, it is the opinion of all his Western friends that he would never have sought political life. His tastes were quiet and domestic. But this trial unhinged him, made him for years reckless, despairing, atheistic. It was very gradually that he came to conquer the revolt of his own soul. It was that work well done which fitted him to conquer other men. I dare not pursue the subject further than to say that Mr. HERNDON has a task before him which for delicacy and magnitude exceeds any of which I have ever dreamed. Mr. LINCOLN left no blood relations but his sons. None of ANN RUTLEDGE's survive her. The unhappy Scotchman who returned to find her dead, saw every line of the lecture which the *Advertiser* criticised before it was printed. I think few authors of modern times would have been honorable enough to ask his consent, since he was not to be named in it, but Mr. HERNDON read the manuscript to me himself, and would never allow me to speak of it till it had passed that last revision.

I had not got far in Illinois before I found that the life of ABRAHAM LINCOLN was something very different from what we at the East had imagined. I found HOLLAND's book lying in half the log-cabins, with the vexed disgust of readers pencilled on the margin. "Gammon!" was the most frequent comment of those on the Sangamon Circuit. "Pious cant!" was another. I had traversed the length and breadth of the State before I reached Springfield, but the hope that anything I might hear there would change the new impression hourly diminished, and when at last I laid my hand upon Mr. HERNDON's papers and said, "Will the world ever bear that you shall tell the whole truth?" he answered, "It must have that or nothing." "And what would ABRAHAM LINCOLN himself have desired?" I continued. His eyes closed, a look of strange tenderness stole over his face, and he answered: "I seemed to see him and hear him just as I used to do, and he says, 'Go ahead, Billy.'" We must trust Mr. HERNDON, because ABRAHAM LINCOLN trusted him. There is nothing in history more touching than their dealings with each other. For more than twenty-five years they were partners, but never kept a separate account, held each other's money as they held their own, and never suspected nor experienced wrong, never had a misunderstanding nor a grievance. When Mr. LINCOLN was about to leave for Washington, he went to the dingy little law office which had sheltered his saddest hours. He sat down on the couch, "BILLY," said he, "you and I have been together all these years, and have never 'passed a word.' Will you let my name stay on the old sign till I come back from Washington?" The tears started to Mr. HERNDON's eyes. He put out his hand. "Mr. LINCOLN," said he, "I will never have any other partner while you live," and to the day of the assassination all the doings of the firm were in the name of LINCOLN & HERNDON.

We must trust Mr. HERNDON also, because this nation owes him a great debt. It was he who first led Mr. LINCOLN to anti-slavery convictions. Utterly refusing office at the President's hands, he kept the friend's moral power to the very last. God grant he may live to complete a work which no one else would ever have the courage to undertake.

He is a man of genius, and we shall have to be patient with his individualities, as we were with those of CARLYLE. The real difficulty in the lecture under discussion is, that in his delicacy he leaves the facts somewhat misty, his imaginative mind being scarcely willing to let the daylight touch them. The wilderness has educated him. The wilderness must pronounce upon him. It was not our courts which taught him law. He showed me a law paper one day,

with a curious twist about his mouth, "You would not think much of that at the East," said he, "but it does our business here."

C. H. D.

Copy

"History of
Illinois
1818-1848.
Thomas Ford.
p. 94

A most remarkable change occurred during this period and a little before, in the habits of dress and appearance of the people. Before the year 1830, a man dressed in the costume of the territory, which was a raccoon-skin cap, linsey hunting shirt, buck-skin breeches and moccasins, with a belt around the waist, to which the butcher-knife and tomahawk on the side and back were appended, was rarely to be seen. The blue linsey hunting shirt with red or white fringe, had given place to the cloth coat, the raccoon-skin cap with the tail of the animal dangling down behind, had been thrown aside for hats of wool or fur. Boots and shoes had supplanted the deer-skin moccasin, and the leather breeches strapped tight around the ankle, had disappeared before unmentionables of more modern material. The female sex had made a still greater progress in dress. The old sort of cotton or woollen frocks, spun, wove and made with their own fair hands, and striped and cross-barred with blue dye and turkey red, had given place to gowns of silk and calico. The feet, before in a state of nudity, now charmed in shoes of calf-skin or slippers of kid; and the head formerly unhelmeted but covered with a cotton handkerchief, now displayed the charms of the female face, under

V.

~~Davis Charles H. Rear Admiral, U.S.N.~~

~~Succeeds Foote in Command of
Union gunboat flotilla~~

~~302~~

many forms of bonnets of straw, silk, or leghorn. The young ladies, instead of walking a mile or two to church on Sunday, carrying their shoes and stockings in their hands to within a hundred yards of the place of worship as formerly, now came forth arrayed complete in all the pride of dress, mounted on fine horses, attended by their male admirers.

II.

~~Davis, Jefferson~~

~~Instructions for rebellion~~

~~8~~

~~Endorsement on Gen Smith's report~~

~~9~~