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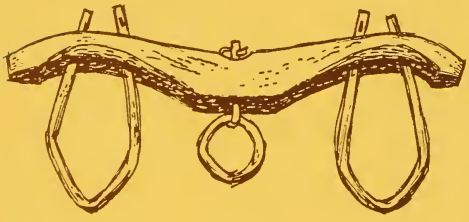


MEMORIAL

the Class of 1901

founded by
HARLAN HOYT HORNER
and
HENRIETTA CALHOUN HORNER

Some Facts

Concerning

Lincoln

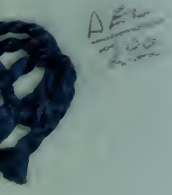
The Versatile

Remarks before the Lincoln Day
Luncheon of Millersburg Chapter
No. 326, Order of the
Eastern Star

February 12, 1924

By John W. Starr, Jr.

Fifty Copies Printed



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Madam Toastmistress,

Members of the Order of the Eastern Star

and Fellow-Guests:

While Abraham Lincoln has not been generally regarded as a versatile man, yet it is in that light that we wish to present a few facts for your consideration this evening.

In his youth and early manhood, he served as farmhand, flatboatman, ferryman, railsplitter, storekeeper, soldier, surveyor, postmaster and legislator, before he took up the study of law at the age of twenty-five, after contemplating blacksmithing.

During his public career he served four terms in the Illinois Legislature; was a United States Senatorial aspirant twice and defeated both times; received 110 votes on the first ballot for Vice President at the first National Republican Convention held in Philadelphia in 1856, and finally in 1860 and again in 1864 received the highest honor it is possible to receive in the gift of the American people.

It is interesting to note that in 1836, when a candidate for the legislature, he declared in favor of woman suffrage—a statement far in advance of his times.

In the Black Hawk Indian war he received a commission of Captain which he was afterwards entitled to use, but his was not the nature to make use of an empty military honor.

During his Presidency he received the degree of Doctor of Laws from Princeton University, which he greatly appreciated.

While Abraham Lincoln was always ready to defend the widow and the helpless, yet it would be entirely appropriate to refer to him as a corporation lawyer, for during the height of his legal career, he served the leading corporations of his own and near-by States as attorney, including the Illinois Central Railroad, the leading corporation of the State of Illinois in his

day. In the capacity of attorney for the different transportation systems he was entitled to and used the free passes issued by the various roads.

He was a sagacious politician, in the best use of the term, but acted always for what he felt were for the best interests.

His statesmanship and diplomacy were second to none, and in the frequent clashes he had with the greatest minds of his own and the opposing political party during his Presidency, he never came out second best.

While knowing practically nothing of the technicalities of warfare, yet he has been pronounced by military writers as a great military strategist; he also kept himself well posted on the naval operations.

As President, he had on foot a colonization scheme for the American negro; was looking forward to the construction of a Panama Canal, and there is reason to believe that he contemplated the prohibition or at least drastic regulation of the liquor traffic at the time of his assassination.

This man, who had less than a year's schooling all told, became a master of the English language.

There hangs on the walls of Oxford University, as an example of English prose, a copy of a letter he wrote while President to the mother of five sons who had been reported slain in battle.

Of his address at the battlefield of Gettysburg, it has been said that there is nothing to surpass it in simple eloquence in all history, ancient or modern; and his Second Inaugural has been compared to the Sermon on the Mount.

He is noted as a man of letters.

For his day and generation, he traveled more or less extensively as he had opportunity, and enjoyed sight-seeing. He had been to the New Orleans slave market, saw the mighty Nigara, knew Broadway, New York; Broad Street, Philadelphia, and had visited many of the other leading cities of the east.

In his younger days he tried his hand at poetry; had the poetic instinct, and from what we have on record today would probably have made a fair success had he chosen to go further along this line.

He was more familiar with the Bible, and on almost any occasion could quote therefrom more readily than we will venture to say can any of our public men of today.

While not a member of any church, yet in his later years he was a regular attendant upon church services and believed thoroly in the efficacy of prayer. During the days of the Civil War period he even attended the mid-week prayer service as opportunity permitted.

He was not a member of any fraternal organization, although it is claimed that he must have had some knowledge of Freemasonry. The only lodge so far as it is known authentically that he ever joined, was the Sons of Temperance, and after joining there is no evidence he ever attended.

He had a good mind, and could digest mentally everything he read which was worth while. When forty years of age, after his single term in Congress, he studied and mastered the book of Euclid. He intensively read religious philosophy, science and mathematics.

He was interested in inventions, and there is today in the Patent Office at Washington the model of a patent he took out after leaving Congress, for lifting vessels over shoals.

Lincoln was a lover of good literature, could quote from Burns, Byron, Holmes and Shakespeare, and could declaim at length from the Bard of Avon very creditably in private.

He enjoyed attending the theatre: be it a minstrel show or a Shakesperian play.

Flowers he adored. In the social line he played chess and checkers fairly well, danced as well as could be expected when the occasion required, but billiards, a game which he enjoyed, he played but poorly.

Abraham Lincoln had a wonderful memory and the faculty of making everyone feel at ease in his presence, even while holding the highest office in the land.

Contrary to common belief, there was nothing uncouth or unsymmetrical in his appearance.

He was personally a brave man, both morally and physically.

There was a strain of the supernatural in his make-up and he believed more or less implicitly in dreams.

He loved children and was an indulgent father.

He could comport himself with ease in the presence of the biggest men of the nation politically, and delighted in lengthy interviews with such eminent scientists as Prof. Joseph Henry, of the Smithsonian Institute, and Prof. Louis Agassiz. Yet he could keep high dignitaries cooling their heels in the ante-room, while he performed an act of mercy for some one of his hapless constituency.

His mind could readily grasp any mechanical problem and he had a faculty for comprehending and understanding machinery.

A story illustrating his interest in things mechanical is told by an associate at the Bar, and with this we close.

During the course of a patent case in the Federal Court at Springfield, in which Abraham Lincoln appeared as attorney for one of the contending parties, several models representing different machines were introduced and placed on the floor before the jury.

In the course of the presentation of Lincoln's argument, he knelt down to get a better view of the models, and the jurors in their interest also got on their knees.

Seeing this, one of the opposing attorneys said to his associate in a voice loud enough to be heard by those near-by:

"Williams, I guess our case has gone to hell; Lincoln and the jury are on their knees together."

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