

THESE MEN KNEW LINCOLN



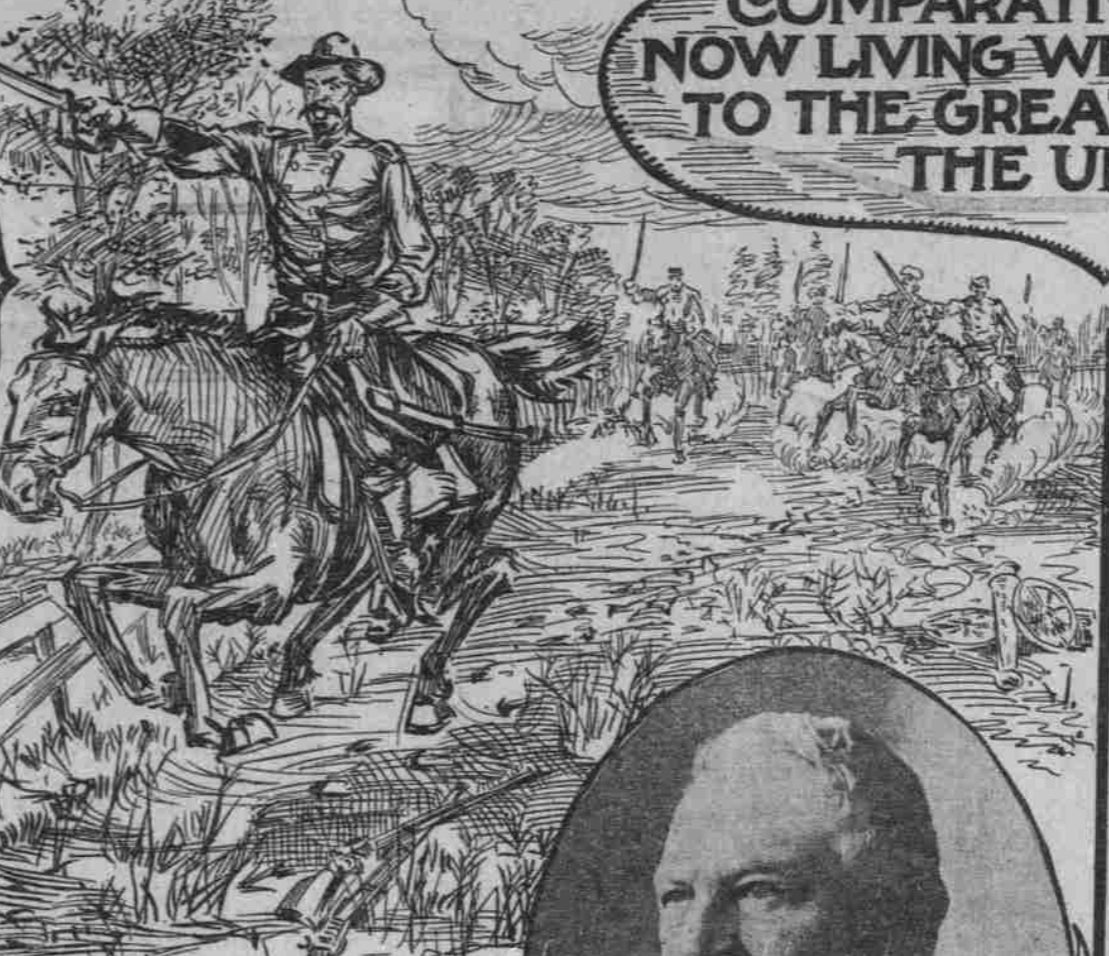
COMPARATIVELY FEW NOW LIVING WHO GOT CLOSE TO THE GREAT SAVER OF THE UNION



GEN. DANIEL E. SICKLES IN CIVIL WAR TIMES



GEN. HORACE PORTER IN CIVIL WAR TIMES



GEN. O. O. HOWARD

AS the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln approaches it finds comparatively few men alive who knew and conversed intimately with the great President. That Lincoln was born 100 years ago, that his friends of the '40s are now few and old, emphasizes how far Lincoln and his times have passed into history. With this centennial anniversary they will have passed into history completely. To gather from the lips and the pens of the survivors of those who knew Lincoln their memories of his personality is to construct a picture of the man and the President which gives a more accurate idea of him than can be had in any other way. A few years more and of those who knew Lincoln none will be alive.

Nearly all of the survivors of those who knew Lincoln are men who have made their mark in various fields of action and whose names are well-known. Though they are men of various temperaments and diverse characteristics and saw Lincoln from different points of view, there is a singular unanimity in their records of the impression he made upon them. At first they thought him awkward, commonplace, disappointing and then they came to regard him with awe and affection. All seem to have been impressed with the certain cloud of death and doom which hung about him.

General O. O. Howard has often told of his first meeting with Lincoln. His story, in brief, is this: "I was encamped at Washington with the first three-year's regiment of volunteers from Maine, my native state, which regiment I had raised and commanded. One evening after parade an orderly came to me and said that some gentlemen in a carriage over by Fourteenth street wished to see me. I walked over there and found a rather shabby carriage of the 'back' variety, in which were several men who appeared to me of very ordinary appearance. Some one standing in the dusk by the side of the carriage said: 'Colonel Howard, permit me to introduce you to our President, Mr. Lincoln.' I was astonished and imagine I showed it plainly. But the President, as if to cover my confusion, said something about having been 'looking on at Colonel Howard's show,' and his pleasant smile and warm handclasp quickly put me at my ease. The President and Colonel Howard talked for a few minutes and then the carriage drove off.

Men Who Knew Lincoln Best.

Of all the men living today who knew Lincoln personally probably General T. T. Eckert, who was chief of the Government telegraph service during the war, and Charles A. Tinker, Albert B. Chandler and David Homer Bates, who were



GEN. T. J. HENDERSON

cipher operators in the War Department, knew him most intimately, since they saw him every day, at all hours of the day, and generally several times a day. They saw him in all his moods and in success and failure.

The military dispatches at first came into General McClellan's headquarters and Eckert, with the rank of captain, was stationed there to superintend the business of the telegraph. Some enemy made a report charging Eckert with neglect of duty and Stanton, in a rage, sent for the Captain. As the Secretary of War was berating and threatening Eckert after his well-known fashion, the Captain felt an arm placed upon his shoulder and to his surprise the voice of Lincoln said: "Mr. Secretary, I am sure you must be mistaken, for I have visited the headquarters at all hours of the day and night and have always found Captain Eckert attending to his duty." The President had entered unobserved while the Secretary was fulminating, and his interference saved Eckert from summary dismissal from the Army if not worse consequences. Stanton apologized and made the Captain a Major. Naturally, Eckert and the President came to be very good friends.

A. B. Chandler, now president of the Postal Telegraph Company, says that Lincoln used frequently to write telegrams in the War Department telegraph office and that his method of composition was slow and laborious. He would evidently think out a sentence before he wrote it, and you could see his lips move as he repeated to himself what he was going to write before he set it down. He would sit looking out of the window, his left elbow on the table and now and then scratching his head in perplexity as if in search of the right word. But when he had written there was little or no revision or scratching out, and the dictation was clear and good. Sometimes Lincoln would pronounce an entire sentence out loud before he set it down.



COL. A. K. MCCLURE

General Lincoln "when I was ordered to Washington two weeks after Sumter was fired on. He was in Secretary Cameron's room and with him was General Scott. Lincoln's tall, gaunt frame and homely face was not at first attractive to me, while General Scott, with his large frame, his stately bearing and his golden epaulettes seemed an ideal figure."

Major Bates tells how Lincoln used to sit in the War Department telegraph office for hours, sometimes reading and sometimes telling stories, as he waited for important dispatches to come in. Sometimes he had a volume of Shakespeare which he read, and again it would be the productions of Petroleum V. Nasby. When he came to anything which he thought particularly funny in Nasby, he would read it aloud. Nasby's phrase, "Oh! well that ends well" seemed to tickle the President's fancy immensely. Lincoln was fond of sitting with his chair tilted back and his feet on a desk or table. Then he would get up and look over the shoulders of the operators as they wrote out messages or translated cipher dispatches.

How Lincoln Received the News of Defeat.

When Lincoln received the news of the battle of Ball's Bluff and the death of his old friend Colonel Baker, "he walked out of the telegraph office in tears and apparently dazed," says Major Bates. He was in the telegraph office when, after the battle of Gettysburg, Meade telegraphed that he was "preparing to attack the enemy." He called Bates up to a large map and pointed out the positions of the two armies. "They are driving the enemy across the river instead of preventing him from crossing. They will be prepared to fight a magnificent battle when there is no enemy there to fight," he said.

Major Bates often saw Lincoln walking alone from the White House over to the War Department and observed that on such occasions he would be talking to himself. In spite of his funny stories and his attempts at cheerfulness and optimism the Major says that he saw a dark cloud settle upon the face of the President when, in the telegraph office, he received the news of the Battle of Bull Run, and that the cloud was never lifted except for the brief period which intervened between the surrender of Lee and Lincoln's assassination.



GEN. STEWART L. WOODFORD

talk. Once, in the telegraph office, Lincoln had asked him to explain the workings of the telegraph. Tinker had tried his best, but at the end Lincoln said: "What puzzles me is that you understand what it says and I don't." It was some time after Colonel Tinker had been in the War Department telegraph office before Lincoln recalled him as the young man who had once explained telegraphy to him.

Colonel Tinker was in the office when the telegram announcing the nomination of Andrew Johnson for the Vice-Presidency was handed to Lincoln. "Well," said the President, "I thought it might be so. Perhaps he is the best man but—" and he went out leaving the sentence unfinished.

Cullom and Porter Also Knew Lincoln.

Senator Shelby M. Cullom, of Illinois, went to Springfield to study law when he was a young man. He had known Lincoln ever since he was 12 years old and had made him his hero. Though he did not study in Lincoln's office the latter gave him many sound words of advice and helped him about his studies. The Senator tells of a drugstore in Springfield where every night Lincoln used to go and talk to the men assembled to hear him. Often they would suggest a subject just to hear Lincoln's views on it and get him to talking.

The Lincoln-Douglas campaign took place while Cullom was in Springfield. Cullom met Lincoln just after word had been received of Douglas' success in the election. "Well, Mr. Lincoln," said Cullom hopefully, "we are beaten."

"Yes," said Lincoln, "we are beaten." "I am very sorry," said Cullom. Lincoln put his hand on Cullom's shoulder and smiled down at the young man. "Oh, my boy, don't worry. It will all come right in the end."

ward President stand there and beam down upon the sturdily-built, stolid General.

Porter saw Lincoln again when he visited Grant's headquarters before Richmond. Porter was then on Grant's staff. The President had a pleasant word for each of the staff officers and showered congratulations upon Grant for the work he had done. He had come by boat and the passage had been rough, he complained, but when one of the staff recommended a glass of champagne he declined it with a jest. Porter says that Lincoln never smiled when telling a story until the climax was reached, when he laughed as heartily as any of his hearers.

General Grant suggested that the soldiers would like to see the President, and Lincoln consenting, he was placed on the back of a big bay horse and set out for a tour of the camp, accompanied by the General and a glittering escort. He wore a high silk hat, black trousers and a frock coat, and Porter says that after he had ridden a short distance his appearance was ludicrous, for his trousers had no straps and were soon above his ankles, his tall hat was awry, and his black clothes were so greasy with joy, however, that they did not seem to notice this fact, and cheered Lincoln again and again.

A Veteran Editor's First Meeting With Lincoln.

Colonel A. K. McClure, the veteran writer, journalist and politician, first met Lincoln two months after his election. He went to Springfield to see Lincoln at the latter's invitation. He rang the bell of Lincoln's house and Lincoln himself came to the door. "Tall, gaunt, ungainly," says McClure, "with a homeliness of manner that was unique in itself, I confess that my heart sank within me as I remembered that this was the man chosen by a great people to be its ruler in the gravest period of its history." But within half an hour McClure's first impressions had entirely vanished and he was filled with respect and affection for the man with whom he was talking. After that first interview McClure was the President's friend.

Once, when a draft had been effected and McClure, though a civilian, was in charge of the Military Department of Harrisburg, he was enraged at the slowness with which the recruiting officer of the city was mustering in the men and went to Washington to complain. Lincoln listened to his story and then, without replying, sent for Adjutant-General Thomas. "General," said Lincoln, "what is the rank of the senior military officer at Harrisburg?" "Captain, sir," responded Thomas. "Bring me a commission," said Lincoln. "For Alexander K. McClure as Assistant Adjutant-General of United

States Volunteers, with the rank of Major."

McClure protested, but was finally won over by Lincoln. He went back to Harrisburg and sent for the senior officer to come to his office. The Captain came and barely treated McClure with civility. McClure handed the officer the commission and asked to be mustered into service. Off came the Captain's hat, he mustered McClure in, and there was no more trouble.

Chauncey M. Depew got to know Lincoln fairly well when he spent the Winter of 1864 in Washington and saw him often in consultation concerning New York politics.

"They say I tell a great many stories," Lincoln once said to Depew. "I reckon I do, but I have found in the course of a long and varied career that the plain people—the plain people—take them as they run, are more easily influenced by a broad and humorous illustration than in any other way. What the hypercritical few think about I don't care."

Frederick Seward, who is now 84 years old, of course knew Lincoln well. It was Seward who was sent to tell Lincoln of the plot to assassinate him as he passed through Baltimore on his way to Washington to be inaugurated, thus causing a change of route. He was Assistant Secretary of State to his father, William Henry Seward, and Acting Secretary in the Cabinets of Lincoln, Johnson and Hayes. In defending his father from the knives of the assassin sent to kill him at the time of the murder of Lincoln, Mr. Seward was badly wounded, and but for his fortunate presence and his struggle with the assassin his father would have been killed. Seward was one of the Commissioners negotiating the Alaska purchase and the acquisition of Pago-Pago in the Samoan group. His fund of reminiscences concerning Lincoln he has not yet put in writing; but it is not too late for him to do so, and this Lincoln centennial is an opportune time.

Speaker Cannon's First View of Lincoln.

Joseph G. Cannon first saw Lincoln when he drove with a hotel keeper of the little Illinois town of Tuscola into Decatur. As they passed along the street in their wagon the hotel man suddenly said, "There's Abe—Howdy, Abe!" "Howdy, Arch!" came back the answer from a tall spare man standing in front of the hotel.

A little later Cannon saw Lincoln writing a dispatch at the telegraph office in the station. The Illinois State Convention, which was to elect a delegate to the National Convention, was in session in Decatur, and it was no secret that Lincoln's name was to come up. Cannon went to the convention and there saw the celebrated rails brought in with the legend printed on a long white cloth. "These rails were made by Dennis Hanks and Abraham Lincoln in 1830." There was a call for Lincoln, and though, as Speaker Cannon says, "Lincoln was a mighty long man," the crowd passed him over their heads to the platform. "Abe, did you split those rails?" cried some one in the crowd. "Dennis Hanks says I did," answered Lincoln. "I don't know whether I did or not—but I have split many a better one."

Union armies. The National authorities held many military prisoners, and Henderson was frequently called upon to intercede for their relief. After Lincoln's second inauguration Henderson made out a list of cases pending against citizens of Missouri for treason and kindred crimes and had his clerk classify them according to the amount of evidence against the prisoners. Then he went to the President, showed him the list with the abstract of evidence annexed, and asked that all those against whom the evidence was slight or doubtful should be released.

"Do you mean to tell me, Henderson," asked Lincoln, "that you wish me to let loose all these people at once?" "Yes, I do," replied the Senator.

Lincoln demurred at first, saying he had no time to look over the evidence, but finally said, "Well, so be it. I hope we are right."

"I know we are," said the Senator. "Durned if I don't think so, too," said Lincoln.

General Stewart L. Woodford, who received his commission in the Army from Lincoln, was at first opposed to him politically. He went to the convention of 1860 a strong advocate of W. H. Seward and stuck to him to the last, but afterward he became one of Lincoln's strongest partisans and got to know him intimately. He says that before he ever met Lincoln he had heard his speech in Cooper Union and it impressed him as the best speech he had ever heard. His subsequent experience in hearing speeches from all sorts of men in all lands has not changed that opinion.

At the recent celebration of the semi-centennial of the Lincoln-Douglas debates at Galesburg, Ill., there was present Clark E. Carr, of that town, a lawyer long prominent in official affairs, once Minister to Denmark and the holder of other important positions. During the war Carr served on the staff of Governor Yates, and was active in organizing and sending troops to the front as well as active in the field. As a young man Carr heard the last debate between Lincoln and Douglas at Galesburg, and in the course of his varied career met Lincoln many times. He describes him as the drollest and at the same time the most serious man he ever met. He heard the Gettysburg address and the speech at the second inaugural, and says that on those occasions he thought Lincoln the most dignified, the most majestic, and the most benign person that imagination could picture.

General T. J. Henderson, who served in the Union Army as Colonel of the 112th Illinois Volunteers, was made Brigadier-General, and is now a member of the board of managers of the National Soldiers' Home at Washington, also holds the distinction of having known Lincoln. "The first time I saw Lincoln," he says, "was during the memorable campaign of 1860, the Tippecanoe and Tyler too campaign, when I was a boy of fifteen. It was at an immense Whig mass meeting at Springfield, Ill., in the month of June. There were many speakers, and while I was too young to judge—I know I thought them all great men—I thought none of them greater than Abraham Lincoln."

Ralph Emerson, the Rockford, Ill., manufacturer and inventor, and the founder of the Emerson Normal and Industrial School at Mobile, Ala., studied law in his early days, but, by advice of Lincoln, who was his personal friend, he dropped law and went into business. Others now living who knew Lincoln personally and well are General Alexander S. Womb, General Isaac S. Catlin, General Thomas H. Hubbard, General Henry Barnett, General Anson G. McCook, Supreme Court Justice David J. Brewer, and John Bigelow, who was appointed Minister to France by Lincoln, and is now 91 years old.—Copyright, 1908, by the Associated Literary Press.

The Modern Verdict. "Who killed Cook Robin?" "Not I," said the snarling. "Though my bow and arrow look quite circumstantial, I feel sure I guess you have heard that the poor robin lived 'Twas run down by an automobile."