

# LINCOLN'S LAST BIRTHDAY



**MAJOR-GENERAL HOOKER,** Cincinnati, Ohio:  
"Is it Lieutenant Samuel D. Davis whose death sentence is commuted? If not done, let it be done. Is there not an associate of his also in trouble? Please answer."

"A. LINCOLN."

This telegram was sent by Abraham Lincoln from the White House on his last birthday alive. It typifies the spirit of the man in the last days of his life and is exemplary of the attitude he took, not only toward individuals but toward the peoples and the states who were opposed in arms to the Union.

The military rigors of the closing days of the war compelled harsh measures, not only in dealing with the enemy but in dealing with those within the forces of the North who were guilty of desertion, neglect or treachery, and the columns of the daily papers of the time were replete with paragraphs headed, as a rule, "Execution of the Conspirators," "The Spies Shot" or "Execution of Deserters."

Naturally there was a great outcry in the North from relatives and political friends of the men condemned by military courts. Continual pressure was brought to bear upon the President throughout the war in this respect, but he left these matters to the discretion of the Generals in the field for the most part.

A perusal of his papers during the weeks preceding and following his birthday, February 12, 1865, show that he was giving especial attention to these matters. In the month of February alone he sent at least ten telegrams suspending or delaying executions or asking for full reports of the trials for his personal examination.

In some cases he upheld the decrees of the military courts, in others he issued pardons, and it is said that in at least one case the man who had been convicted was in reality a Government secret service agent unknown to the military authorities, who had convicted him for the very acts he committed in the service of the Union.

It has been asserted by some biographers of Lincoln that he felt premonitions of his death in the months following his second election and if this be true it is possible that the shadow over his soul may have caused him to be more clement than was his rule. All are agreed that he was always compassionate and slow to condemn, but he was sensible of the necessity for stern justice and was not given to mock mercy of the weak-kneed, sentimental kind.

The President's birthday itself had no special significance in 1865. It is doubtful if many outside his immediate family realized when the day occurred. It would be a small percentage of Americans today who could state the date of President Wilson's birth and in the last stages of the Civil War the Nation was too sorely beset by pressing, vital problems, sorrow and anxiety to recognize the birthday of the man who himself was the vortex of all the maelstrom of political, military and executive activities.

It is known, however, that Lincoln's last birthday season saw the President more cheerful, more hopeful of a peace which should save the Union than he had been at any other time during the war.

He had recently met commissioners of the Confederate government on a steamer at Hampton Roads and although the interview had led to nothing, the President felt that the discussion evident between the commissioners from the South meant a speedy conclusion of the conflict.

Nicolay and Hay, writing of the President's general feeling in February, 1865, say: "His interview with the rebel commissioners doubtless strengthened his former convictions that the rebellion was waning in enthusiasm and resources, and that the Union cause must triumph at no distant day. Secure in his renewal of four years' personal leadership and hopefully inspired by every sign of early victory in the war, his only thought was to speed the generous conciliation the period of dreadful conflict. His temper was not one of exultation, but of broad, patriotic charity and of keen, sensitive personal sympathy for the whole country and all its people, South as well as North. His conversation with Stephens, Hunter and Campbell had probably revealed to him glimpses of the undercurrent of their anxiety that fraternal bloodshed and the destructive ravages of war might somehow come to an end."

Just before the President's birthday the House of Representatives passed a resolution requesting the President to communicate to it such information as he might deem compatible with the public interest concerning his interview with the Confederate Commissioners. The President sent to the House a message summarizing the transactions on board the steamer, which actually amounted to nothing at all. This message was received February 13 and a short discussion occurred in the House, according to Nicolay and Hay:

"It (the discussion) did not rise above the level of an ordinary party wrangle. The few Democrats who took part in it complained of the President for refusing an armistice, while the Republicans retorted with Jefferson Davis's conditions about two countries and the more recent declaration of his Richmond harangue, announcing his readiness to perish for independence. On the whole, both Congress and the country were gratified that the incident had called out Mr. Lincoln's renewed declaration of an unalterable resolve to maintain the Union. Patriotic hope was quickened and public confidence strengthened by noting once more his singleness of purpose and steadfastness of faith. No act of his could have formed a more fitting prelude to his second inauguration, and the preliminary steps of which were at this time being consummated."

This feeling throughout the country and in Congress was becoming evident to the President on his last birthday, so much so that he commented on it to his friends and advisers. It showed



day the first of the cotton ships Sherman had sent from Savannah put into New York and Newport, R. I. The newspapers of February 12 featured the dispatches announcing the arrival of the vessels and commenting with favor on the prospects of getting great cargoes of cotton from the newly opened ports of the South.

The dailies were also filled with dispatches telling of the progress of Grant's campaign against Lee, which was beginning to be forecasted that Appomattox should end the war, and that Sherman had completed his march to the sea. None viewed the approach of peace with greater gratification than did Lincoln, and it was with the spirit of this period of his last birthday upon him that he wrote his second inaugural address, which is fraught with human sympathy, so expressive of the character of the man.

The sad story of the great President's death is familiar to all. That it was to follow so closely on his last birthday, so lightened by hope and gratitude for the success of the Union cause, none could foresee, unless, as some writers declare, the President himself had forebodings of it.

If there were any thoughts of death in his mind on this, his last birthday, however, it is more than likely that they were due to a consciousness of having labored under too terrific a strain for any man to survive, especially with four years more of vexatious problems and unceasing labor ahead.

In all events, it is pleasant to contemplate that the closing months of Abraham Lincoln's life were gifted with a feeling of peace which for long he had not known. It was during these months that he conceived that closing paragraph of his second inaugural address:

"With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the Nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations."

### Told By and About Lincoln

#### Lincoln the Christian.

There were many who tried to make political capital out of Lincoln's religious beliefs or the alleged lack of any such beliefs. On one occasion an Illinois clergyman asked the President if he was a Christian. The reply is as full of pathos as are so many of Lincoln's sayings full of humor:

"When I left Springfield I asked the people to pray for me; I was not a Christian. When I buried my son, a severed trial of my life, I was not a Christian. But when I went to Gettysburg and saw the graves of thousands of our soldiers I then and there consecrated myself to Christ. I do love Jesus."

#### In a Predicament.

The usual droves of office seekers beset Mr. Lincoln after his first inauguration. He was fairly besieged by them, and at the same time important news came hourly from the South. He had no time to give to politics, yet he realized that he must give attention to his appointments as the Administration would suffer. Speaking of the situation to a friend, he said:

"I am like a man so busy letting rooms in one end of his house that he cannot stop to put out a fire that is burning in the other."

#### Their Last Ride Together.

On the afternoon of April 14, 1865, a few hours before he was shot, President Lincoln was driving with his wife. He was in unusually good spirits; so much so that his wife said: "You almost startle me by your cheerfulness." "And well I may feel so, Mary," he replied. "For I consider this day the war has come to a close. We must both be more cheerful in the future. Between the war and the loss of our darling Willie we have been very miserable."

#### He Gave It Away.

Mr. Herndon, once Lincoln's law partner, frequently related that on one occasion a man with a case the merits of which Lincoln did not appreciate requested the future President to try it in court. Mr. Lincoln thought for a moment and then said:

"Yes, there is no reasonable doubt that I can gain your case for you. I can get a whole neighborhood at loggerheads; I can distress a widowed mother and her six fatherless children, and thereby get you \$600, which rightfully belongs, it appears to me, as much to them as it does to you. I shall not take your case, but I will give a little advice for nothing. You seem a sprightly, energetic man. I would advise you to try your hand at making \$600 in some other way."

#### A Use for Everything.

A friend of Mr. Lincoln's called to his attention that a certain member of his Cabinet was seeking to be nominated for President, although Lincoln himself was a candidate for re-nomination. The President seemed to be rather amused at the announcement and told this story:

"My brother and I were once plowing corn on a Kentucky farm. I driving the horse and holding the plow. The horse was lazy, but on one occasion rushed across the field so that I, with my long legs, could hardly keep pace with him. On reaching the end of the furrow I found an enormous chinchilly fastened upon him, and knocked off. My brother asked me what I did that for. I told him I didn't want the old horse bitten in that way."

"Why," said my brother, "that's all that made him go."

"If Mr. ——— has a Presidential chinchilly biting him and can't get it off, it will only make his department go."

him that the Nation was behind him. President Lincoln that he had been elected President of the United States. The electoral college met and voted, and on February 8 the two houses of Congress assembled in joint convention. The Vice-President announced that he had in his possession returns from the States of Louisiana and Tennessee, but in obedience to the existing law he held it to be his duty not to present them to the convention.

There was no demand to have these returns opened, as they could in no possible manner affect the result, and therefore only the returns from the loyal states, including West Virginia, were counted, showing 212 electoral votes for Lincoln and 21 for McClellan.

## LESSONS IN SOIL REPAIR

(Continued From Page 2.)  
Cowlitz River. The British brought to Oregon cattle, sheep and hogs, which multiplied fast. But it was not until 1837 that any considerable supply of cattle was available. In that year Ewing Young brought a herd from California. These were known as "Spanish cattle" and their blood remained in Oregon long; perhaps it is flowing yet. They were hardy and vicious and made much trouble for the settlers. Many went wild and roamed the woods. With the arrival of American pioneers from the Middle West, beginning in the '40s, came the more docile breed of Oregon long; or Durham cattle. David Guthrie, of Polk County, pioneer of 1846, was probably the earliest to bring in highbred Shorthorns. In 1847 John Wilson brought another fine herd from Illinois. Captain Benson and J. C. Greer, Sr., also brought good cattle that year. The first large influx of cattle came across the plains in 1848. I am informed by George H. Himes that the first Shorthorn bull

## LAND OF NORTH WIND

other highly valued food is vetch, which was introduced here in 1870 by William Chalmers, and which grows luxuriantly in Willamette Valley. This wild pea which thrives here abundantly in brush places, thus indicating the favorable natural conditions. The total value of cattle in Oregon was given in the 1910 census as \$17,570,855. (To Be Continued Next Week.)  
**Poison in Perspiration.**  
London Standard.  
Professor Arjoms, of Lyons, France, proved by experiment that human perspiration is a irritant because it is actually poisonous. It actually burns away the epidermis of sensitive skins and leaves them almost raw. It is important that perspiration be not checked; it is equally important in hot weather to change one's underclothing every day.  
**Guessing Her Age.**  
Judge.  
Miss Withers—Do you think you could come anywhere near guessing my age?  
He—Not with any degree of safety.

## LAND OF NORTH WIND

THOUGH much is written about Western Canada nowadays, one hears very little of the vast northern wastes of that dominion, where the conditions of life were but little from what they were a century ago.  
Until very recent years the great wilderness of swamp and forest stretching from the head of Lake Winnipeg east to Hudson Bay, and north to the Arctic circle, was known as the district of Kewatin.  
With the exception of small detachments of Northwest mounted police, a few scattered missionaries, and the Hudson Bay Company's traders and employes, this vast district is peopled entirely by Indians of the Cree and Salteaux tribes, and in the far northern portion, a few wandering Eskimos and Chippewayans.  
This country, in which Winter of almost Arctic severity holds sway for eight months in the year, is a network of large lakes, rivers, and smaller streams draining into Hudson Bay,

Along most of these navigable waters, situated from 160 to 250 miles apart, stand the lonely trading posts or forts of the Hudson Bay Company. These forts usually consist of a picketed or stockaded square inclosing a number of log or frame buildings, usually four or five, with a tall flag pole rising in the center, from which, on special occasions, floats the red ensign of the company.  
The staff of the smaller outposts generally consists of one white man as officer in charge, with two or three half-breed or Indian assistants or dog-drivers. As in most cases these posts are situated in a virgin wilderness, far from civilization, the trader may not see a fellow white man for six months at a stretch, and has only the society afforded by his half-breed servants—Wide World.  
**Calling of a Bluff.**  
Aitchison Globe.  
Sometimes a bluff is called merely because it is too strong.