



# Children's Stories That Never Grow Old.

## LINCOLN, THE BOY

1.

**I**N AN uncomfortable log cabin, far out in the West at a place called Noils Creek, Abraham Lincoln was born, February, 1809, and here he lived until he was 7 years old. There was only one room in the cabin, which was built of stout logs laid on top of each other, then bound together with twigs. The spaces between the logs were filled up with clay, grass and dead leaves. There was no ceiling, only the log roof. He used to climb up a shaky ladder to a loft in the roof, where he slept on a bed of dry leaves, covering himself with an old deerskin. As he lay there he would count the stars that looked through the spaces between the logs. The only comfort the cabin had was the huge fireplace, which took up nearly the whole of one side. In front of it was a great bearskin rug, on which he used to spend the days in winter, leaning against his mother's knee while she told him stories about Indians and American history or parables from the Bible.



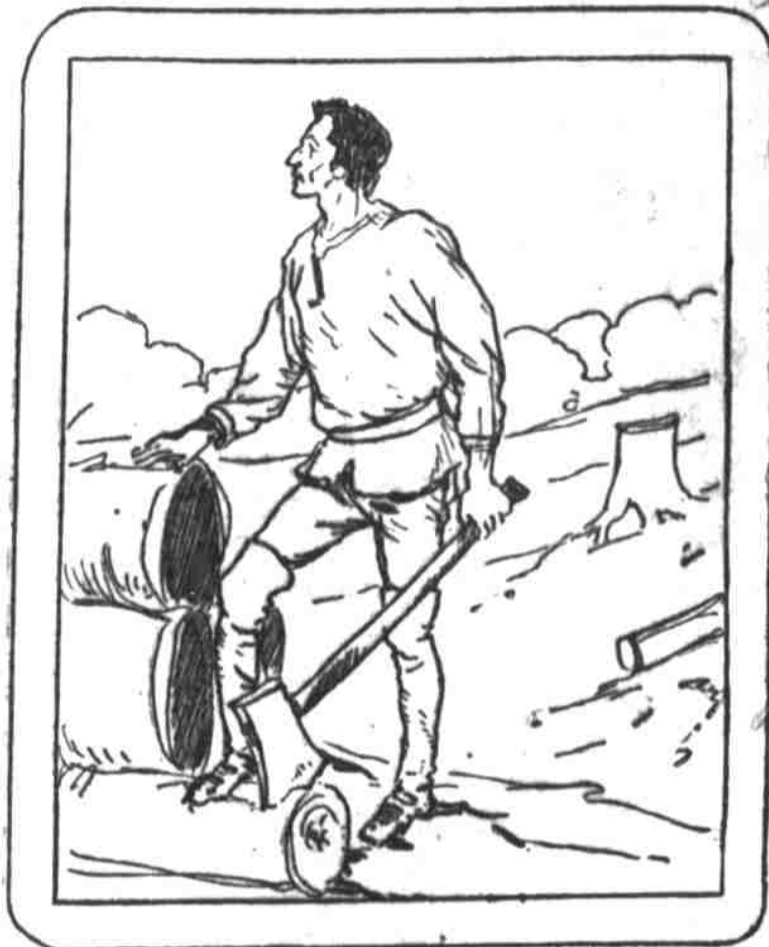
2.

**T**HEIR food was very simple, consisting of game shot in the forest, fish caught in the stream, roots and berries from the wood. The bread was made of flour ground from Indian corn, and until Lincoln was a grown man he never tasted any other sort of bread.

Abraham soon learned to make himself useful. He would cut and bring home wood for the fire. He learned to use a rifle, and was a very good shot.

When Abraham was 7 his father moved to a place called Little Pigeon Creek, on the Ohio river, where they built another cabin.

Abe, as they called him, was a tall boy for his age, and his legs were always in his way! He never wore stockings until he was a young man, but moccasins, such as the Indians wear, and his leggins and shirt were made of deerskin.



3.

**A**BRAM, though a boy when his mother died, never forgot her. She had taught him his first lessons, and from her came that sweetness of nature, the power of thinking first of others, that made every one who knew Abe love him. His father married again, and Abe loved his stepmother, who loved him and thought he was the best boy she had ever seen. He was, indeed the sunshine in the house, but in many ways he was lonely.

He was hungry for knowledge of books. All the schooling he had was a month now and then with traveling teachers. But Abe was not the sort of boy to learn nothing because there was nobody to teach him. He had a few books that had been his mother's, and he read them over and over again. When he came in from work he would go to the cupboard, take a piece of corn bread, take down a book, sit down, cock his legs as high as his head, and read. The Bible and Pilgrim's Progress, Esop's Fables and Robinson Crusoe, these were his books, and he knew them by heart.



4.

**I**N THE evenings he used to sit silently for hours, thinking. Sometimes he did sums of all sorts on the wooden shovel, making figures on it with pieces of charcoal. When it was quite full he shaved off the top with his knife so as to have a clean slate in the morning.

All his companions liked Abe, and admired him. He worked hard, and sometimes he used to stop work and climb on a gate or tree stump and make absurd speeches, or comic sermons, or recite passages from his favorite books. His companions thought him a quaint fellow, with strange ideas. He never cared much for sport, because it seemed to him cruel.

He showed his tenderness to animals when quite a small boy. One day he was playing in the woods with a boy called John Davis. While they were at play, they ran a hedgehog into a crevice between two rocks.

5.

**T**HEY tried every sort of plan to get it out, for the poor thing could not move itself. Abraham could not bear to leave it to die in pain, so he ran to a blacksmith's shop, quite a mile away, and borrowed a pole with an iron hook fastened to the end. With this they were able to set the little animal free.

All little children and old people trusted Abraham and his word. He was very soon known as "Honest Abe." His life was dull, and he longed to escape and go out and see the world, for until he was 19 years old he had never left home at all.

One day Mr. Gentry, a rich landowner, wanted to send his son down the Ohio river with different kinds of goods to sell at the places they passed. Abraham had struck Mr. Gentry as being an honest, capable lad, and he asked him to undertake the voyage.



6.

**A**BRAM consented at once, glad of any chance to see something of life outside the settlement. He took the raft and steered it successfully down the river, and they went past the great sugar plantations, right down to New Orleans. One night they encamped at Baton Rouge, and here they fastened their raft and lay down to sleep.

They were both sound asleep, when suddenly Abraham started up. He heard sounds of many footsteps all around him. In the darkness at first he could see nothing; then he became aware that a band of negroes were attacking the raft, intending to steal their goods and murder them. Abraham's cry waked his companion, and they threw themselves upon the negroes. Abraham seized a huge log of wood which served him as a club, and brandished it in his hand. His great height and unknown weapon, which he whirled around his head, terrified the negroes, as he hit first one and then another on the head and threw them overboard.



7.

**T**HE fight was very fierce for a few moments, and then the negroes turned and fled into the darkness. The voyage ended successfully, and Abraham returned home for two years.

At the end of this time his father again moved, and all the household goods were packed in a wagon drawn by oxen, while the family walked beside it. They tramped for more than a week, and at last came to the new state, Illinois. Abraham helped his father to make a cabin, and with his own hands he plowed fifteen acres of ground. He also cut down walnut trees, split them, and built a high, solid fence which went right around his father's property. Abraham lived in Illinois until he was made President of the United States.



8.

**O**NCE he addressed a meeting there, years after this, and his cousin, Dennis Hanks, marched in amid the shouts of applause of the crowd, carrying on his shoulders a piece of railing that Abraham had made for his father. It is now in the museum at Washington, kept as a national treasure. How little could Abraham, or any one who knew him at this time, have dreamed that this rail-splitter was to be the greatest man in America.

