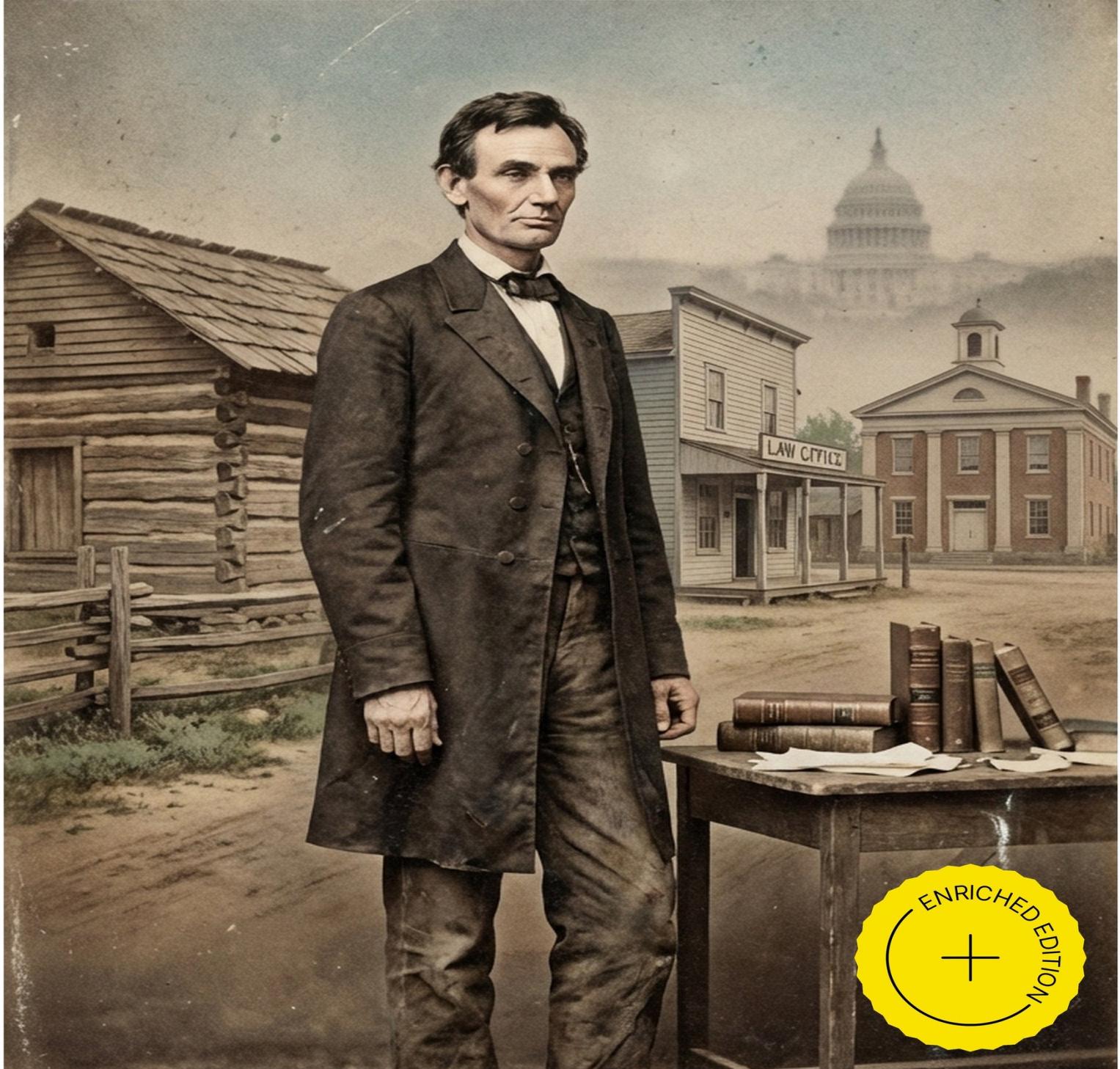


# WARD HILL LAMON



***THE LIFE OF ABRAHAM  
LINCOLN, FROM HIS BIRTH  
TO HIS INAUGURATION  
AS PRESIDENT***

**Ward Hill Lamon**

# **The Life of Abraham Lincoln, from His Birth to His Inauguration as President**

**Enriched edition.**

*Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Cameron Price*

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# Introduction

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At the heart of this biography lies the tension between an ordinary frontier youth and an extraordinary national calling, a life assembled from competing memories and materials that test where character ends and legend begins, as poverty, ambition, self-education, and public duty press upon a single figure whose private reticence and public consequence cannot be perfectly reconciled, inviting readers to weigh resilience against circumstance, anecdote against record, and the slow apprenticeship of law and politics against the sudden demands of a nation on the edge of rupture, until the threshold of leadership is reached and the questions of origin meet the burdens of office.

This work is a nineteenth-century biography by Ward Hill Lamon, a close associate of Abraham Lincoln, following its subject from his birth to his inauguration as President. First published in the early 1870s, in the era when the United States was still reckoning with the war's aftermath, it belongs to a tradition that sought to document the making of notable public figures with an emphasis on witness and record. Its settings stretch from rough frontier communities and county seats to legislative chambers and national crossroads, portraying the social and political worlds that formed a lawyer and party leader before the responsibilities of executive power commenced.

The premise is straightforward: to recount how a boy of limited means became a public figure of uncommon weight, ending at the moment when his national stewardship

begins. The reading experience is deliberately documentary yet energetic, combining collected recollections and records with a steady narrative line that favors clarity over ornament and analysis over sentiment. Its voice is that of a contemporary determined to test anecdotes against verifiable detail, and its tone is measured, often skeptical toward easy uplift while attentive to the unglamorous labor of learning, practicing law, building alliances, and discerning opportunities in a volatile political landscape without anticipating later events.

Lamon writes not as a distant chronicler but as someone who knew Lincoln personally, and that proximity gives the account a distinctive texture without dissolving into intimacy. He foregrounds the processes by which stories are gathered, weighed, and arranged, indicating when recollections diverge and when documentation bears more authority than lore. The resulting method encourages readers to watch evidence accumulate across the years of schooling, circuit riding, and organizing, and to see character inferred from habit rather than proclaimed by grand speech. While respectful, the portrait is unsentimental, presenting discipline, humor, reserve, and calculation as intertwined faculties rather than as ornaments added after fame.

Among its central themes is the American problem of self-making: how material scarcity, regional cultures, and civic institutions collaborate to shape a mind capable of public leadership. The book follows the disciplines that cultivate judgment—reading, law, argument, coalition building—and examines how temperament interacts with opportunity. It traces the early contours of ideas about union, slavery, and party strategy without projecting later crises backward, inviting careful attention to development rather than prophecy. Throughout, it probes the boundaries

between public virtue and personal ambition, the uses of humor and storytelling, and the moral weight of prudence in moments when haste or spectacle might seem easier.

For contemporary readers, the book's lasting value lies in its disciplined attention to evidence and its portrait of leadership as a cumulative practice rather than a sudden transformation. In an age concerned with misinformation, polarization, and the pressures of celebrity, its insistence on corroboration and patient formation feels bracing. It models how to read testimony critically, how to relate biography to institutions, and how to distinguish conviction from performance without cynicism. It also illuminates the practical arts of democratic life—argument, compromise, coalition, and restraint—while suggesting that character emerges from daily labor more than from dramatic gestures, a perspective that invites thoughtful engagement beyond partisanship.

Approached on its own terms, *The Life of Abraham Lincoln, from His Birth to His Inauguration as President* offers an intimate, pre-presidential portrait that stops at the moment responsibility formally begins, making it a spoiler-safe gateway to the larger story. It participates in a nineteenth-century effort to record firsthand recollections while they remained accessible, yet it arranges them into a coherent narrative attentive to cause and effect. Readers can expect patient pacing, plainspoken analysis, and a steady interest in the everyday disciplines that prepare a statesman. What endures is its invitation to separate myth from memory and to consider how democratic leadership is made.

# Synopsis

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Ward Hill Lamon's *The Life of Abraham Lincoln, from His Birth to His Inauguration as President*, published in 1872, is a biography by a close associate and former law partner of Lincoln. Drawing on interviews, letters, court records, and the recollections of Lincoln's contemporaries, Lamon assembles a narrative that follows Lincoln's development from frontier boyhood to president-elect. The book's method is documentary and anecdotal, combining plain chronicle with commentary on character and circumstance. Its declared aim is not to canonize, but to locate Lincoln within the pressures and possibilities of his era, tracing the formation of habits, convictions, and skills that would later matter.

It begins with family background and the rough conditions of early Kentucky and Indiana, emphasizing poverty, labor, and the scarcity of formal schooling. Lamon treats Lincoln's parents and kin with attention to origins and reputation, then shows how migration, loss, and household change shaped the boy's responsibilities. Self-education—through reading, stories, and practical tasks—emerges as the central means by which Lincoln expanded limited opportunities. The move to Illinois opens broader horizons while retaining frontier constraints. Across these pages Lamon highlights stamina, curiosity, and a cautious moral temper, suggesting that these traits, more than any early advantage, underwrote Lincoln's later choices.

The narrative shifts to New Salem, where Lincoln tests a series of occupations and civic roles that place him before neighbors as a dependable problem-solver. Lamon sketches militia service during a frontier conflict, portraying it less as battlefield glory than as an apprenticeship in leadership and local esteem. Early forays into politics reveal defeat, persistence, and eventual election to the state legislature. In parallel, Lincoln undertakes disciplined study of law, first informally, then in practice. Lamon attends to the social networks, practical arithmetic, and habits of speech that converted raw ambition into usable influence within a small but observant community.

In Springfield, the book concentrates on professional consolidation: partnerships, circuit travel, and the habits that governed Lincoln's practice. Lamon stresses preparation, fairness toward opponents, and a knack for clarifying disputed facts. Marriage and domestic responsibilities enter the story as additional tests of balance and judgment. Without romantic embellishment, the biography illustrates how courtroom experience refined Lincoln's style—patient, probing, and oriented to juries—while political friendships broadened his reach. Notable engagements and public addresses are treated as training grounds rather than climaxes, revealing the interplay between reputation for integrity and the rough-and-tumble of Illinois law and party life.

The book next follows Lincoln to the national stage through a single term in Congress, where he navigates party discipline, war policy, and constituent expectations. Lamon presents Lincoln's positions as cautious yet principled, attentive to law and public opinion. The return to private practice is not a retreat; the Kansas-Nebraska turmoil and the reorganization of parties draw him back, increasingly identified with opposition to the expansion of slavery. Lamon

traces how county fairs, bar meetings, and regional gatherings became platforms for sharpened argument. The craft of persuading juries is transposed to a wider audience as Lincoln refines a public case.

The account climaxes in the Illinois contests with Stephen A. Douglas, where extended debate forces Lincoln to hone definitions, anticipate objections, and connect moral premises to constitutional structure. Though office sought is not won immediately, Lamon marks the emergence of national reputation and a coalition capable of supporting higher ambitions. The Republican convention that follows is depicted as a disciplined display of organization and image, culminating in nomination and election. The closing chapters treat the tense interlude before inauguration, as states fracture and statements are weighed for their legal and political effects, with personal security and travel logistics carefully observed.

Throughout, Lamon resists hagiography, favoring a plain-spoken portrait that foregrounds character under pressure, the uses of humor, and a methodical habit of mind. The reliance on firsthand testimony produces a texture of incident and voice, and his frank treatment of private beliefs and domestic matters sparked early controversy. Yet the book's lasting value lies in how it ties Lincoln's public emergence to the ordinary disciplines of work, study, and community trust. Ending at the threshold of power, it invites readers to consider which traits were forged before crisis, and why those traits continued to matter when the nation's trials intensified.

# Historical Context

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Published in 1872, Ward Hill Lamon's biography of Abraham Lincoln covers the period from Lincoln's 1809 birth in Kentucky to his 1861 inauguration, locating its subject within the expanding United States of the early nineteenth century. The book's setting spans the Ohio Valley frontier and the developing institutions of a young republic: state courts, militia musters, land offices, churches, post offices, and legislatures. Lamon, a close Illinois associate who later served as United States Marshal for the District of Columbia, writes with an insider's eye to law and politics. His narrative situates Lincoln amid westward migration, market change, and a nation divided by slavery.

Lincoln's youth unfolded in border and Midwestern communities shaped by land policy and migration. Born in Hardin County, Kentucky, he moved with his family to Indiana in 1816 and to Illinois in 1830. The Northwest Ordinance's ban on slavery north of the Ohio River framed differences between neighboring societies, even as commerce and kinship linked them. Sparse schools, itinerant preachers, and self-governing townships typified local institutions. Subsistence farms, river traffic, and emerging roads connected households to broader markets. Lamon emphasizes this austere setting to anchor Lincoln's formative experiences in verifiable places and practices rather than legend, reflecting a preference for documentary sobriety.

In Illinois during the 1830s, Lincoln encountered institutions that structured civic life on the frontier. He clerked in New Salem, served as the village postmaster (1833–1836), and worked as deputy county surveyor, positions rooting him in networks of credit, land, and communication. The 1832 Black Hawk War mobilized Illinois militias; Lincoln's brief service as a captain introduced him to constituents and local leaders. As settlement intensified, county seats, circuit courts, and the statehouse—relocated to Springfield in 1839—became arenas for ambition and debate. Lamon treats these functional settings as the practical schools in which Lincoln learned procedure, persuasion, and public responsibility.

Lincoln entered elective office as a Whig, winning a seat in the Illinois House of Representatives in 1834 and serving four consecutive terms. He championed internal improvements, a program of roads, canals, and banks intended to spur commerce and bind the state. The sweeping 1837 internal-improvements law and the subsequent Panic of 1837 revealed both the ambition and the fragility of this developmental vision. Admitted to the bar in 1836, Lincoln began practicing law in Springfield in 1837. Lamon uses legislative records and early casework to show how partisan ideas, fiscal strain, and institutional growth converged in shaping Lincoln's political economy.

Amid an expanding market and transportation network, Lincoln's law practice on Illinois's Eighth Judicial Circuit exposed him to juries, corporations, and property disputes emblematic of a modernizing Midwest. After election to the U.S. House in 1846, he served one term, introducing the 1847 "Spot Resolutions" questioning the origins of the Mexican-American War. Returning to Springfield in 1849, he resumed practice, partnering with William H. Herndon from 1844 onward and arguing increasingly complex cases,

including railroad litigation. Lamon's account links courtroom routines, party newspapers, and stump speaking to the skills and reputation that later sustained Lincoln's regional and national candidacies.

The 1850s intensified sectional conflict. The Compromise of 1850 and, especially, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which repealed the Missouri Compromise, reorganized parties and helped found the Republican coalition in the North. The Supreme Court's 1857 Dred Scott decision further nationalized the debate over slavery's expansion. Lincoln's speeches against Nebraska and his 1858 debates with Stephen A. Douglas in Illinois exemplified the period's robust political culture. The 1860 Chicago convention, rapid newspaper circulation, and the telegraph structured the ensuing national campaign. Lamon frames these developments as the institutional pathway by which a lawyer-politician from Illinois became president-elect without abandoning documentary restraint.

Ward Hill Lamon drew on extensive firsthand familiarity and on research gathered by Lincoln's longtime partner William H. Herndon, who began interviewing friends and acquaintances shortly after the assassination in 1865. Lamon employed Chauncey F. Black to shape the manuscript, which appeared in 1872. Unlike commemorative tributes then in fashion, the book foregrounded mundane records and candid recollections, including testimony about Lincoln's religious skepticism and frontier roughness, prompting controversy among admirers. The sourcing and tone reflected Reconstruction-era struggles over memory: whether to sanctify Lincoln for national unity or to document him as a product of specific communities, institutions, and conflicts.

By closing with the inauguration of March 1861, Lamon concentrates on the formation of character, networks, and ideas rather than wartime decisions. His emphasis on county courts, political clubs, newspapers, and party conventions presents Lincoln as a participant in—and creation of—American institutions transformed by expansion, capitalism, and slavery's contest. The book's reliance on depositions, letters, and reminiscences embodies a documentary impulse of the postwar period. In resisting hagiography while staying within verifiable evidence, it critiques the era's heroic mythmaking and invites readers to understand Lincoln's rise as historically contingent, grounded in the specific time and places that shaped him.

# **The Life of Abraham Lincoln, from His Birth to His Inauguration as President**

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# PREFACE.

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IN the following pages I have endeavored to give the life of Abraham Lincoln, from his birth to his inauguration as President of the United States. The reader will judge the character of the performance by the work itself: for that reason I shall spare him the perusal of much prefatory explanation.

At the time of Mr. Lincoln's death, I determined to write his history, as I had in my possession much valuable material for such a purpose. I did not then imagine that any person could have better or more extensive materials than I possessed. I soon learned, however, that Mr. William H. Herndon[1] of Springfield, Ill., was similarly engaged. There could be no rivalry between us; for the supreme object of both was to make the real history and character of Mr. Lincoln as well known to the public as they were to us. He deplored, as I did, the many publications pretending to be biographies which came teeming from the press, so long as the public interest about Mr. Lincoln excited the hope of gain. Out of the mass of works which appeared, of one only —Dr. Holland's—is it possible to speak with any degree of respect.

Early in 1869, Mr. Herndon placed at my disposal his remarkable collection of materials—the richest, rarest, and fullest collection it was possible to conceive. Along with them came an offer of hearty co-operation, of which I have availed myself so extensively, that no art of mine would serve to conceal it. Added to my own collections, these acquisitions have enabled me to do what could not have been done before—prepare an authentic biography of Mr. Lincoln.

Mr. Herndon had been the partner in business and the intimate personal associate of Mr. Lincoln for something like a quarter of a century; and Mr. Lincoln had lived familiarly with several members of his family long before their individual acquaintance began. New Salem, Springfield, the old judicial circuit, the habits and friends of Mr. Lincoln, were as well known to Mr. Herndon as to himself. With these advantages, and from the numberless facts and hints which had dropped from Mr. Lincoln during the confidential intercourse of an ordinary lifetime, Mr. Herndon was able to institute a thorough system of inquiry for every noteworthy circumstance and every incident of value in Mr. Lincoln's career.

The fruits of Mr. Herndon's labors are garnered in three enormous volumes of original manuscripts and a mass of unarranged letters and papers. They comprise the recollections of Mr. Lincoln's nearest friends; of the surviving members of his family and his family-connections; of the men still living who knew him and his parents in Kentucky; of his schoolfellows, neighbors, and acquaintances in Indiana; of the better part of the whole population of New Salem; of his associates and relatives at Springfield; and of lawyers, judges, politicians, and statesmen everywhere, who had any thing of interest or moment to relate. They were collected at vast expense of time, labor, and money, involving the employment of many agents, long journeys, tedious examinations, and voluminous correspondence. Upon the value of these materials it would be impossible to place an estimate. That I have used them conscientiously and justly is the only merit to which I lay claim[1q].

As a general thing, my text will be found to support itself; but whether the particular authority be mentioned or not, it is proper to remark, that each statement of fact is fully sustained by indisputable evidence remaining in my possession. My original plan was to verify every important

statement by one or more appropriate citations; but it was early abandoned, not because it involved unwelcome labor, but because it encumbered my pages with a great array of obscure names, which the reader would probably pass unnoticed.

I dismiss this volume into the world, with no claim for it of literary excellence, but with the hope that it will prove what it purports to be—a faithful record of the life of Abraham Lincoln down to the 4th of March, 1861.

Ward H. Lamon.

Washington City, May, 1872.

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# **LIFE OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.**

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# CHAPTER I.

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN was born on the twelfth day of February, 1809. His father's name was Thomas Lincoln, and his mother's maiden name was Nancy Hanks. At the time of his birth, they are supposed to have been married about three years. Although there appears to have been but little sympathy or affection between Thomas and Abraham Lincoln, they were nevertheless connected by ties and associations which make the previous history of Thomas Lincoln and his family a necessary part of any reasonably full biography of the great man who immortalized the name by wearing it.

Thomas Lincoln's ancestors were among the early settlers of Rockingham County in Virginia; but exactly whence they came, or the precise time of their settlement there, it is impossible to tell. They were manifestly of English descent; but whether emigrants directly from England to Virginia, or an offshoot of the historic Lincoln family in Massachusetts, or of the highly-respectable Lincoln family in Pennsylvania, are questions left entirely to conjecture. We have absolutely no evidence by which to determine them, Thomas Lincoln himself stoutly denied that his progenitors were either Quakers or Puritans; but he furnished nothing except his own word to sustain his denial: on the contrary, some of the family (distant relatives of Thomas Lincoln) who remain in Virginia believe themselves to have sprung from the New-England stock. They found their opinion solely on the fact that the Christian names given to the sons of the two families were the same, though only in a few cases, and at different times. But this might have arisen merely from that common religious sentiment which induces parents of a

devotional turn to confer scriptural names on their children, or it might have been purely accidental. Abrahams, Isaacs, and Jacobs abound in many other families who claim no kindred on that account. In England, during the ascendancy of the Puritans, in times of fanatical religious excitement, the children were almost universally baptized by the names of the patriarchs and Old-Testament heroes, or by names of their own pious invention, signifying what the infant was expected to do and to suffer in the cause of the Lord. The progenitors of all the American Lincolns were Englishmen, and they may have been Puritans. There is, therefore, nothing unreasonable in the supposition that they began the practice of conferring such names before the emigration of any of them; and the names, becoming matters of family pride and family tradition, have continued to be given ever since. But, if the fact that Christian names of a particular class prevailed among the Lincolns of Massachusetts and the Lincolns of Virginia at the same time is no proof of consanguinity, the identity of the surname is entitled to even less consideration. It is barely possible that they may have had a common ancestor; but, if they had, he must have lived and died so obscurely, and so long ago, that no trace of him can be discovered. It would be as difficult to prove a blood relationship between all the American Lincolns, as it would be to prove a general cousinship among all the Smiths or all the Joneses.<sup>1</sup>

*1 At the end of this volume will be found a very interesting account of the family, given by Mr. Lincoln himself. The original is in his own handwriting, and is here reproduced in facsimile.*

A patronymic so common as Lincoln, derived from a large geographical division of the old country, would almost

certainly be taken by many who had no claim to it by reason of descent from its original possessors.

Dr. Holland, who, of all Mr. Lincoln's biographers, has entered most extensively into the genealogy of the family, says that the father of Thomas was named Abraham; but he gives no authority for his statement, and it is as likely to be wrong as to be right. The Hankses—John and Dennis—who passed a great part of their lives in the company of Thomas Lincoln, tell us that the name of his father was Mordecai; and so also does Col. Chapman, who married Thomas Lincoln's step-daughter. The rest of those who ought to know are unable to assign him any name at all. Dr. Holland says further, that this Abraham (or Mordecai) had four brothers—Jacob, John, Isaac, and Thomas; that Isaac went to Tennessee, where his descendants are now; that Thomas went to Kentucky after his brother Abraham; but that Jacob and John "are supposed to have" remained in Virginia.<sup>1</sup> This is doubtless true, at least so far as it relates to Jacob and John; for there are at this day numerous Lincolns residing in Rockingham County—the place from which the Kentucky Lincolns emigrated. One of their ancestors, Jacob—who seems to be the brother referred to—was a lieutenant in the army of the Revolution, and present at the siege of Yorktown. His military services were made the ground of a claim against the government, and Abraham Lincoln, whilst a representative in Congress from Illinois, was applied to by the family to assist them in prosecuting it. A correspondence of some length ensued, by which the presumed relationship of the parties was fully acknowledged on both sides. But, unfortunately, no copy of it is now in existence. The one preserved by the Virginians was lost or destroyed during the late war. The family, with perfect unanimity, espoused the cause of the Confederate States, and suffered many losses in consequence, of which these interesting papers may have been one.

*1 The Life of Abraham Lincoln, by J. G. Holland, p. 20.*

Abraham (or Mordecai) the father of Thomas Lincoln, was the owner of a large and fertile tract of land on the waters of Linnville's Creek, about eight miles north of Harrisonburg, the court-house town of Rockingham County. It is difficult to ascertain the precise extent of this plantation, or the history of the title to it, inasmuch as all the records of the county were burnt by Gen. Hunter[2] in 1864. It is clear, however, that it had been inherited by Lincoln, the emigrant to Kentucky, and that four, if not all, of his children were born upon it. At the time Gen. Sheridan received the order "to make the Valley of the Shenandoah a barren waste," this land was well improved and in a state of high cultivation; but under the operation of that order it was ravaged and desolated like the region around it.

Lincoln, the emigrant, had three sons and two daughters. Thomas was the third son and the fourth child. He was born in 1778; and in 1780, or a little later, his father removed with his entire family to Kentucky.

Kentucky was then the paradise of the borderer's dreams. Fabulous tales of its sylvan charms and pastoral beauties had for years been floating about, not only along the frontiers of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina, but farther back in the older settlements. For a while it had been known as the "Cane Country," and then as the "Country of Kentucky." Many expeditions were undertaken to explore it; two or three adventurers, and occasionally only one at a time, passing down the Ohio in canoes. But they all stopped short of the Kentucky River. The Indians were terrible; and it was known that they would surrender any other spot of earth in preference to Kentucky. The canes that were supposed to indicate the promised land—those canes of wondrous dimensions, that shot up, as thick as they could

stand, from a soil of inestimable fertility—were forever receding before those who sought them. One party after another returned to report, that, after incredible dangers and hardships, they had met with no better fortune than that which had attended the efforts of their predecessors, and that they had utterly failed to find the "canes." At last they were actually found by Simon Kenton, who stealthily planted a little patch of corn, to see how the stalk that bore the yellow grain would grow beside its "brother" of the wilderness. He was one day leaning against the stem of a great tree, watching his little assemblage of sprouts, and wondering at the strange fruitfulness of the earth which fed them, when he heard a footstep behind him. It was the great Daniel Boone[31]'s. They united their fortunes for the present, but subsequently each of them became the chief of a considerable settlement. Kenton's trail had been down the Ohio, Boone's from North Carolina; and from both those directions soon came hunters, warriors, and settlers to join them. But the Indians had no thought of relinquishing their fairest hunting-grounds without a long and desperate struggle. The rich carpet of natural grasses which fed innumerable herds of buffalo, elk, and deer, all the year round; the grandeur of its primeval forests, its pure fountains, and abundant streams—made it even more desirable to them than to the whites. They had long contended for the possession of it; and no tribe, or confederacy of tribes, had ever been able to hold it to the exclusion of the rest. Here, from time immemorial, the northern and southern, the eastern and western Indians had met each other in mortal strife, mutually shedding the blood which ought to have been husbanded for the more deadly conflict with a common foe. The character of this savage warfare had earned for Kentucky the appellation of "the dark and bloody ground;" and, now that the whites had fairly begun their encroachments upon it, the Indians were resolved that the phrase should lose none of its old

93 Refers to Ottawa, Illinois, the town where one of the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas joint debates was held; these debates were a high-profile series of senatorial campaign speeches in Illinois.

94 David Wilmot, a Pennsylvania congressman who in 1846 proposed the 'Wilmot Proviso,' an unsuccessful amendment intended to prohibit slavery in territory acquired from Mexico.

95 Refers to the Lecompton Constitution and related controversy (mid-1850s) over a pro-slavery constitution drafted for Kansas Territory, which provoked national political conflict.

96 A mid-19th-century political doctrine, associated with Stephen A. Douglas, holding that settlers in a U.S. territory should determine whether slavery would be permitted there by vote.

97 The site of John Brown's 1859 raid on a federal armory in Harpers Ferry, Virginia (now West Virginia); the raid aimed to incite a slave rebellion and resulted in Brown's capture and execution.

98 An assembly hall in Manhattan (now Cooper Union) where Abraham Lincoln delivered his influential February 1860 lecture/speech often called the 'Cooper Union' address, boosting his national profile.

99 Refers to Senator Stephen A. Douglas (1813-1861) and criticisms of his policies; here Lamon uses the phrase to charge that Douglas's doctrines (especially popular-sovereignty positions) would be used to silence anti-slavery speech and dissent.

**100** State or territorial constitutions adopted in jurisdictions that prohibited or rejected slavery; in this period such documents often included explicit language declaring slavery wrong or excluding it from that jurisdiction.

**101** The New-York Tribune, a major mid-19th-century newspaper edited by Horace Greeley, widely read in the Northeastern United States.

**102** The nickname for the large temporary hall in Chicago that hosted the 1860 Republican National Convention; 'the Wigwam' was the site where Lincoln received the nomination.

**103** A campaign nickname for Abraham Lincoln that referenced his frontier youth and work splitting fence rails, used to promote an image of humble, self-made origins.

**104** The Democratic Party platform adopted at the 1856 convention in Cincinnati, which, among other things, set out the party's positions on slavery and territory policy and was later invoked in 1860 debates.

**105** Common name for the American Party, a nativist mid-19th-century political movement opposed to immigration and Catholic influence; many former Whigs and others affiliated with it in the 1850s.

**106** Phrase Abraham Lincoln used in an 1858 speech (commonly called the 'House Divided' speech) quoting the Bible to argue the United States could not endure permanently half slave and half free.

**107** Historically refers to William III (William of Orange, 1650–1702), the Dutch prince who became King of England, Scotland, and Ireland after the Glorious Revolution; Lamon

invokes him as an example of a monarch facing difficult political choices.

**108** The Springfield, Illinois, law partnership of Abraham Lincoln and William H. Herndon; Lincoln turned his practice over to Herndon before leaving for the presidency.

**109** A young woman in New Salem, Illinois, long associated in contemporaneous accounts with Lincoln as an early romantic attachment whose death in the mid-1830s was said by some to have deeply affected him; historians debate details and significance of the relationship.

**110** A fraternal organization founded in the 1840s that promoted total abstinence from alcoholic beverages; the text says Lincoln joined in 1854 but did not continue attending its meetings.

**111** An American Unitarian minister and reformer (1810–1860) associated with transcendentalism and liberal theology; Lamon notes Parker's writings as influential on Lincoln's theological views.

**112** Refers to Constantin-François de Chassebœuf, comte de Volney (commonly cited as 'Volney'), an 18th–19th century French philosopher whose book *Les Ruines* ('The Ruins') was influential among freethinking and deist readers mentioned in the text.

**113** Nickname for the nativist American political movement of the 1850s (officially the American Party) that opposed immigration and Catholic influence; Lamon states Lincoln detested it though he was sometimes mistaken for a member.

**114** A contemporary cited by the author who claimed recollections about Lincoln's religious profession; here he is

criticized as an unreliable witness. The passage does not provide further identifying details about Bateman's life or occupation.

**115** A published sermon by Theodore Parker (1810–1860), a prominent Unitarian minister and Transcendentalist whose writings argued for a liberal, individualist view of religious inspiration and conscience.

**116** A folk-medical cure popular in 19th-century rural America, a stone or similar object believed by some to draw out poisons or the infection from animal bites, including suspected rabies; its efficacy was not supported by medical science.

**117** Marcus Junius Brutus was a Roman senator involved in the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BCE; nineteenth-century speakers often invoked 'Brutus' as the classical exemplar of murder for political motives or tyrannicide.

**118** Refers to Felice Orsini (1819–1858), an Italian nationalist who attempted to assassinate Napoleon III in 1858 with bombs and became a well-known figure in European revolutionary circles; his name was sometimes used as a model for political violence.

**119** The Willard (Willard's) Hotel in Washington, D.C., was a prominent 19th-century hotel near the Capitol and White House frequented by politicians, lobbyists, and visitors to the capital.

**120** Refers to Winfield Scott (1786–1866), the U.S. Army's General-in-Chief at the time, who was responsible for organizing troops and military precautions in Washington, D.C., during Lincoln's inauguration.