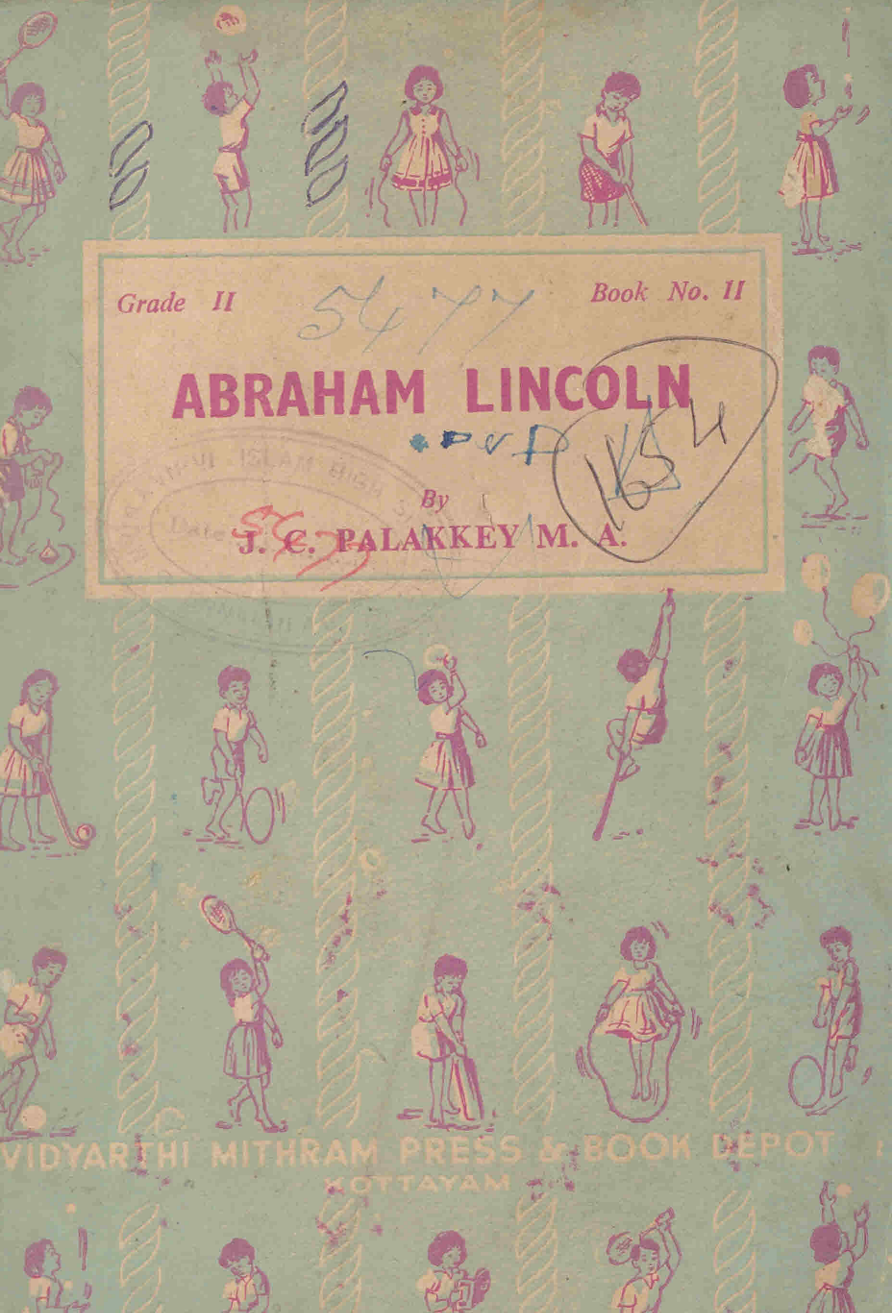


Grade II

Book No. II

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

By

J. C. PALAKKEY M. A.

VIDYARTHI MITHRAM PRESS & BOOK DEPOT
KOTTAYAM

Standard VII 5477 *Book No. II*

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AUTHOR :

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About this Series

It is a recognised fact that the purpose of classroom work is to arouse in the pupils a thirst for knowledge. Once the thirst for knowledge is aroused in the pupils, it has to be and can only be quenched by allowing them to drink deep from the ocean of library books. As a result Library assumes great importance in the frame work of the educational system.

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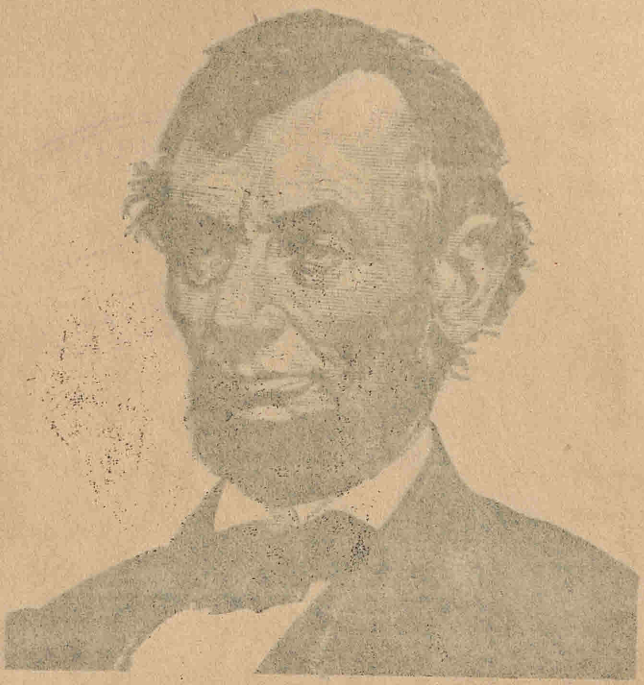
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J. C. Palakkey

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN



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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

1. Early days

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809 in a log cabin near the village of Hodgen Villa, Kentucky in the United States of America.

His parents, Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks Lincoln belonged to the race of settlers. Thomas Lincoln was a carpenter by trade and a farmer by choice. He was an illiterate man who looked down upon education as something useless in the battle of life.

Abraham Lincoln's mother was a very clever woman. She created in her son a passion for reading. It was from her that Abraham Lincoln received his first lessons in the alphabet.

When Abraham was in his seventh year, a teacher, Zachariah Riney came and set up a log school house in the nearest settlement. Abraham Lincoln went to this school. After sometime, Zachariah Riney left the place and another teacher, Cable Hazel by name, came there. These two persons were Lincoln's first instructors.

Abraham Lincoln's schooling lasted only for less than a year. During this short period, he acquired a fair knowledge of reading, writing and arithmetic.

When Abraham Lincoln was eight years old, the Lincoln family moved from Kentucky to Indiana. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals, still in the woods. A small hut was constructed there and they began to live there.

The conditions in which the Lincoln family lived there were not wholesome. In October, 1818 Lincoln's mother fell ill of the 'Milk Sickness' and died.

With his mother's death, life at home became more difficult. There was no woman in the house to keep order, to prepare food and to take charge of the growing children. Abraham Lincoln and his sister. So Thomas Lincoln married a widow named Sara Bush in December 1819 and brought her to Indiana.

Sara Bush was a good-natured woman. She had three children by her first marriage. Being a kind and sensible woman, she regarded Nancy Hank's children as her own and made

no difference between her own children and poor Nancy Lincoln's. Very soon, Abraham Lincoln became her favourite.

Abraham Lincoln tried to read as many books as possible. He read every book he could buy, beg or borrow. He possessed a Bible, Æsop's Fables, the Pilgrim's Progress, Eucld's Geometry, Life of Henry Clay and Ramsay's Washington. There is an interesting story about his reading habit. Once Abraham Lincoln heard of a new book on 'Life of Washington' written by one 'Weems'. He came to know that a neighbouring settler had bought that book. He borrowed it from the neighbour and took it home. At night he kept it under his pillow so that he might start reading as soon as he awoke. A storm came on in the night

and a driving rain blew in through the chinks of the cabin and soaked the book. Next day Lincoln took the book back to its owner, and asked how he could make payment for the damage. The owner wanted the boy to husk corn for three days. Abraham Lincoln felt that it was too much for the damage. So he asked, "Will that pay for the book or only for the damage." 'Well', said the owner. 'I allow it is not much account now to me or anybody else. The book is yours after three day's work'.

Abraham Lincoln used to assist his father in his work. He became an expert with the axe. He worked in the fields and took farm products to the mill. His father very often hired him out to work for others. Abraham Lincoln worked hard with his hands,

at the same time he was more interested in words and ideas.

In March 1830, the Lincoln family shifted to Illinois. Here too they lived in a Cabin and the conditions of life did not improve much. The family had to endure a lot. Sometimes food had to be reduced to the slenderest rations and there had been occasions when the Lincolns actually starved.

2. In the Battle of Lye

One day a store-keeper named Denton Offut took Lincoln with him in a boat to New Orleans. He had been a child when he was in the slave state of Kentucky. Indiana and Illinois were free states. So he had little knowledge of the institution of slavery till then. In New Orleans, Lincoln saw one of

the biggest slave markets in the country. The sight of a young girl on the auction block horrified him. He resolved that he would hit slavery and hit it hard if he could.

A year later, Abraham Lincoln went again to New Orleans. This time, he made a closer study of the system of slavery. He was horrified at the way in which slaves were treated.

Denton Offut was going to start a store in New Salem. He wanted a trustworthy man to run it. His choice fell upon Abraham Lincoln. In July 1831, Abraham Lincoln took charge of the store. There Lincoln got an opportunity to learn much about men and matters.

Abraham Lincoln was physically very strong. He was a good wrestler.

He was a man of great intellectual ability. All these qualities soon enabled him to endear himself to the people of New Salem.

At New Salem, Abraham Lincoln got plenty of leisure time. He did not want to waste his spare time. He began to study law and read every book he could get He read Shakespeare and Burns and studied English grammar. Mentor Graham, a local teacher, gave him private lessons.

Business at Offut's stores became very dull and finally it had to be closed down. Lincoln was left without a job. He decided to run for the State Legislature.

3. Lincoln Begins Public Life

In 1832 Lincoln stood as a Candidate for election to the State Legisla-

ture. He was only twenty-three at that time. The people of New Salem voted for him in a solid block. But that was not enough. In other parts of the constituency, he was still unknown. As a result, he was defeated in the election. This was his only failure to win an election by a direct vote of the people.

Lincoln again returned to trade. He acquired a partnership in a general store. But his partner was a drunkard. His drinking affected his health and business very much. Before long he died, leaving a debt of $ 1100 which Lincoln took fifteen years to pay back.

Again Lincoln was without a regular job. He worked in the fields, split rails, did anything to earn his living.

Before long, he was appointed the Postmaster of New Salem. On May 7, 1833, he assumed his post. This was his first position as an employee of the United States Government. While he was working as Postmaster, he taught himself surveying and managed to get himself appointed deputy surveyor. He continued his general reading and study of Law. As there was no attorney available in New Salem, he was allowed to plead minor cases before the local justice. This was the spring-time of Lincoln's career.

It was in New Salem that Lincoln first experienced the love of a woman. He fell in love with a handsome girl named An Rutledge. In August 1835, she died after a short illness.

In 1834 Lincoln contested the election again and was elected to the Legislature of the State of Illinois.

In 1837, Lincoln moved to Springfield the Capital of Illinois and set up practice as a lawyer. Lincoln was penniless at that time and his friends came to his aid. One of his friends fed him in his own home for several years without charge. Another friend named Joshua Speed offered to share his room with Lincoln. He stayed with him for nearly four years. All his friends were willing to go out of their way to do things for Lincoln and help him.

Lincoln soon became a successful lawyer. His skill at argumentation was very great.

On November 4th, 1842 Lincoln married Mary Todd. Lincoln's wife



Mary Todd

was not an ideal companion for him. In 1843, their first son Robert Todd Lincoln was born.

Soon after his marriage, Lincoln formed a partnership withHerudon who was a constant source of help and guidance for him in his future life.

4. In The Battle Against Slavery

In 1846, Lincoln was elected as a member of the congress. In 1849 Lincoln was allowed by the United States Supreme Court to practise before it.

The United States of America is a union of many small States. The northern States were against slavery, while the Southern States were for it. The Industrial Revolution had spread to America and in the Northern States rich in coal and iron, factory towns were rapidly springing up. As a result, the people were growing richer. They were ready to accept progressive ideas, like abolition of slavery. But the Southern States were not so. There were many large estates there, owned by wealthy people. They employed slaves to work in their estates and were

against any change in their way of life.

Lincoln who had seen the evil effects of slavery began to express himself strongly against slavery. The abolitionists formed themselves into a party called Republican party. The book 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' written by Harriet Beecher Stowe aroused sentiments in the heart of people against the institution of slavery.

Senator Stephen A Douglas was the leader of the party for retention and extention of slavery. Douglas was a man of great ability and Lincoln fought against him by speech and pamphlet. He soon became famous for his strong support of the agitation against slavery. At one of the debates with Douglas,the Senator amused the audience by telling that Lincoln was a

groce-keeper who among other things sold whiskey when he (Douglas) came to know of him first. The nown-drinking Lincoln turned the laudh on his opponent by admitting the truth of what Douglas said, "But I remember" said Lincoln in those days that Mr. Douglas was one of my best customers. Many a time have I stood on one side of the counter and sold whiskey to Mr. Douglas on the other side, but the difference between us now is this. I have left my side of the counter, but Mr. Douglas still sticks to his as tenaciously as ever."

In 1858 Abraham Lincoln wrote 'As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy.' Abraham Lincoln's position on slavery was this.

Slavery was opposed to morality and democracy and as such it ought to be abolished. But at the same time the solution of the slaveryproblem should not result in the destruction of the national union.

5. Lincoln the President

In May 1860, the Republican party chose Lincoln as the party's candidate for the Presidency. On November 6, Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States. This was a terrible blow for the Southern States. The Southern States knew that Lincoln would abolish slavery. So they began to secede from the Union. The Southern States set up a confederacy and elected Jefferson Drvis President and declared war against the Northern States. Thus the American Civil war began.

On March 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln became the President of the United States. For the sake of forcing the Southerners to set free the slaves alone, Lincoln would not have waged a war. But there was a greater issue involved in this. The unity of the country was threatened. The question that faced him was whether or not the United States should continue to be united. Lincoln wanted that the Union must not be broken. So he decided to face the threat posed by the Southern States.

Date.....

Abraham Lincoln recruited 75,000 volunteers on his side and directed the war. The war lasted for four years. Lincoln's army was defeated many times. But he toured the country and addressed many public meetings enlisting the support for the Union. It was in one of such meetings that he made his celebrated speech at the

National Cemetery at 'Gettysburg.' He said in his speech "Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

"But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow this ground. The brave

men living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what they did here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion; to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that the Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." This speech was made on November 19, 1863.

While the war was going on, Lincoln issued on September 22. 1862 a preliminary Emancipation Proclamation granting freedom to all slaves. On January 1, 1863 Lincoln issued the final Emancipation abolishing slavery from the United States for ever. Great was the joy of the slaves who were freed from the yoke of slavery.

The Civil war was a long-drawn one. There was terrible waste and killing of men.

While the war was going on, Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States for a second term, on November 8, 1864. In January 1865, the House of Representatives passed the Constitutional amendment abolishing slavery in the United States. It was subsequently ratified by the States.

On March 4, 1865. Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated President for a second term of office.

On April 9, 1865 the southern states surrendered. On April 11, Lincoln made his address on reconciliation and the reconstruction of loyal government in the defeated states.

On the evening of April 14, 1865, Lincoln went with his wife to the Fords' Theatre in Washington to attend a performance in honour of the victory. As he sat looking at the stage, he was shot in the back of the head by an actor named John Wilkes Booth. Lincoln fell down unconscious. He was at once removed to a private house where the best possible medical aid was given to him. Surgeons worked for hours to save his life, but he did not even regain his consciousness.

Abraham Lincoln died on the morning of April 15, 1865.

Abraham Lincoln's career which started in a log-cabin,ended in the White House. It was a life well-lived and sacrificed for a noble cause. It was his calm courage and firm determination that averted the disintegration of the Union.

"And so Abraham Lincoln, murdered at the age of fifty-six for his successful struggle to preserve the United States and the freedom of men, now towers high in American history. By his words he deepened the meaning of democracy, and by his actions he widened the horizons of human dignity giving his life to the Universal ideal "that the government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Meaning of difficult words:-

Illiterate	= without book-learning; uneducated
Instructor	= One who teach or direct
Acquire	= to gain; to attain
Wholesome	= sound; healthy
Widow	= a woman who has lost her husband by death
Sensible	= aware
Chink	= a narrow opening
Soak	= to steep in a fluid
Damage	= loss or injury
Husk	= to remove the thin covering of some fruits or seeds.
Endure	= to tolerate; to bear with patience
Wrestle	= a struggle between two to throw each other down
Endear	= to make dear
Affect	= to act upon; to produce a change
Liquidate	= to clear or pay off; to clear up and dispose of; to wind up
Employee	= a person employed
Attorney	= one legally authorised to act for another
Available	= that can be obtained
Contest	= a struggle for superiority
Constant	= firm; unchanging
Rapid	= quick

Abolitionist = one who seeks to abolish anything especially slavery

Sentiment = feeling

Retention = Act of retaining; memory; custody

Customer = One who buys from one

Tenacious = retaining or holding fast

Democracy = A form of Government in which supreme power is vested in people

Abolish = to put an end to

Confederacy = alliance; a league

Celebrate = to honour with solemn ceremonies

Cemetry = burying ground

Dedicate = to consecrate

Proposition = the act of proposing

Consecrate = to set apart for a holy use; to devote

Detract = to take away; lessen

Resolve = determine

Avert = to turn from

Disintegration = to separate into parts

Questions :

1. What do you know about Abraham Lincoln's parents ?
2. What do you know of Lincoln's education ?
3. Give an account of the early life of Lincoln
4. Describe Lincoln's career as a lawyer and a Senator.
5. Describe the condition of the U. S. when Lincoln was elected President.
6. What were the problems that faced Lincoln when he was elected President and how did he deal with them ?
7. Give an account of Lincoln's contribution to the cause of democracy and freedom.
8. Describe Lincoln's death ?
9. What is democracy according to Lincoln?
10. Can you name any other leader who stood for the oppressed ?

APPENDIX

Lincoln's Letters

Lincoln's letters are very famous. The most celebrated of all his letters is the one written to Mrs. Lydia Bixby, a Boston widow to console her for the loss of five sons who were supposed to have died in the war. It is reproduced below.

"Executive Mansion,
November 21, 1864.

Dear Madam,

I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which

should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully.

Abraham Lincoln

How Lincoln was careful not to use his official position to personal ends is best illustrated by his letter to Grant. Lincoln's son Robert Todd Lincoln

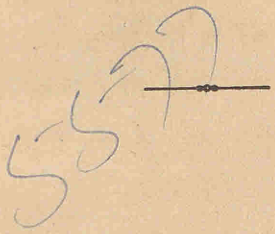
wanted to serve in the army. Abraham Lincoln could have given his son a commission outright. But he did not do so. He wrote a letter to Grant to find a suitable place in the army for his son. His letter is reproduced below.

"Executive Mansion,
Januray, 19, 1865.

Lieutenant-General Grant,

Please read and answer this letter as though I was not the President but only a friend. My son, now in his twenty-second year, having graduated at Harvard wishes to see something of the war before its ends. I do not wish to put him in the ranks nor yet to give him a commission, which those who have already served long are better qualified to hold. Could he, without embarrassment to you or detriment to

the service, go with your military family with some nominal rank, I and not the public furnishing his necessary means? If no, say so without the least hesitation, because I am as anxious and as deeply interested that you shall not be encumbered as you can be yourself".



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