

**EULOGY ON THE LIFE AND PUBLIC
SERVICES OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN, LATE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED
STATES, DELIVERED BY PUBLIC REQUEST,
IN CHRIST M. E. CHURCH, PITTSBURGH,
THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 1865**

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Eulogy on the life and public services of Abraham Lincoln, late president of the United States,
Delivered by public request, in Christ M. E. church, Pittsburgh, Thursday, June 1, 1865 by
Thomas Williams

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THOMAS WILLIAMS

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BY
HON. THOMAS WILLIAMS.



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MAYOR'S OFFICE, }
PITTSBURGH, June 2, 1865. }

To the HON. THOMAS WILLIAMS:

Dear Sir—At a recent meeting, held by a large number of the leading and influential citizens of Pittsburgh and vicinity, a resolution was unanimously passed, requesting me, as Chairman, to procure from you a copy of your eloquent and truthful Eulogy of the late President Abraham Lincoln.

Your compliance with this request will greatly oblige

Your most obedient servant,

JAMES LOWRY, Jr.

PITTSBURGH, June 2, 1865.

HON. JAMES LOWRY, JR.

Dear Sir—In accordance with the request of the meeting of which you have been made the organ, I hand you for publication a copy of the Eulogy which I had the honor to pronounce at Christ M. E. Church, on the evening of the 1st instant.

I am sorry that the performance is not more worthy of the theme and the occasion.

Thanking you, however, for the flattering terms in which you have been pleased to speak of it,

I am, very truly, Yours,

THOMAS WILLIAMS.

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EULOGY.

WE meet in gloom. But yesterday our streets were jubilant, and the very heavens ablaze with the bright pomp of a rejoicing multitude. But yesterday our temples were vocal with songs of rapturous thanksgiving for the great victories that had been vouchsafed to our arms. To-day no jubilee solicits us. No loud huzzas—no “aves vehement”—no hurrying feet—no hymns of triumph salute our ears. It is the hour of darkness, as these sad emblems indicate. A nation mourns. A mighty people throngs its wide-spread sanctuaries, to lament its martyred Chief, but just returned from the overthrow of the armed array that menaced its own life, to die in the very hour of his triumph—in the fancied security of its own capital—under the blaze of a thousand lights, and a thousand admiring eyes—and in the midst of the brave hearts that belted him around, and would have spilled their life's best blood to shelter him from harm—and to die, oh God of Justice! by the stealthy and felonious blow of an assassin. In such a presence, and with such surroundings, the chosen Ruler of this great Republic—the kind, the generous, the parental magistrate, who knew no resentments, and had never done aught to deserve an enemy—has bowed his venerable head upon his bosom, and laid down the high commission with which he had been so lately reinvested by the popular acclaim. “Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope the temple of the Lord's anointed, and stolen out the life of the building.” The pulse of the world has stood almost suspended by the earthquake jar that shook its continents and isles, as no event of modern times has done. A multitudinous people—“in numbers numberless” almost as the stars of heaven—thrilled with horror, and smitten dumb by the fearful atrocity which flashed upon them, unheralded by

any note of warning, over the electric wires, have uncovered their heads and wept, as no people ever wept before, as the funeral cortege swept by, with its precious but unconscious burthen, over mountain and plain, and along the rivers and the lakes, in its long and melancholy journey to the far Western home which he was to see in the body no more. The earth has opened to receive all that the nation could give back to that now desolated home, and we are here to-day, by the appointment of his successor, to bow in reverential submission and acknowledgment before the Hand that has smitten us, and to draw such consolations as are possible, from the consideration that the chastisements of God are sometimes mercies in disguise, while we water with our tears the fresh grave of the heroic martyr, who has crowned his great work by the offering of his own life upon the same altar where the blood of so many victims had already smoked to heaven.

Yes! ABRAHAM LINCOLN is no more. All that could die of him who has defended and rebuilt the tottering structure of our fathers, has passed from earthly view, by a transition as abrupt as his who laid the foundations of the Eternal City, and then, according to the legendary epic of the Roman State, was wrapt from mortal vision in a chariot of fire. The shadow of the destroyer has mounted behind the trooper, and the grim spectre of the grisly king followed close upon the pageant of the avenue. The wise and prudent ruler who was commissioned of God to lead this people through the fiery trials from which they have just emerged—the chief who had just been lifted on their bucklers for a second time to the supreme command—the idol of the popular heart, who had so recently been crowned anew at the Capitol with the symbols of a nation's power, the insignia of a nation's trust, and the rewards of a nation's gratitude, amidst the thundering salvos of artillery, and the responsive voices of an innumerable throng, has ceased to listen to the applauding shout, and passed from the regards of men, into the serener light of an abode beyond the stars, where the banner of war is furled, and the hoarse summons of the trumpet, and the roll of the stirring drum, no longer awaken either to the battle or the triumph.

On two occasions only in our brief but eventful history, the hand of death has fallen upon the head of this great Republic. On both, however, it descended in a period of public tranquility, by

the quiet and gentle ministration of nature, without shock and without disturbance. The fruit fell when it was ripe, and the nation grieved, but not as those who are without hope. It paused but for a moment to cast its tribute of affection on the tomb, and then hurried onward in its high and prosperous career. For the first time now, in the very hurricane of civil strife, a bloody tragedy, of fearful aspect, and more than mediæval horror, forestalling the dissolving processes that are interwoven with the law of life, has snatched away the man who, above all others, was most dear to us, almost in the twinkling of an eye, in high health, and in the very crisis of his great work, when the regards of the world were most intently fixed upon him, and the destinies of a nation were trembling in his hands. It is as though an apparition had stalked, in the midst of our rejoicings, into the very presence of the festal board, and it is under the projecting shadow with which that ghastly shape has darkened the whole land as with a general eclipse, that I am asked to discourse to you of the merits and services of the extraordinary man, who has thus disappeared from amongst us after having enacted so large a part in the greatest and most important era of the world's history. It is a task which is never easy in the performance, and cannot be faithfully executed until the lapse of years shall withdraw the observer from a proximity that is always unfavorable to the clearest vision, and the work is consigned to the pen of impartial history. It is one, however, which I have not felt at liberty to decline.

Of Abraham Lincoln there is little to be said, until the voice of the people called him from the comparative obscurity of a provincial town in the remote West, to preside over the destinies of this Republic. The story of his life, antecedent to his appearance on that broader stage, where he was destined to command more of the observation of the world than any other man either of ancient or modern times, is soon told. Born in a frontier settlement in Kentucky, of humble parentage, and with no prospective inheritance but that of the coarsest toil, it was not his hard fate to wear out his life in the hopeless struggle for success, to which that nativity would have consigned him. At the age of six years, his parents, warned by no vision, but by the stern necessities of life, removed from the house of bondage, taking the young child with them, to grow up in the freer air of that great Territory, whose fundamental

ordinance had insured the respectability of labor, by forbidding any bondsman from ever setting his foot upon its soil. There, in the vigorous young State of Indiana, without even the aid of a mother's care beyond his infant years, he shot up—we know not how—into the lofty stature and robust manhood which have since become so familiar to us all, diversifying his labors, and indulging that spirit of adventure that is so common to the pioneer, by embarking, at the age of nineteen years, as a working hand, at the scanty wages of ten dollars a month, on one of those primitive flat-boats on which the western farmer of those times was wont to launch his produce on the bosom of the Ohio, to find its only market at New Orleans. At the age of twenty-one years, without any better prospects in life, and inheriting apparently the migratory instincts of his father, who had perhaps grown weary of his Indiana home, he plunged with him into the further West, and sought and found a new settlement on an unreclaimed quarter-section of the public lands in Central Illinois. That he must have shared the humble labors of that parent in winning his new acquisition from a state of nature into a habitable abode for man, is obvious from the fact that so limited an area, on the extremest frontier of civilization, could have afforded no great scope for employment but with the axe or plow, and no means whatever for mental culture or development, except those powers of thought and observation, which the solitudes of nature, and the communion of the forest and the field, have sometimes awakened in those gifted spirits that seem to be immediately inspired of God. Within a year or two, however, the occurrence of what was called the "Black Hawk War," drew him from a seclusion which must have been extremely irksome to a youth of lively temperament, and overflowing health, by offering the temptation which the pursuit of arms almost invariably presents to the young and ambitious spirits of the land. He enlisted in a company of volunteers, who forthwith selected him as their captain, but his aspirations for military renown were soon cut short by the unexpected termination of the war. His next appearance is as a candidate for the Legislature of the State, to which he was repeatedly elected, and about the same time he turned his attention to the study of the law, and was duly admitted to the Bar. What preparation he may have made for this transition to another and a higher field of labor, is unknown to us. He has the credit of con-

fessing, with that simplicity which drew from him the acknowledgment that he had never read the works of the great master of the drama, that he had enjoyed the advantage of but six months' schooling in the whole course of his life. That he had read such books as were accessible to him, is not to be doubted. Report says that he had picked up in some way a little knowledge of surveying, which may have served to train and discipline his reasoning faculty, and was, as will be remembered, the youthful employment of the great Washington himself. Beyond this, however, little was required in the infant condition of a frontier settlement, which would have few attractions for men of such acquirements as only an old community could afford; although it is not to be questioned that some of the robustest intellects in the land have been nurtured in those primitive and truly republican schools, where no hot-bed culture was admissible, and every sickly plant was doomed to die. Whether he succeeded in attaining any great distinction in his new profession, where success is dependent generally on a peculiarity of taste or mental structure, and where industry is so often an over-match for talent, is by no means clear. We do know, however, that his abilities and worth were duly recognized at home by his triumphant election in 1846 to the Congress of the United States—where he served, however, but for a single term—as well as by the award to him, by common consent, of the championship of the Free State party, on the occasion of the controversy which grew out of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill. In 1856 he was presented by his State, and supported largely, as a candidate for the office of Vice President on the Republican ticket of that year; and in the canvass of 1858, as the accepted candidate for Senator, he discussed before the people of Illinois the question of the extension of slavery into the Territories, in a series of debates which riveted the attention of the nation, by the clearness of their statements, and the immense logical power which they displayed. It was perhaps to the publicity of these efforts that he was mainly indebted for the great distinction conferred on him by the Convention of 1860, in singling him out, above all competitors, as the standard-bearer of the army of freedom in that memorable campaign.

And this brief narrative—compiled from unauthentic sources, and making no pretension to the accuracy of biography—is a summary of his career until called by Providence to enact a part that