

**HERNDON'S LINCOLN; THE TRUE
STORY OF A GREAT LIFE; THE
HISTORY AND PERSONAL
RECOLLECTIONS OF ABRAHAM
LINCOLN; VOL. II; PP. 205-418**

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WILLIAM HENRY HERNDON & JESSE WILLIAM WEIK

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HERNDON'S LINCOLN

THE TRUE STORY OF A GREAT LIFE

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THE HISTORY AND PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY

WILLIAM H. HERNDON

FOR TWENTY YEARS HIS FRIEND AND LAW
PARTNER

AND

JESSE WILLIAM WEIK, A. M.

VOL. II

THE HERNDON'S LINCOLN PUBLISHING COMPANY

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THE PUBLISHERS.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE year 1840 finds Mr. Lincoln entering his thirty-second year and still unmarried. "I have come to the conclusion," he suggests in a facetious letter, two years before, "never again to think of marrying." But meanwhile he had seen more of the world. The State Capital had been removed to Springfield, and he soon observed the power and influence one can exert with high family and social surroundings to draw upon. The sober truth is that Lincoln was inordinately ambitious. He had already succeeded in obtaining no inconsiderable political recognition, and numbered among his party friends men of wealth and reputation; but he himself was poor, besides lacking the graces and ease of bearing obtained through mingling in polite society—in fact, to use the expressive language of Mary Owens, he was "deficient in those little links which make up the chain of woman's happiness." Conscious, therefore, of his humble rank in the social scale, how natural that he should seek by marriage in an influential family to establish strong connections and at the same time foster his political fortunes! This may seem an audacious thing to insinuate, but on no other basis can we reconcile the strange course of his courtship and the tempestuous

chapters in his married life. It is a curious history, and the facts, long chained down, are gradually coming to the surface. When all is at last known, the world I believe will divide its censure between Lincoln and his wife.

Mary Todd, who afterwards became the wife of Mr. Lincoln, was born in Lexington, Kentucky, December 13, 1818. "My mother," related Mrs. Lincoln to me in 1865, "died when I was still young. I was educated by Madame Mantelli, a lady who lived opposite Mr. Clay's, and who was an accomplished French scholar. Our conversation at school was carried on entirely in French—in fact we were allowed to speak nothing else. I finished my education at Mrs. Ward's Academy, an institution to which many people from the North sent their daughters. In 1837 I visited Springfield, Illinois, remaining three months. I returned to Kentucky, remaining till 1839, when I again set out for Illinois, which State finally became my home."

The paternal grandfather of Mary Todd, General Levi Todd, was born in 1756, was educated in Virginia, and studied law in the office of General Lewis of the State. He emigrated to Kentucky, was a lieutenant in the campaigns conducted by General George Rogers Clark against the Indians, and commanded a battalion in the battle of Blue Licks, August 18, 1782, where his brother, John Todd, was killed. He succeeded Daniel Boone in command of the militia, ranking as major-general, and was one of the first settlers in Lexington, Ky. February 25, 1779, he married Miss Jane Briggs. The

seventh child of this union, born February 25, 1791, was Robert S. Todd, the father of Mrs. Lincoln. On her maternal side Mrs. Lincoln was highly connected. Her great-grandfather, General Andrew Porter, was in the war of the Revolution. He succeeded Peter Muhlenberg as major-general of the Pennsylvania militia. Her great uncles, George B. Porter, who was governor of Michigan, James Madison Porter, secretary of the navy under President Tyler, and David R. Porter, governor of Pennsylvania, were men of ability and distinction. Her mother, Anne Eliza Parker, was a cousin of her father, Robert S. Todd. The latter had served in both houses of the Kentucky Legislature, and for over twenty years was president of the Bank of Kentucky at Lexington. He died July 16, 1849.

To a young lady in whose veins coursed the blood that had come down from this long and distinguished ancestral line, who could even go back in the genealogical chart to the sixth century, Lincoln, the child of Nancy Hanks, whose descent was dimmed by the shadow of tradition, was finally united in marriage.

When Mary Todd came to her sister's house in Springfield in 1839, she was in her twenty-first year. She was a young woman of strong, passionate nature and quick temper, and had "left her home in Kentucky to avoid living under the same roof with a stepmother."* She came to live with her oldest sister, Elizabeth, who was the wife of Lin-

* Mrs. Edwards, statement, Aug. 3, 1887.