

**ABRAHAM
LINCOLN**

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Abraham Lincoln by Wilber Fisk Gordy

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Abraham Lincoln in 1861

From a photograph by Hester, in possession of F. A. Brown

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BY

WILBUR F. GORDY

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STATES," "A HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES FOR SCHOOLS."

"Let us have faith that right makes right; and in
that faith let us to the end, dare to do our duty
as we understand it."—LINCOLN.

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PREFACE

It is an old and true maxim which says that we learn from experience; meaning, of course, our own personal experience. But much is to be learned also from the experience of others, especially of the great and the good who have lived before us. Herein lies the value of biography. By coming to know, through books, men of great and strong character, we learn from their lives much that is helpful in living our own. For if in imagination we enter into their purposes and plans, their sorrows and joys, their defeats and victories, we learn through their experiences, and they become in a real sense our teachers, guides, and friends.

Perhaps to Abraham Lincoln, more than to any other man in the history of our country, has been given the power of influence over the lives of those unknown to him. To thousands who never saw him, but who know him through his letters and speeches, and through the record of his private and public life, he is an inspiration. The story of his overcoming the difficulties of his early life has put courage into many a young heart; his resolute stand by what he thought to be right has helped countless souls to be true to their duty; and the kindness and good-will which flowed from his great heart toward all—even his foes—

made the cherishing of malice and bitterness seem unworthy and shameful.

To know such a man, as we may know him by the study or even the reading of his life, cannot fail to inspire us to nobler living and more patriotic service in that little community we call our neighborhood and that larger community, our country.

Such a hero and leader, who continues to live in the ideals and institutions of his native land, is one of its richest possessions; and it is especially fitting, in days when the nation is again called to take a stand in a great cause, that we should learn to understand and appreciate something of the high purpose and immortal achievements of his life.

With that thought in mind, this book has been prepared. It is the first of a series called "Heroes and Leaders in American History," a series which will include many of the men, in various fields of service in our national life, who have had much to do with making our country what it is to-day.

In writing this volume my aim has been to make real to my young readers Abraham Lincoln; first as a youth who worked and struggled in the backwoods to prepare himself for greater usefulness; then as a man raised by his own merits to positions of responsibility; and, finally, as a leader of a great nation, who through four of the most troubled years of that nation's history carried its burdens amid peril and crisis; but always and under all circum-

stances as one who was simple, honest, and friendly, living true to high and unselfish motives of service to his fellow men.

In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge my deep obligation to Mr. Forrest Morgan, of the Watkinson Library, Hartford, and to Miss Elizabeth P. Peck, of the Hartford Public High School, both of whom have read the manuscript and offered most helpful criticism; and also to my wife, whose invaluable co-operation and assistance has in large measure given to this biography whatever of merit it may possess.

WILBUR F. GORDY.

HARTFORD, CONN.,
May 1, 1917.