

MEMORY

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Personality

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Abraham Lincoln's Personality

Memory

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

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LINCOLN'S MEMORY A WONDER

At a Convention Names, Initials and
Incidents Were Recalled
Unfailingly. 1812

The most notable thing about Mr. Lincoln was his wonderful memory. At one of the conventions were many men who had been famous in their time, but who had not of late been much known. Each member was introduced by his surname, but in nine cases out of ten Mr. Lincoln would recall their entire name, no matter how many initials it contained. In several instances he recited historical reminiscences of families. When the tall General Doniphan of Missouri was introduced, Mr. Lincoln had to look up to catch Doniphan's eye. He immediately inquired:—

"Is this Doniphan who made that splendid march across the plains and swept the swift Comanches before him?"

"I commanded the expedition across the plains," modestly responded the general.

"Then you have come up to the standard of my expectations," replied Mr. Lincoln.—From Perley's Reminiscences.

Lincoln's Wonderful Memory.

One of my cousins, John Holmes Goodenow of Alfred, Me., was appointed Minister to Turkey early in the Lincoln administration, and was taken to the White House before his departure for his post to be presented to the President.

When Lincoln learned that his visitor was a grandson of John Holmes, one of the first Senators from Maine, and a man of note in his day and generation, he immediately began the recitation of a poetical quotation which must have been more than a hundred lines in length. Mr. Holmes, never having met the President, was naturally astonished at this outburst; and, as the President went on and on with his long recitation, the suspicion crossed his mind that Lincoln had suddenly taken leave of his wits. But when the lines had been finished the President said: "There! that poem was quoted by your grandfather Holmes in a speech which he made in the United States Senate in —," and he named the date and specified the occasion.

As John Holmes' term in the Senate ended in 1833, and Lincoln probably was impressed by reading a copy of the speech, rather than by hearing it, this feat of memory appears most remarkable. If he had been by any casualty deprived of sight, his own memory could have supplied him with an ample library.—Noah Brook in January Century. 1895

“Abe” Lincoln Had Good Memory Story Illustrates His Character Emancipator Pattern for Us All

San Francisco, Jan. 27-12-25

By ANNIE LAURIE

Last night when the wind was driving the great clouds in from the sea like a giant shepherd driving his flock—we sat by the blazing fire and talked about Abraham Lincoln—the Great American.



And one among us once lived in the little village that was once Lincoln's home, and she had a hundred friendly little tales to tell of Honest Abe at the bar and Lincoln in politics, and Abraham Lincoln as a neighbor and a friend.

This is one of the stories she told us as the wind howled down the chimney and shook the windows as if it were trying to frighten us and make us realize what little, unimportant beings we are—all of us—after all.

"My uncle lived in a little town next to our little town," said the woman who told the tale, "and he was a good humored, friendly sort of fellow, with a positive adoration for Lincoln.

FOLLOWED DEBATERS.

"When the great Douglas-Lincoln debate was on, my uncle got on his saddle horse and followed the debaters from county to county until he knew every word of their speeches by heart, but he never got tired of hearing them—especially the Lincoln speeches.

"At the close of the campaign of speaking, my uncle persuaded his idol to come to his little town and make a short talk.

"My uncle met Lincoln at the jerkwater train and escorted him proudly through the village.

"This is our new postoffice, Mr. Lincoln," said my uncle. "This is our schoolhouse, we have two rooms in it, you see, one for the a-b-abs, and one for the big boys and girls, for we are very progressive here.

"There is our cemetery and on the hill is our church—" by this time the two men were close to

my cousin's house, where they were going to have dinner before the speaking.

"There is my home," said my uncle, "and there—" his eyes fell upon his son, an imprudent, rakish youth about 9 or so, who was playing marbles in the gutter.

"This, Mr. Lincoln, is my son," said my uncle, "Thomas Lowry, Junior."

"The barefooted boys looked up and grinned.

"Well, said Mr. Lincoln, "what are you doing, Thomas Jr., having a game of marbles?"

"Thomas Jr. gave his ragged old hat a jerk and spat between his teeth, 'oh,' he said, with a contemptuous snort, 'any fool would know that.'

"Every time my uncle met Abraham Lincoln after that, no matter where it was, Lincoln always said, 'How's Thomas Jr.—still playing marbles?'"

And then we talked of the old story of the boy who fell asleep on sentry duty and his mother went to Lincoln and Lincoln sent him a reprieve from death, and of the time he wrote to the colonel of a regiment about a homesick, conscience-smitten boy and said: "Let John go home and marry Mary."

TALES OF "OLD ABE."

And about his old friends and how they loved him and about how great he was and how witty and how just and how far-seeing and how noble and how wise—but mostly we talked of how good he was.

Abraham Lincoln, the Great American—after all that is the thing we love to think of most, isn't it?

Now that our great hero is dead and his grave and those who knew him are all gone, too,—we love to know that he was kind and magnanimous and simple-hearted and honest and very, very good.

What a fortunate nation we are to have a man of such character for our greatest hero.

If we could only remember him a little oftener—we might some of us try to be like him—just a little bit, and if we would do that both great and simple, clever and dull, in public life and in private,—what a great nation we might be.



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