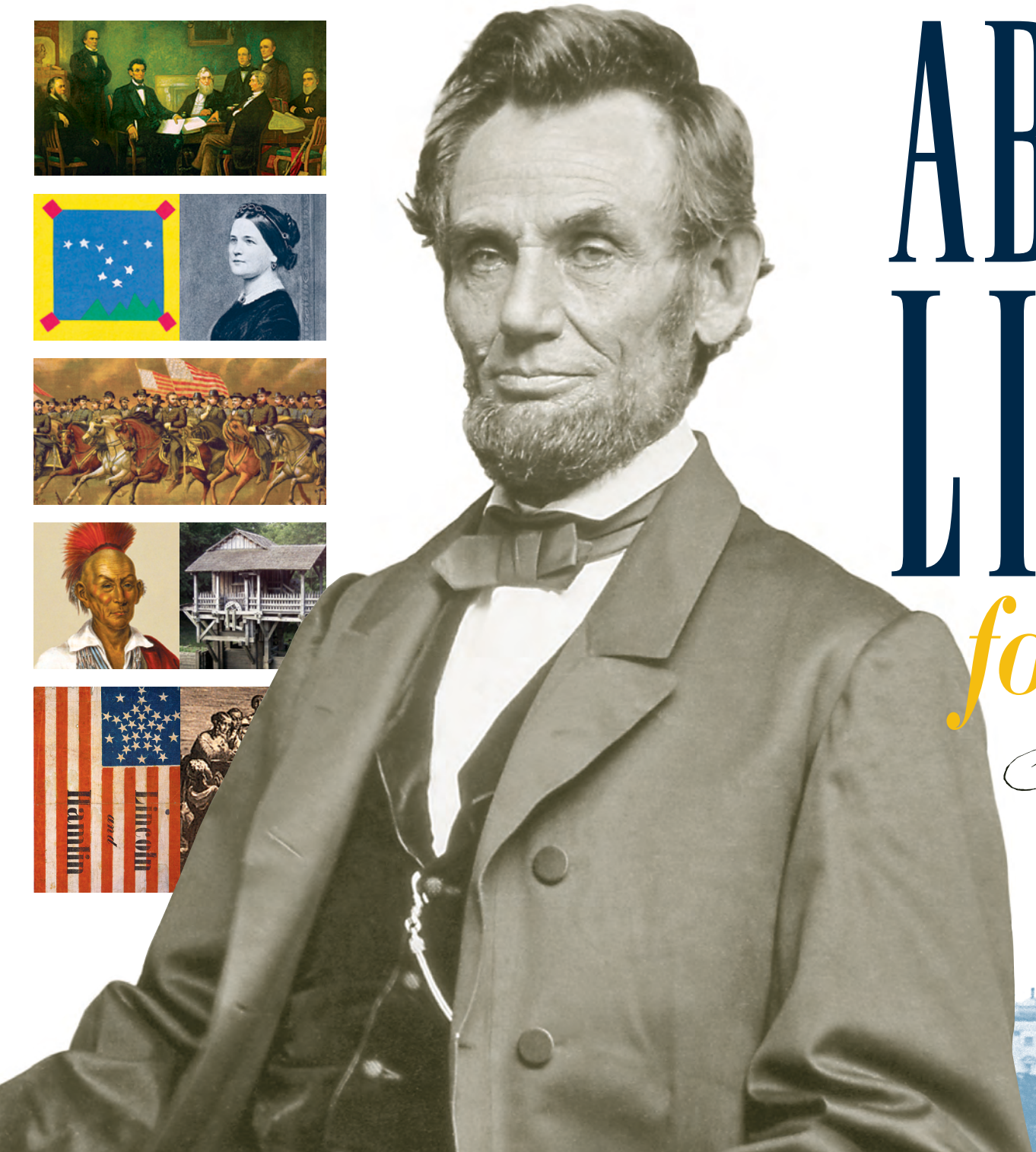

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

for KIDS

His Life and Times with 21 Activities

JANIS HERBERT

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Note to the readers: To see the sources of the quotes in this book, visit www.janisherbertforkids.com.

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INTRODUCTION

"EVERYBODY IN THE world knows Pa used to split rails!" said Abraham Lincoln's son Tad. But in 1861, as Lincoln made his way to the White House, people knew little else about the president-elect. He didn't like to talk much about his childhood. He had been a rail splitter, a storekeeper, a one-term congressman, and a lawyer. He was the husband of Mary Todd and the father of four boys, one deceased. Newspapers even got his name wrong.

Many despaired at the surprising election of this obscure Illinois man. One newspaper called him an ignorant backwoods lawyer. Few suspected that he could succeed in holding the United States together. The nation, struggling over the issues of slavery and states' rights, was fragmenting.

Across the nation, churches and communities split. Family members argued; deep ties were broken. In Washington, congressmen and senators argued and even came to blows over the country's differences. The best political minds had failed. Decades of effort and compromise had come to nothing.

As Lincoln's train moved east to Washington, Southern states broke their ties to the Union and declared themselves a new nation, the Confederate States of America. As Lincoln entered the White House, Confederate guns pointed toward a federal fort in South Carolina.

The country was in an uproar. All turned their eyes to the tall, ungainly Lincoln and wondered how he could lead them out of this crisis. Who was this Abraham Lincoln?

"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise to the occasion. As our case is new, we must think anew, and act anew."

—Abraham Lincoln

TIME LINE

1809 FEBRUARY 12 Abraham Lincoln is born

1816 DECEMBER Lincoln family moves to Indiana

1818 OCTOBER Nancy Hanks Lincoln (Abraham's mother) dies

1819 DECEMBER Thomas Lincoln (Abraham's father) marries Sarah Bush Johnston

1828 JANUARY Sarah Lincoln (Abraham's sister) dies

APRIL Lincoln journeys by flatboat to New Orleans

1830 MARCH Lincoln family moves to Illinois

1831 MARCH Lincoln's second flatboat journey to New Orleans

JULY Lincoln moves to New Salem, Illinois

1832 MARCH Lincoln runs for state legislature

1832 APRIL–SEPTEMBER Lincoln fights in Black Hawk War

1834 AUGUST Lincoln is elected to Illinois House of Representatives (serves four terms)

1837 MARCH Lincoln becomes an attorney

APRIL Lincoln moves to Springfield

1842 NOVEMBER Lincoln and Mary Todd marry

1843 AUGUST Robert Todd Lincoln is born

1846 MARCH Edward Baker "Eddy" Lincoln is born

AUGUST Lincoln is elected to the U.S. House of Representatives

1850 FEBRUARY Eddy Lincoln dies

DECEMBER William Wallace "Willie" Lincoln is born

1851 JANUARY Thomas Lincoln dies

1853 APRIL Thomas "Tad" Lincoln is born

1855 FEBRUARY Lincoln loses race for Senate

1858 AUGUST–OCTOBER Lincoln-Douglas debates

NOVEMBER Lincoln loses Senate race to Douglas

1860 MAY Lincoln is nominated for presidency

NOVEMBER Lincoln is elected president

1861 FEBRUARY Lincoln leaves Springfield

MARCH 4 Lincoln is inaugurated in Washington

APRIL 12 Civil War begins

1862 FEBRUARY Willie Lincoln dies

1863 JANUARY 1 Lincoln signs Emancipation Proclamation

NOVEMBER 19 Lincoln gives Gettysburg Address

DECEMBER 8 Lincoln issues proclamation of amnesty and reconstruction

1864 JULY 11–12 Lincoln comes under fire at Fort Stevens

NOVEMBER 8 Lincoln is reelected to presidency

1865 MARCH 4 Lincoln's second inauguration

APRIL 4 Lincoln enters Richmond

APRIL 9 Robert E. Lee surrenders at Appomattox

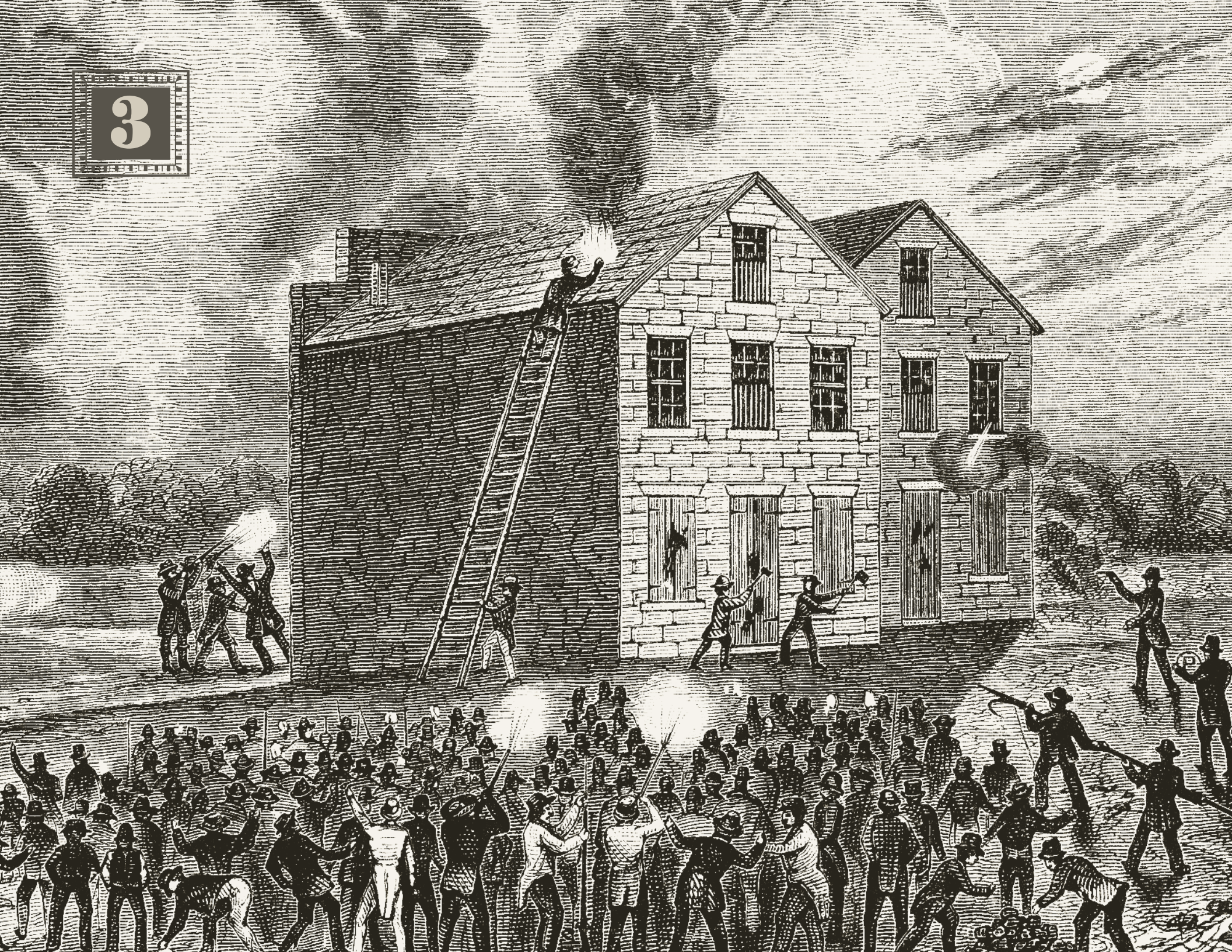
APRIL 14 Lincoln is shot by John Wilkes Booth

APRIL 15 Abraham Lincoln dies

APRIL 26 John Wilkes Booth killed by federal troops

MAY 4 Lincoln is buried in Springfield, Illinois

DECEMBER 6 13th Amendment is ratified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"THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT"

Abraham Lincoln's political career began modestly in Illinois's modest capital, Vandalia. During his first months in its shabby statehouse, Lincoln quietly watched and learned. He and the other legislators sat at long tables, debating projects and issues while chunks of plaster fell from the ceiling. Legislative sessions lasted months. In between them, Lincoln returned to New Salem, where he studied law books and "mixed in surveying work" to pay his bills. In time, he grew more comfortable with his new role and stepped up to support a state bank and transportation improvements.

Reelected, he became known as the longest of the "Long Nine," a group of legislators who were each so tall their combined height added up to 54 feet. The Long Nine worked to have the state capital moved to the town of Springfield. New settlers had shifted the population to the north and it made sense for the state's government to be at a more central site.

Illinois was no longer a frontier land. People had poured in from states east, north, and south, from Ireland, Great Britain, and Germany. Towns grew, roads and bridges were built, steamboats plied the rivers, and soon railroads would connect small towns across the state. Lincoln supported these improvements by voting for railroads and the Illinois and Michigan Canal, a project that would connect Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River.

During his four terms in the Illinois legislature, Lincoln became a leader of the Whig party and was even nominated by his party for a position as Speaker of the House. His reputation had grown. It suffered a little over something he later called "that jumping scrape." He and his fellow Whigs had hoped to prevent a quorum from meeting in order to delay an important vote. (A quorum is the minimum number of members necessary for a vote to be taken.) When enough members of the opposing party showed up at the statehouse to make a quorum, Lincoln and his friends tried to bolt out the door. Their rivals held it shut. He and two other Whigs then jumped out the second-story window! A newspaper article joked that the jump didn't hurt Lincoln at all, because his long legs "reached nearly from the window to the ground." It suggested that a third-floor meeting room might make members think twice about trying such an escape.

After years of studying on his own, Lincoln became a lawyer. His friend John Todd Stuart offered him a position in his busy Springfield law office. Lincoln packed his few books and belongings and said good-bye to his New Salem friends. His borrowed horse picked its way through Springfield's muddy streets while he looked over the new and booming town. It had hotels and stores, churches and schools, even a newspaper! Where would he fit in?

"I am quite as lonesome here as I ever was anywhere in my life," Lincoln wrote a friend weeks later. "I have been spoken to by but one woman since I've been here, and should not have been by her, if she could have avoided it." But he wasn't lonely for long.

Work kept him busy. He was still in the legislature, which met in a Springfield church until a new statehouse could be built. He wrote legal documents in Stuart's office and represented clients in the courtroom downstairs and in courts in nearby counties. Stuart put him in charge of keeping the office accounts,

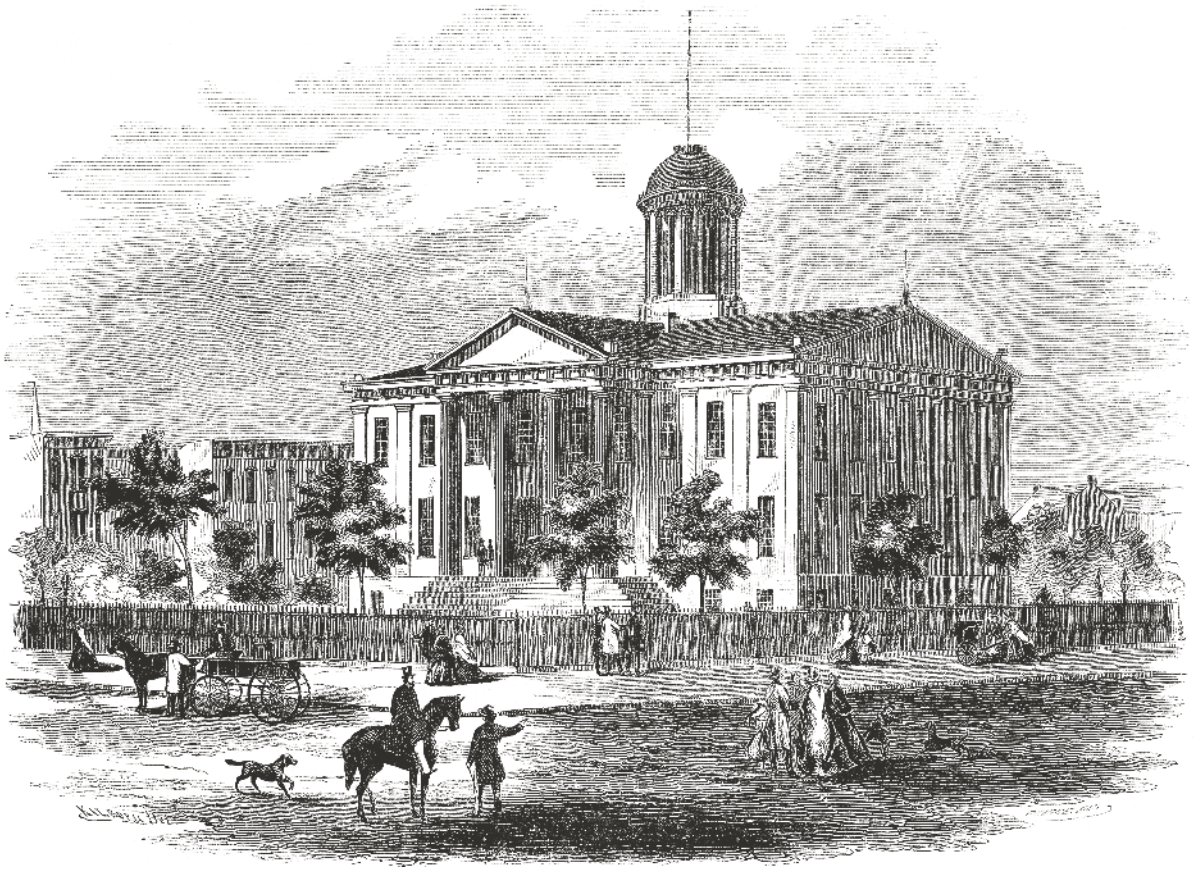
which Lincoln did badly. He stuffed important papers in his pockets or in his new, tall stovepipe hat. Still, Stuart had enough confidence in his young partner to leave Lincoln in charge when Stuart left for Washington to serve in Congress.

Lincoln found a friend and a place to stay when he shopped at Joshua Speed's general store. His goods came to a total of $17—much more than he had to spend. Speed later said he'd never seen so "gloomy and melancholy a face" as Lincoln's when the young lawyer explained he was short of funds. Speed came up with a plan that would save Lincoln money. "You are perfectly welcome to share a room with me," he said. When Lincoln heard that the room was right above the store, he collected his bags, went up the stairs, and came back down smiling. "Well, Speed," he said, "I'm moved!"

Joshua Speed, who had also been born in Kentucky, became one of Lincoln's closest friends. Young William Herndon, who clerked at the store and also slept in the crowded upstairs room, became another. Speed's store was a favorite gathering place and soon, according to Herndon, the young men who met there started a club for "debate and literary efforts." They read each other's poems and argued about politics while warming themselves by the fireplace in the back of Speed's store.

There was plenty for the young men to argue about. There was the current economic crisis, then the presidential election between Van Buren and Harrison, and, always, slavery. With the abolition movement growing stronger, arguments about slavery were heard across the country. Friends, families, and churches split over the issue. Communities were torn by riots and lynchings. Abolitionists—blamed for

Springfield, Illinois ❖ North Wind Picture Archives



LINCOLN AT THE LYCEUM

Imagine a time before movies or television, a time when even books were hard to get. What did people do for entertainment? When Abraham Lincoln was young, lyceums were popular. These were associations that hosted lectures and debates. Springfield's Young Men's Lyceum drew crowds. They heard lectures on topics like blood circulation and geology. One lecture even addressed the question "Who is happier—married or single people?"

A speech Lincoln gave at Springfield's Lyceum was published in the local newspaper. In it, he said that Revolutionary War heroes had fought passionately to gain America's freedom but that the time for passion was over. He warned against emotion in politics. The United States was "an undecided experiment," Lincoln said, and when vicious people "throw printing presses into rivers and shoot editors . . . this Government cannot last."

Lincoln was referring to abolitionist Elijah P. Lovejoy, a printer who had been calling for the end of slavery in his Alton, Illinois, newspaper. Twice, an angry crowd destroyed his printing presses. During a third attack, Lovejoy was killed. News of his death spread across the nation. Many called the tragedy an attack on freedom of speech and Lovejoy a martyr to abolitionism.

Lincoln asked his audience to set emotion aside and be guided by reason and respect for the Constitution. "Reverence for the law," he said, should become "the political religion of the nation."

Proslavery rioters burn the print shop of Elijah Lovejoy ❖ North Wind Picture Archives

inciting slave revolts—received death threats. "End slavery now!" cried some people. "End it and the Union dies!" replied others. In the South, talk of secession (breaking away from the Union) grew louder. "The federal government has no right to interfere!"

For the moment, the federal government showed no interest in interfering with slavery. For years, the House of Representatives had had "gag rules" which said congressmen couldn't even discuss antislavery petitions. So many people were uncomfortable with the way that abolitionists "riled things up" that some Northern states, including Illinois, answered the appeals of Southern state governments by officially denouncing abolitionist societies. Only a handful of legislators, including Abraham Lincoln, protested. He and a colleague said they believed that "the institution [of slavery] is founded on both injustice and bad policy."

One of the young men who warmed himself at Speed's store was Stephen A. Douglas, a feisty, intelligent man who loved nothing more than a good argument. A prominent Democrat, he was called "the Little Giant" for his small size and his big role in Illinois politics. He and Lincoln agreed on very little, from the state bank to the presidential election. But they did agree that Mary Todd was one of the most charming ladies in town.

Mary Todd had come to Springfield from Kentucky to visit her sister and brother-in-law, Elizabeth and Ninian Edwards. Soon she was the belle of Springfield, and bachelors like Lincoln and Douglas were calling on her at the Edwardses' fine home.

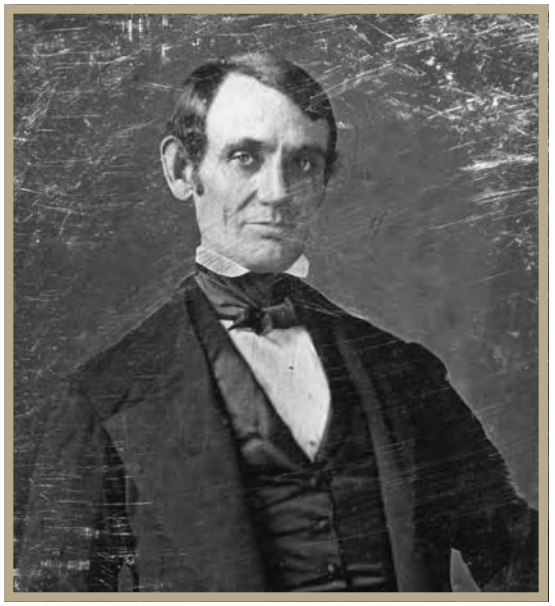
This was not Lincoln's first courtship. His New Salem neighbors said he had once loved Ann, the daughter of New Salem tavern owner James Rutledge. Some even said they had been engaged. With her auburn hair, blue eyes, and kind nature, Ann could easily inspire romantic feelings. When she died young, probably of typhoid, people said Lincoln was devastated, almost crazy. The summer that Ann died was a rainy season; according to one friend, Lincoln said he couldn't bear the idea of the rain falling on Ann's grave.

Lincoln felt shy and unsure of himself around most women. He had begun a half-hearted courtship with a friend's sister, Mary Owens, when the friend hinted that she would bring Mary to New Salem if Lincoln would marry her. Lincoln had once seen Mary, and thought her pretty. "[I] saw no good objection to plodding through life hand in hand" with her, he said. After she arrived, he was sorry he had said it. For her part, Mary Owens said that Lincoln was "deficient in those little links which make up the chain of a woman's happiness." Lincoln was so tender-hearted he ruined his best clothes to rescue a hog mired in the mud, yet when he and Mary went riding he crossed a dangerous river without even looking back to see if she made it. Still, he felt honor-bound to keep his word and propose to her. To his surprise, she rejected him. "I have now come to the conclusion never again to think of marrying," he wrote a friend, "and for this reason; I can never be satisfied with any one who would be block-head enough to have me."

Mary Todd changed his mind. She was small and plump with chestnut hair and sparkling blue eyes. She was witty, intelligent, and cultured. They had much in common. They were both from Kentucky and each had lost a mother at an early age. They shared a passion

"I am destined to marry a president."

—Mary Todd, as a young girl



Abraham Lincoln; Mary Todd Lincoln ❖ Library of Congress

for poetry and Whig politics. She even knew Lincoln's hero, Henry Clay, who was her father's friend.

In many ways, though, Lincoln and Mary Todd were entirely different. Lincoln came from the poorest background and had despised slavery as long as he could remember. Mary's father was a prestigious Kentucky banker and a slave owner. Mary, with her finishing school education, spoke French and charmed suitors on the dance floor. The self-taught Lincoln, with his messy hair and spindly legs, felt awkward in comparison. He towered over the petite Mary, who was only five feet tall (they were "the long and short of it," he liked to say). But he was smitten, according to Mary's sister Elizabeth, and would "listen and gaze on her as if drawn by some superior power." After a year of courtship, they agreed to marry.

The Todd home in Lexington, Kentucky
Jeff Herbert

Once they became engaged, Lincoln had doubts. Mary's sister thought Lincoln an honest and sincere man but felt the two were not well suited. He wondered if he could possibly make a happy life for Mary, who loved fine things and came from such an aristocratic family (one *d*, he said, was enough for God but the Todds needed two).

They broke their engagement and Lincoln was miserable. "If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family," he wrote a friend, "there would not be one cheerful face on the earth." Springfield gossips said Lincoln was suffering "two Cat fits and a Duck fit" and had gone as "crazy as a loon." His friend Joshua Speed, who had moved to Kentucky, invited Lincoln to his family's country home for some rest and quiet.

A friend brought Mary Todd and Lincoln back together, inviting each to her home and urging them to be friends. Soon, their courtship began again—but secretly this time, away

from prying eyes and disapproving families. In the meantime, Lincoln's partnership with Stuart had dissolved. Lincoln had become a partner in Stephen T. Logan's law office and was serving his last term in the Illinois legislature.

One rainy November evening, in the parlor of her sister's home, Lincoln and Mary Todd married. They made their first home in a rented room at Springfield's Globe Tavern. Days later, Lincoln wrote a friend, "Nothing new here, except my marrying, which to me, is a matter of profound wonder."

Lincoln had come a long way from his childhood. He was a lawyer, a husband, and soon to be a father. The year after his marriage, son Robert Todd Lincoln was born. The year after that, the Lincolns bought a home, a plain house on a corner lot, with upstairs ceilings so low Lincoln couldn't stand up straight. With a well for water and a stable in back for their horse and cow, they had everything they needed. Months later, Lincoln started his own law practice and asked his friend William Herndon to join him as junior partner.

The Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices were a mess! Neither man liked to keep order. Books and papers were everywhere—in boxes, on desks, in piles on the floor. A pile on Lincoln's desk had a note on top saying "When you can't find it anywhere else, look in this." Lincoln still had a habit of putting papers in his hat, which his partner called "an extraordinary receptacle, his desk and memorandum book." They let dirt pile up in the corners and spat orange seeds on the floor. (One visitor even

EN GARDE!

"Cavalry broadswords of the largest size. A plank 10 feet long which neither is to pass his foot over upon forfeit of his life. Thursday evening at 4:00. Within three miles of Alton, on the opposite side of the river." These were the terms of a duel between Abraham Lincoln and political opponent James Shields.

The quarrel between the two men started as a prank. Letters appeared in the Springfield newspaper, signed by a country woman named "Rebecca." She had a lot to say about politicians (that with the current set in office, she soon wouldn't have a cow left to milk) and especially about state auditor James Shields (that he never told the truth or even "a good, bright, passable lie"). The letters had a good many people in Springfield laughing, but James Shields didn't like them one bit.

"Rebecca" was actually Lincoln, Mary Todd, and her friend Julia. When Shields found out Lincoln was behind the insulting letters, he challenged him to a duel. According to the long-held customs of dueling code, Lincoln was allowed to choose the weapons. He chose swords. He had no intention of hurting Shields and thought that, with his long arms, he could stay far away from his opponent and remain unhurt himself.

Both of the men and their seconds (assistants) took a coach to Alton for the duel. Just as they were about to begin, friends showed up and put a stop to the fight. Lincoln was embarrassed about the entire incident and realized he had taken the prank too far.

MAKE A STOVEPIPE HAT

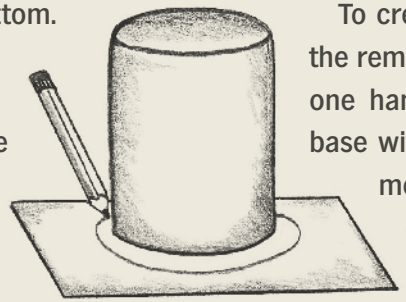
ABRAHAM LINCOLN used his tall, black stovepipe hat like a filing cabinet, keeping important letters and papers inside. What will you keep inside this stovepipe hat?

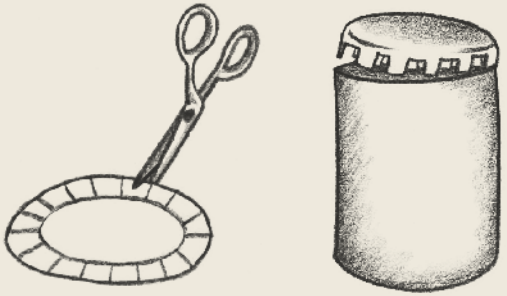
WHAT YOU NEED

- Ruler
- 2 pieces of black poster board, 22 by 28 inches
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Paper clips
- Stapler
- Clear tape
- Black ribbon, 2 inches wide and 24 inches long
- Small envelope

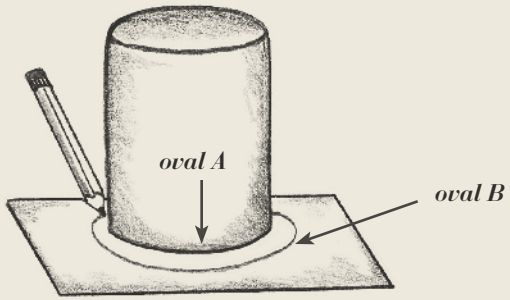
Measure a 7-by-28-inch rectangle on one piece of poster board and mark it with a pencil. Cut it out. Wrap the rectangle around your head until it fits comfortably (a little extra room is good). Paper-clip the cylinder at the top and bottom to hold it then try it on again. When you're comfortable with the fit, staple the cylinder at the top and bottom.

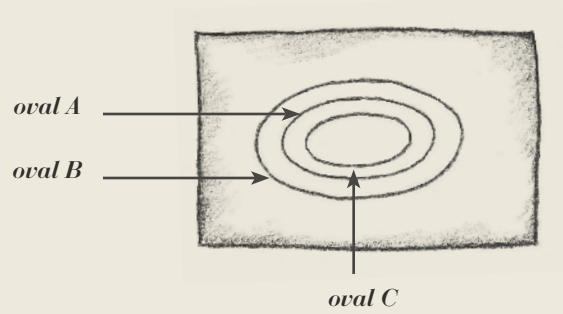
Center the cylinder on the poster board. Slightly push in on two sides of the cylinder to make it an oval shape. Hold it down with one hand while tracing an oval around the base with the other hand (or ask someone to help hold the cylinder while you trace). Remove the cylinder. Measure 1 inch out from the edge of the oval and draw another oval around the first one. Cut out along this outer oval. Cut slits from the outer oval approximately every 1 inch toward the inner oval to create tabs. Place the oval on top of the cylinder, folding the tabs inside to make a good fit. Turn the cylinder over, and tape the tabs to the inside of the cylinder.



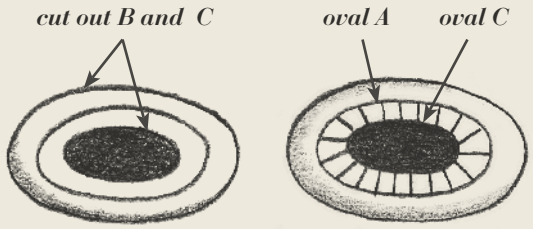


To create the brim, place the cylinder over the remaining poster board. Hold it down with one hand while tracing an oval around the base with the other hand (this is oval A). Remove the cylinder. Measure 1½ inches out from the edge of oval A and draw another oval around it (this is oval B).

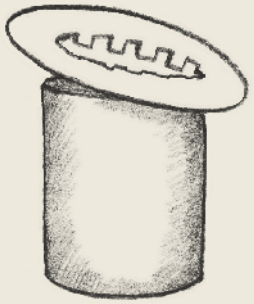




Measure 1 inch *in* from oval A and draw a third oval inside it (this is oval C). Cut around the outer oval (B), then cut along the inner oval (C). To make tabs, cut 1-inch slits from oval C to oval A.



With the cylinder covered end down, place this piece around the uncovered upper rim. Fold the tabs inside the cylinder and tape them in place.



Glue the ribbon around the base of the hat. To use your hat as a filing cabinet, cut the "v" off a small envelope, then tape the envelope to the inside of your hat. Use it to hold very important papers!

claimed that the seeds sprouted in the dirt!) But in spite of the mess, theirs was a successful partnership and one of Springfield's busiest firms.

Every spring and fall, Lincoln packed a bag, mounted his horse Old Tom, and set out across Illinois's countryside. In those days, circuit court judges traveled from one county seat to another, holding court in each place for days or weeks. To get business, lawyers "rode the circuit" too. Judge and lawyers traveled together over muddy spring roads and in the crisp autumn air. When they came to a river, the judge looked to long-legged Lincoln to find the best place to cross. They shared tavern rooms, two or three to a bed, with only the portly judge allowed a bed of his own. In the evenings, lawyers, judge, and locals sat by the fire to talk. With his gift for funny stories, Lincoln was often at the center of the crowd. His eyes sparkled when he told a joke, and he could hardly keep himself from smiling. When he got to the punch line, no one laughed harder than he did.

The inns were noisy and often not clean. As many as 20 men might share a room, sleeping on old quilts or straw. None of it bothered Lincoln much. He didn't care about comforts, about clothes or even food. One night, when an innkeeper had no bread or meat, Lincoln cheerily said, "Well, in the absence of anything

SEW A CARPETBAG

WHATEVER Lincoln couldn't fit into his hat went into a carpetbag. These handy satchels served as the suitcases, briefcases, and purses of the 1800s.

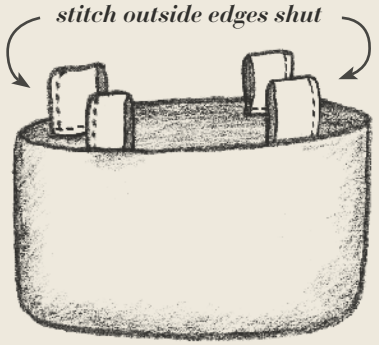
Adult supervision required

WHAT YOU NEED

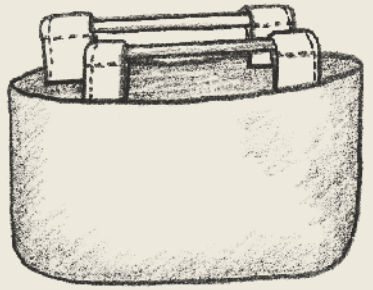
- Scissors
- 1 yard upholstery fabric
- Measuring tape
- Pins
- Needle and thread
- ⅜-inch dowel, cut into two 18-inch pieces (ask an adult to cut the dowel)
- One large button
- Marker

Cut fabric into a 24-by-24-inch square. On two opposite edges of the square, pin ½ inch of fabric to the unpatterned side of the material and stitch down. Fold in half so the patterned side faces in and the stitched edges meet. The fabric piece is now shaped like a rectangle. Stitch each of the short sides of the rectangle together, ½ inch from their edge, to make a bag. Turn the bag inside out so the pattern is on the outside.

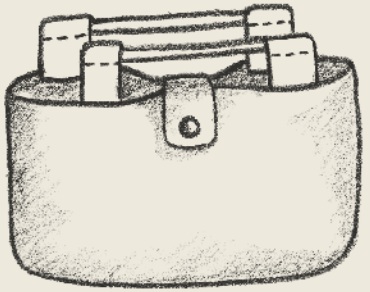
Cut four pieces out of the remaining fabric, each 8 by 5 inches. Take one of these pieces and fold one long edge toward the middle. Fold the other long edge to overlap the first so that the piece measures 2 inches across. Pin down, then stitch all three layers together. Repeat with all four pieces. These will serve as handles for the carpetbag.



Fold one of the handles in half. Pin it to the inside of one side of the bag, 2 inches from one end, then stitch it on. Fold, pin, and stitch another handle 2 inches from the other end. Then fold, pin, and stitch the two remaining handles opposite the first two, on the other side of the bag (see illustration). Stitch the outside edges of each handle together. Place the dowels inside the handles. Stitch through the fabric as close to the dowels as possible, to help keep them in place.



Cut a 5-by-5-inch piece from the remaining fabric. Fold and stitch as you did for the handles so that the piece is 5 inches long and 2 inches wide. Fold one of the short edges under ½ inch and stitch. Stitch the other short edge to the center of one side of the bag, on the inside. Sew the large button close to the edge on the opposite side of the bag from this piece. Fold the fabric piece over to close up the bag and meet the button. Use a marker to mark the place where the fabric piece meets the button. Cut through the fabric at that spot, creating a buttonhole large enough for the button to go through.



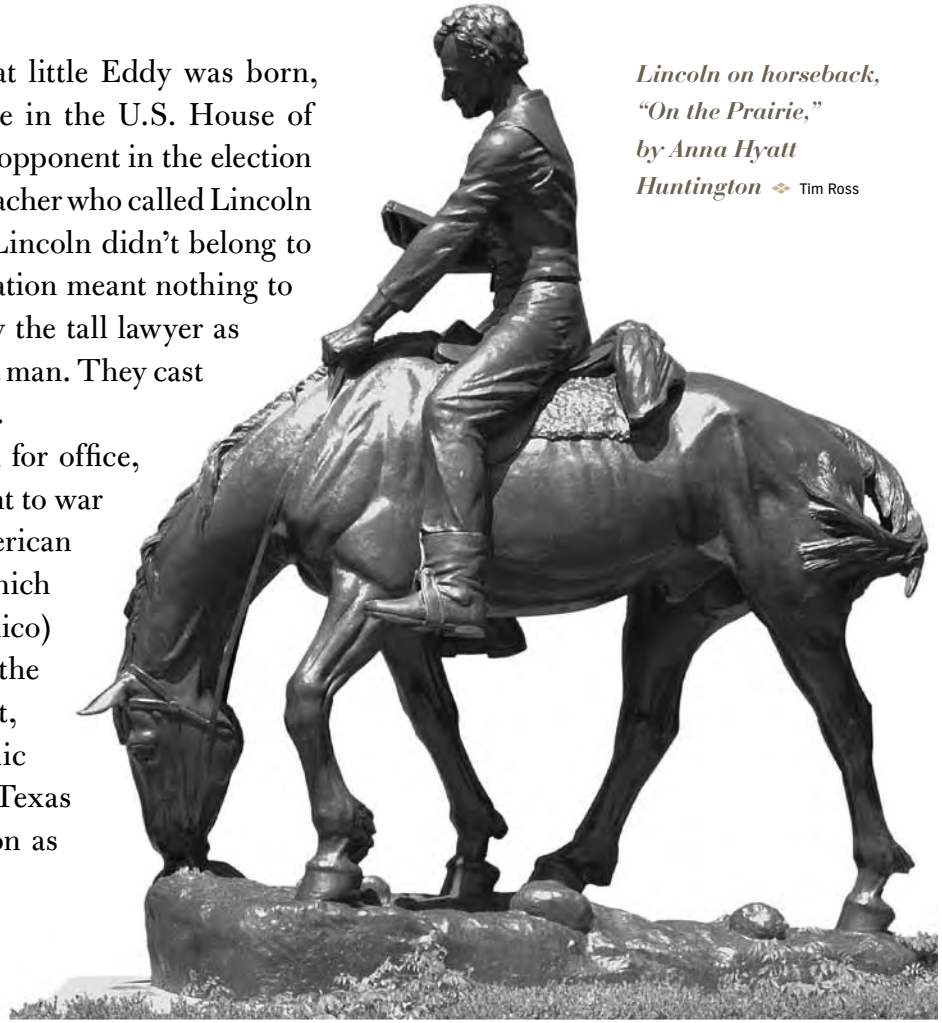
else to eat I will jump into this cabbage!" All summer long, he wore a linen duster, stained and travel-worn. In the winter, he threw a shawl over his shoulders and fastened it with a safety pin. He wrapped a cord around his umbrella to keep it shut and carried his papers in a carpetbag. He was, said another lawyer, "the ungodliest figure I ever saw."

At each new town, the lawyers met with clients whose trials were about to be held. With his intelligence, knowledge of the law, and friendly courtroom presence, Lincoln was a popular choice among the people who needed help. Once more, by traveling around the country, he got to know people and talked to them about their concerns. A man who once rode with him on the circuit said Lincoln seemed to know all the people they ran into—and their horses, too.

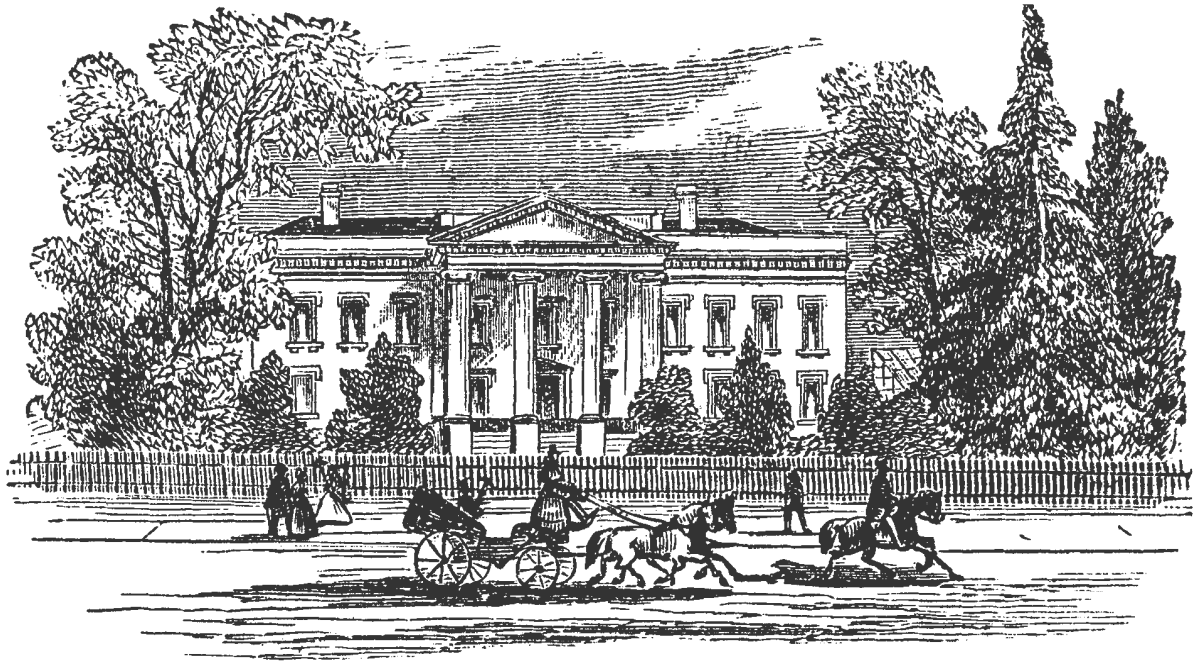
While Lincoln traveled, Mary learned how to keep house. She had been brought up as the pampered daughter of a wealthy man, but she learned to cook and clean. A string of hired girls came to help with the chores, but none of them were ever quite good enough for the quick-tempered Mary. At times her temper was directed at Lincoln. *Must* he answer the door in his stocking feet? Could he *please* read sitting in a chair and not stretched out on the floor? The worst for Mary was when Lincoln went into one of his blue spells, staring off sorrowfully into space. Mary would go into a rage, Lincoln would leave the house until she calmed down, and the neighbors would talk and talk. Still, Mary adored her husband and said he was "her all." Lincoln loved his wife, and treated her kindly and tenderly. They had another baby and named him Edward Baker Lincoln.

The same year that little Eddy was born, Lincoln ran for office in the U.S. House of Representatives. His opponent in the election was a well-known preacher who called Lincoln "an infidel" because Lincoln didn't belong to a church. The accusation meant nothing to the people who knew the tall lawyer as an honest and upright man. They cast their vote for Lincoln.

While Lincoln ran for office, the United States went to war against Mexico. American settlers in Texas (which was once part of Mexico) had rebelled against the Mexican government, created the Republic of Texas, and had Texas admitted to the Union as



Lincoln on horseback, "On the Prairie," by Anna Hyatt Huntington ❖ Tim Ross



The White House

a slave state. Later, President James K. Polk ordered soldiers to the Rio Grande River. A skirmish broke out between American and Mexican soldiers over land claimed by both countries. Polk declared war.

As American soldiers marched to Mexico, the Lincoln family packed their belongings and moved to Washington. Mary tried to make a nice home in their modest boarding-house room, but she was lonely and unhappy, and the boys were restless. She moved with the children to her father's home in Lexington, Kentucky. Left alone, Lincoln wrote affectionate letters to his wife, sending his love to her and his "dear rascals." He studied nights at the Library of Congress or bowled with friends. He made friends with Alexander Stephens, a slight man from Georgia whose speeches brought tears to Lincoln's eyes.

Congressman Lincoln served on committees, answered petitions from his constituents, made speeches, and sent copies of them to the folks back home. Speaking in Congress, he wrote to Herndon, was just like speaking in court. "I was about as badly scared," he said, "and no worse." A newspaper praised one of Lincoln's speeches, saying, "He kept the House in a continuous roar of merriment." Another speech upset people and earned him the nickname of "Spotty Lincoln." In it, he called on the president to name the exact spot where the war had begun. President Polk claimed it was in United States territory but Lincoln believed Polk had lied about the spot in order to start a war. Speaking out against the war was considered unpatriotic. Lincoln was even called "traitorous" by an Illinois newspaper.

During his second year in Congress, Lincoln worked on a bill to end slavery in the District of Columbia, but his efforts came to nothing. He thought it was a terrible thing that slavery existed in the capital of a country dedicated to liberty. Lincoln proposed compensated emancipation for the slaves of Washington, D.C., meaning that their owners would be paid for the price of the freed slaves.

"Naturally anti-slavery," was how Lincoln described himself, saying, "I cannot remember when I did not so think, and feel." He wrote to a friend about having seen a group of "10 or a dozen slaves, shackled together with irons" on a trip along the Ohio River. "That sight was a continual torment to me," he said, "and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio, or any other slave border."

In spite of that torment, Lincoln felt that the best way to end slavery was gradually. Pushing for the end of what Southerners called their "peculiar institution" created deep divisions between the two sections of the country. Lincoln thought that by working through the law to keep slavery restricted to those states where it already existed, it would die a natural death. Cotton crops exhausted the soil. Plantation

IN THE HEADLINES

Lincoln followed political events closely and read several newspapers every day. With new states forming and Southerners threatening to secede, there was excitement in the news.

1848: Peace with Mexico! The peace treaty with Mexico brought vast new territories to the United States, including parts of present-day Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah.

1848: Gold! After gold was discovered in California, fortune-hunters raced to the West. American settlers there quickly applied for statehood.

1850: Compromise Reached! The Compromise of 1850 tried to please Southerners and Northerners alike. It admitted California as a free state, allowed the settlers of the New Mexico and Utah territories to decide for themselves about slavery, and banned the practice of selling slaves in the District of Columbia. A strong Fugitive Slave Act made capture more likely for escaped slaves.

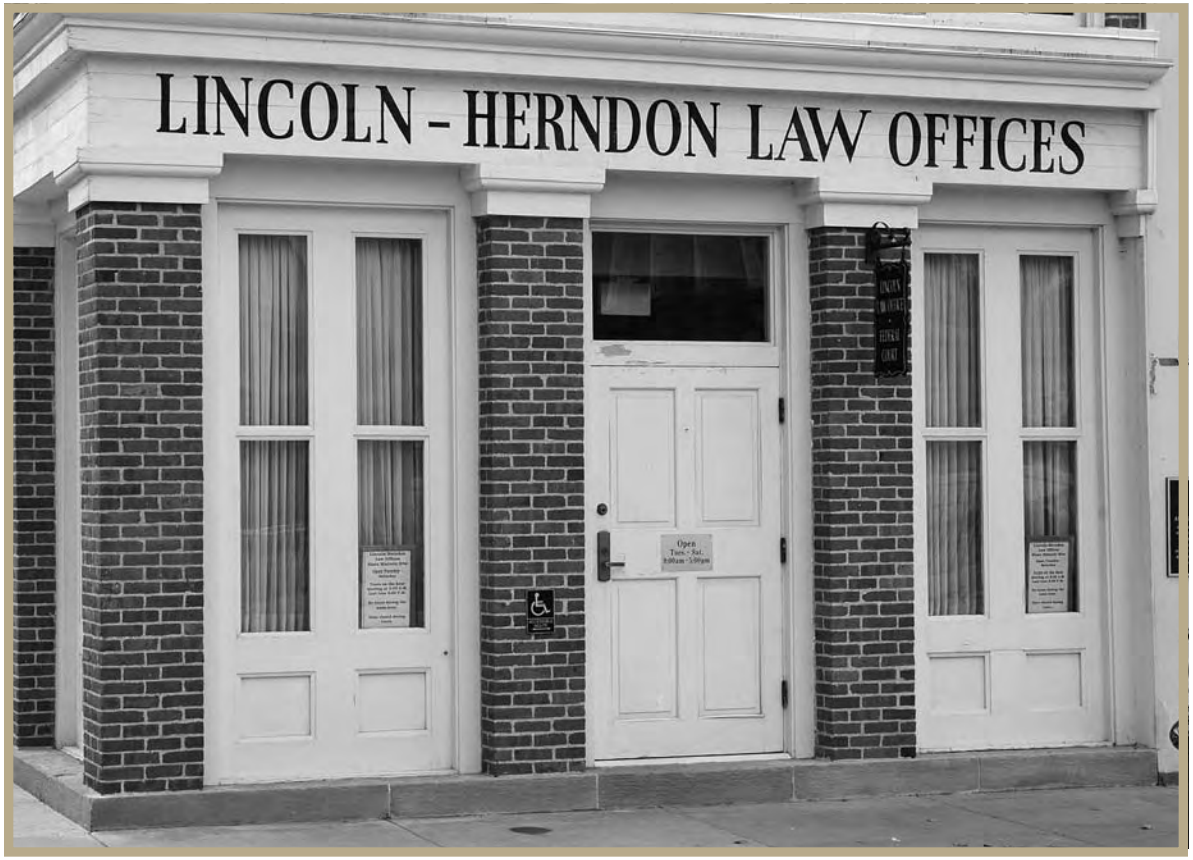
1850: "Rough and Ready" Dies! When Mexican war hero and U.S. president Zachary Taylor died, Millard Fillmore became the new president.

1852: Mother of Six Writes Best-Seller! Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a moving story about the plight of slaves, sold 300,000 copies in its first year. It was read by everyone, including England's Queen Victoria. Southerners called the book abolitionist propaganda.

"How hard it is to die and leave one's country no better than if one had never lived for it."

—Abraham Lincoln to partner William Herndon

The Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices as a museum today ❖ Tim Ross



owners, in order to raise new crops, continually moved with their slaves to make plantations on new land. If they were restricted in where they could hold slaves, eventually, perhaps, they would give up on the institution.

During Lincoln's term in Congress, there were many angry arguments about slavery, especially about a bill called the Wilmot Proviso, which called for slavery to be excluded in any territory acquired from Mexico. Congressmen shouted and scuffled. Two of them even got into a fistfight! The bill was defeated.

When his term ended, Lincoln was offered the governorship of the Oregon Territory. He turned it down. Mary didn't like the idea of living in the wild western lands. Little Eddy was ill, and the move would be hard on him. The family settled back into their life in Springfield and Lincoln returned to his law office, sure that his political life had reached its end.

Lincoln and Herndon moved to a bigger (but no cleaner) office and their business grew, along with Lincoln's reputation as a masterful and honest lawyer. "Honest Abe," people called him. One judge thought so highly of him that when the judge was not available, he asked Lincoln to rule on the cases.

William Herndon also thought the world of his partner, but he got annoyed when Lincoln read out loud. He laughed at Lincoln's jokes, even when Lincoln told the same joke to two

or three visitors in a row, but he rolled his eyes when Lincoln sprawled out on the couch, with his long legs over two chairs, to read the newspapers.

Herndon hated it when Lincoln's children came to the office to visit. The boys pushed papers on the floor, emptied inkstands, and danced on the mess. Lincoln, an indulgent parent, just laughed. He took them home, carrying them on his shoulders. His boys adored him, and the neighborhood children loved tall Mr. Lincoln too. When he appeared, they ran and jumped on him and knocked his hat off in play. He rewarded their pranks with cookies. He played marbles with the older boys, gave the little ones "horseback" rides, and took everyone to the circus.

The Lincolns cherished their children. They agonized when young Eddy got sick, and their hearts were broken when, after a long illness, he died. They welcomed a new baby, William Wallace, not long after. Two and a half years later, their youngest boy was born. They named him after Lincoln's father, Thomas, who had died a couple of years earlier. Young Thomas Lincoln looked like a tadpole, his father said, and the nickname "Tad" stuck.

Lincoln had been out of office for nearly five years and said he was "losing interest in politics." His business was thriving and his family settled into their life in Springfield. But one day he read a newspaper article describing the Kansas-Nebraska Act, a bill introduced in Congress by his old rival, now a senator, Stephen A. Douglas. This bill would repeal the Missouri Compromise, which outlawed slavery in the North. Instead, residents of Kansas and Nebraska would vote on whether their future states would be slave or free. Lincoln was shocked, stunned, and, finally, driven to act.

A COURTROOM DRAMA

Attorney Lincoln took all kinds of cases and clients, from personal bankruptcy to patents to railroad business. One of his most famous cases involved the son of his old New Salem friend Jack Armstrong. Young "Duff" Armstrong was accused of murder. A witness said he clearly saw the attack at 11:00 P.M. on a bright, moonlit night. Lincoln asked the witness to tell the story again and again, inviting him to share every detail. The witness said there was no mistaking Duff's attack by the light of the full moon, which was high in the sky. Lincoln then pulled out an almanac showing that the moon had nearly set by the time the witness claimed the attack occurred. Duff Armstrong was found "not guilty."

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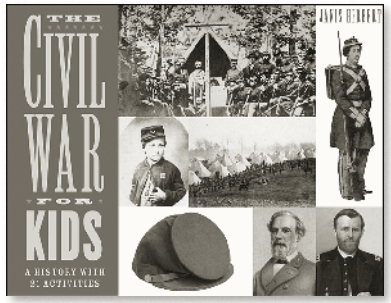

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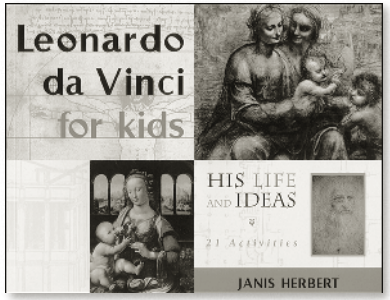

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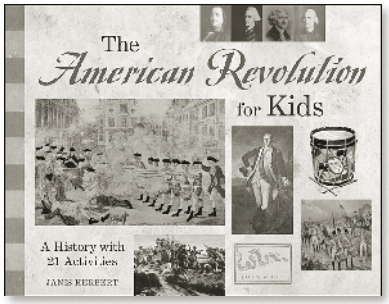

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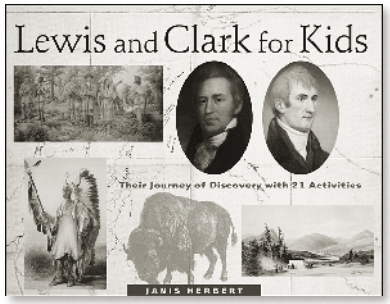

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Janis Herbert is the author of *The Civil War for Kids, Leonardo da Vinci for Kids, The American Revolution for Kids, Lewis and Clark for Kids,* and *Marco Polo for Kids.*

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