

Recollection of 1881–82

Rev. N. W. Miner's "Personal Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln"

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Rev. Noyes W. Miner, D.D. (1818–1893), a native of Connecticut, sits more firmly in the Lincoln story since the Leonard Volk cabinet bust he mentions came to the auction block four generations later, in 2022, and was purchased, then gifted to the Lincoln Presidential Library. In 2019 the Bible from a Philadelphia ladies charity was gifted there directly by Miner's descendants.

A Baptist, he was the first reader at Lincoln's funeral in Oak Ridge Cemetery, Springfield. His sister, Hannah Shearer, with whose family he lived for a year at 8th and Jackson, received at least 11 letters from Mary Lincoln in 1859–64, among the most revealing of any Mary wrote about her family's life; and Mary wrote him 5 pleading letters in early 1882 to intervene with Congress for her pension.

The 55 holograph leaves of lined paper transcribed here show a variously clear, tired, or distracted hand, and, similarly, while some of Rev. Miner's stories are disprovable now, or have dates slightly at variance with the known record, other of his personal experiences and quotations add materially to our knowledge. This 'lecture' he first composed in 1881, modified it a week before Mary Lincoln died in 1882, and he later lectured in at least one Fifth Avenue church in New York.¹

1. Wayne C. Temple, *Abraham Lincoln: From Skeptic to Prophet*, 3rd ed. (Mahomet, Ill.: Mayhaven Pub., 2013), pp. 53–54, 87–88, 192–93, 343; Turner and Turner, eds., *Mary Todd Lincoln: Her Life and Letters* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972); Charles V. Darrin, "Robert Todd Lincoln and a Family Friendship," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 44:3 (Autumn 1951), pp. 210–17. Rev. Miner is *not* named in reference works by Mark E. Neely, Jr., and Norman F. Boas or in histories by David H. Donald and Doris K. Goodwin.

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Personal Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln is the subject to which I invite your attention in the following address. He was a near neighbor of mine for a number of years, and a warm personal friend. What we have to say to you about that Great and Good man, will not be taken at second hand. There will be no quotations from books, pamphlets, or documents—no attempt at oratory, eloquence, or rhetoric, but I shall confine myself to a narration of facts that have come within my personal knowledge. For the information I shall impart to you in the present Lecture I am indebted, for the most part, to President Lincoln and his wife.

First Acquaintance

On the 19th day of January 1855 I passed over the Chicago Alton and St. Louis Rail Road to Springfield Illinois. It was my first visit West. At that time the houses and villages on the line of the Road were few and wide apart; and the sight of the wide rolling prairies, bounded on all sides only by the horizon, had the appearance of the vast ocean, and filled my mind with emotions of sublimity. Having been born and brought up among the rocks and hills of New England, where the farms are small, and the meadows are divided from the pastures by stone walls; the sight of so much land, rich and productive, lying in common, in its virgin state, without a building, or a fence, or a tree, or stone in sight, made a deep impression on my mind.

The day, I remember, was dark and dreary. The sky was overcast with thick clouds which seemed to hang low, and the chilly, murky atmosphere, and the rising wind which came howling over the great vast prairies all indicated the coming on of a great storm. It burst upon the country at midnight, with a fury, which never before or since, has been experienced by the people in central Illinois. The mercury sank rapidly from above freezing point to twenty-two degrees below Zero. Snow fell to the depth of between two and three feet, and was so badly drifted by the wind, which blew a perfect gale, that not a train of cars passed over the road, after my arrival in Springfield for nearly six weeks. The Legislature, which was in session, having taken a recess, for the purpose of visiting the state institutions, was overtaken by the storm, and blocked by the snow, on the distant prairies, far from any human dwelling, where for days they remained without fuel and on short rations till they nearly perished by hunger and cold. The good people of Springfield, being anxious for their safety, assembled at the State House, to talk over the situation and to devise some way by

which they might be brought back to the Capitol in sleighs, a distance of about seventy miles.

It was at this meeting I first saw Abraham Lincoln. Like Saul, the first King of Israel, he stood head and shoulders above the people. A friend pointed him out to me with the remark, "that tall ~~ugly~~ homely looking man you see talking with a crowd of listeners around him, is Abraham Lincoln, who a few days ago came within one vote of being elected United States Senator." The Hon. Lyman Trumbul was the successful candidate.

Had Mr. Lincoln at that time been elected United States Senator, he, in all probability, would never have had that famous debate with Judge Douglas,—never have been invited by the Young Men's Republican Club of the City of New York, to deliver his great speech in Cooper Union, and never have become President. I was much struck with the honest face and noble bearing of the man, but the thought never entered my head, that he who had interested me so much at first sight, was to become, in the course of a few years, the most remarkable and renowned man of the age—that he would be elevated to the Presidency, and by the Providence of God proclaim liberty to more than four millions of bondmen.

In April of the same year, I moved to Springfield, and rented a house in the same street, on a corner opposite to the residence of Mr Lincoln. Being a near neighbor, I soon became acquainted with him, and saw him almost daily. I became a frequent visitor to his home, and he occasionally visited mine. Sympathising with him in his religious and political views, [*caret*: and admiring his moral integrity], I was drawn towards him and took special pains to cultivate his acquaintance, and as the years rolled on a friendship sprang up between us, close and intimate, which continued till the close of his eventful life. I have in my possession many proffs of his love and friendship which are so highly prized by me that no wealth could buy.

In the Century Magazine for Dec. 1881 there is an interesting article, written by Mr. Volk a Chicago Sculptor, about taking the life cast of President Lincoln. The cabinet size bust, which he minutely describes, and which he brought from Chicago to Springfield and presented to Mr. & Mrs Lincoln on the evening he was notified officially of his nomination as the candidate of the Republican party for President, I have in my possession. Mr. Lincoln sent his servant with it to my house as a present from him; the morning he left Springfield for Washington, the last time, a few hours before he asked his old friends & neighbors, in taking leave of them, to pray for him. I have also an elegant Bible

which was presented to Mr. Lincoln by the Ladies of Philadelphia, and after his assassination was sent to me by Mrs Lincoln. On one side of the Bible is printed in gold letters, "Presented to Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States by the Ladies citizens voluntary hospital association of Philadelphia;" and on the other, "Mrs. Abraham Lincoln to Rev N.W. Miner D.D., with the date of the gift. I received a note with it from Mrs. Lincoln, saying she sent the Bible to me on account of the love & friendship her husband had for me. An Englishman called at my home, one day, to see it. Looking it over very carefully he asked me if I would take a thousand dollars for it. What, said I, Sell that Bible! I could not part with it at any price. What would the world say of me if I were to sell the Bible once belonging to Mr Lincoln, and given to me under such circumstances. I shall never part with that Bible ~~only on~~ except upon one consideration. What is that he inquired? If I were starving for want of Bread, and there was no other way to get it, I might part with it. But that good Book assures me that "my bread shall be given me," and I think I shall not part with the Bible.

Mr Lincoln as a Neighbor

We found Mr. Lincoln a delightful neighbor. Always kind, obliging, affable, full of sympathy and benevolence. There were times when my house was full to overflowing with delegates coming from long distances to attend Associations, and Sunday School Conventions. At such times Mr. Lincoln would either come over himself, or send a servant with the request that a part of my company spend the night with him. He also, without my asking, furnished me with the free use of his horse and carriage for years, which greatly aided me in my church work, and "Bob," as he was then called, but now the Hon. Robert T. Lincoln, Secretary of War, used to clean the carriage and harness the horse for me and he did well! He is a worthy son of his noble father—talented, well educated, modest but firm;—He has many of the excellent traits of his illustrious father—though he has not his fathers genius. And it would not be at all surprising, if some day, our country should have another President by the name of Lincoln!

President Lincoln was a great lover of children, and he loved his neighbors children too. Many a time we have seen troops of children, living on the same street, run out to meet him, when he was coming to his meals, and would gambol by his side, and as many as could get

hold of him, would swing from his hands. He had a kind word and a smile for all. When death came into the families of his neighbors, he would attend the funerals, and was prompt to express his sympathy with them in their sorrows. He was on good terms with every body, and those who knew him best loved him most.

Mr. Lincoln was a great Comoner. He was emphaticly a man of the people. Having known what it was to toil and struggle with poverty in early life, he knew how to feel and did feel with the toiling masses. He said to me on one occasion, "I have seen a good deal of the back side of this world." ~~After he was~~ When elevated to the office of President, he carried with him to that high office the same loving, condescending disposition. He delighted to come down from his high position and make the people feel that he still had a heart that could feel for them in their toils and trials. We remember riding out with the President in an open carriage, through the streets of Washington, during the war. The streets were filled with officers and soldiers. When we drove past an officer an officer of high rank, or a member of Congress, he would wave the hand and say good morning, and then remark that was General so and so, or that man is a member of the House or Senate; but when we drove past a soldier standing on duty pacing his weary beat, and he presented arms to the President, he would, inveribly, rise partially from his seat, take off his hat, and make a low bow to the common soldier.

A poor widow woman came to my study one day, while I was pastor in Springfield, and said, "Mr. Miner I wish you would write to President Lincoln and ask him if he wont dismiss George from the service. Philip is dead, (She had two sons who both entered the service of their country,) My aged mother is sick and I know not how I can get along without George." I said to her, I think Mr. Lincoln would grant your request if it was any other time. Mr. Lincoln is in Richmond to-day. That city has fallen into the hands of the Union Army, and General Lee, hard press by General Grant, will doubless surrender to day or to morrow. The country is full of excitement. The war will soon be over. I do not think the President would find time to write a letter to dismiss George just now. Well she said I wish you would write him anyway. I wrote the letter as requested, and stated to the President the urgency of the case. Two days after the assassination, I received a letter from the martyred Lincoln a ~~letter~~ containing the order to dismiss George from the army, requesting me to forward the order to his commanding officer. Now for a man occupying the position of President at this time, when he was receiving the congratulations of the nation—the

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he presented arms to the President, he would, inevitably, rise partially from his seat, take off his hat and make a low bow to the Common Soldier.

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Figure 1. A typical page, no. 13, of Miner's holograph. Courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

very hour of his triumph,—to stop to write a letter for the dismissal of a poor widows Son from the army—because she was in trouble, is a most remarkable instance of benifience and condescention.²

Mr. Lincoln was as a Temperance Man

Mr. Lincoln was a Temperance Man, out an out. He neith used liquor himself, nor would furnish it for others. Gen. Brayman, who was a member of my church, a life long friend of Mr Lincoln, who used to practice law with him as early as 1837, told me he never knew Mr Lincoln to touch a drop of liquor, tho. it was customary, at that time, for almost every body to drink.

This was owing, doubtless, to the instruction of his [*caret: pious*] mother. His father and mother were members of the ~~regular~~ Baptist Church in good and regular standing. They were good and pious people, and set a good example for their Son to copy. Mr. Lincoln's father could neithe read nor write. He was a man of good strong common sense—a man of energy and decision of character and abhorred slavery. It was on this account he sold his farm at a discount and removed [*caret: Kentucky*] to Illinois. Mr. Lincoln's mother could read, though her education was limited.³ In character, and decided religious convictions, she semes to have resembled very strongly the mother of President Garfield. The only books which they had in their log cabin home, were a Bible and a spelling book. They lived in the wilds of Kentucky, deprived almost entirely of religious and educational privileges. They revered the Lord's day, and it was the custom of the family to keep it in a scriptural manner. When the necessary work, on their little farm, was done, they would sit together in their little cabin, and the mother would read from after hour from the Bible to her husband an little son. In this way young Abraham learned [*caret: to love*] the stories of the Bible, and he became familiar with its history before he could read. His mother taught him the Ten

2. These are probably Philip (1845–1865) and George (1846–1909) Dinkel, who grew up a block from the Lincolns; at 15 Philip was living and working in the Lincoln household, according to the 1860 census. Their widowed mother Barbara and her three children were indeed members of Rev. Miner's church at 7th and Adams, but Miner's chronology is awry: Philip suffered from tuberculosis from October 1864 till his death 12 months later. No such letter from Lincoln for George (discharged in July 1865) has appeared. Wayne C. Temple, *The Dinkels and the Lincolns* (Springfield, Ill.: ALA, 2020), pp. 4, 16, 25.

3. Evidence today supports the opposite view: Thomas Lincoln was literate, Nancy Lincoln was not.

Commandments which he committed to memory. There were three lesson, especially, which this good woman took unwearied pains to impress upon the mind of her boy. [*caret*: She taught better than she knew.] 1st. never to swear. 2d never to lie. 3d never to drink alcoholic liquors. She used to emphasise the third Commandment. "Though shalt not taken the name of the Lord thy God in vain." My son neve profane God's name. It is cowardly, mean, and wicked. It is unmanly to do so, Never sware. So, too, she would emphasise the ~~eleventh~~ 9th Commandment. "Though shalt not bear fals witness against thy neighbor." My son never tell a lie. Always tell the truth. No one thinks well of a person who tells falshoods. You can never be a great, and good man, and have the confidence and respect of your fellow men unless you tell the truth. So also, in regard to the third lesson she taught that son. Again, and again, she charged him never to drink intoxicating liquors. There was a man living in their little community, who when sober was a good neighbor; but when he was drunk as he frequently was, he was abusive and profane. He would beat his wife and children and he was a terror to his neighbors. Mrs. Lincoln, at such times, would point out to her son the drunken man and then say, it is whisky that makes that man act so. My son never drink liquors. They have cast down many strong men, and they may ruin you. How well this noble woman succeeded in the instruction she imparted to her son we, know from the history of the boy when he became a man. Mr. Lincoln was never known to profane the name of God, was never known to tell a lie, and was never known to drink a glass of intoxicating liquor.

We have attended many entertainments at his home, when the most distinguished politicians, lawyers, and judges of the state were present, and at such times the tables would be loaded with the choicest viands, but nothing that would intoxicate was ever provided. After he was nominated for the presidency, he was informed by telegraph, that a special committee appointed by the Convention, with the Hon. George Ashmon as chairman, would visit him on the evening of the following day to notify him officially of his nomination. Some of the State officers of Illinois waited on Mr. Lincoln, and urged him, for once, to wave his objection to liquors and have them on the tables at the entertainment that was to be given to the Committee. They insisted that it was the custom on such occasions to have wines and other liquors; that it might make him unpopular with some of the members of the committee if he did not furnish it &c. And finally they told him if he would only give his consent they would bring it and take away after the entertainment was over, and

he might have nothing to do about it. Mr Lincoln listened attentively to what they had to say and then returned this answer. "You are old and valued friends, and neighbors. You worked hard to secure my nomination. I am grateful to you, and would do any thing which I conceive to be right to serve you. You have attended many entertainments at my house, and I have neve in a single instance furnished liquors, and I cannot on this occasion, even if I were to lose my election by so doing." Mr. Lincoln was a temperance man, and an anti slavery man, simply because he believed it would wrong for him to be otherwise.

Mr. Lincoln as a Lawyer

Mr. Lincoln was a lawyer by profession. And he was a very able lawyer too. He stood in the first rank among the able lawyers in the West in his day. I never saw a man who had such power over a Jury. Whenever he gave a deffinition of the law on any point, they believed he gave a right interpretation. Whenever he stated a fact bearing on the case being tried, they believed he told the truth. It was this honesty that gave him his great power. He was strait forward in his practice. Neve exorbitant in his charges, but always graduating his fees according to the value of the service rendered. There was no intrigue, or clap trap about him. He was an honor to his great profession, and acquired for himself the appropriate title of "honest Old Abe." He told me that ~~he that~~ he would never take a case in court unless he though there was merit in it. I remember during my residence in Springfield, that a woman was arested and put on trial for the murder of her husband who was found dead in his door yard. She sent for Mr Lincoln to come and see her. She declared she was innocent and requested him to undertake her case. He did so. But as the trial progressed, the evidence, which was all circumstantial, seemed to favor the prosecution. This caused him great anxiety, and he said to me that he feared he was on the wrong side. But before the trial was ended, the testimony was clearly in favor of the woman's innocence, and she was acquitted. He frequently advised persons not to go to law—to settle their differences among themselves, and if they could not to leave the matter to arbitration.

A gentleman living near Springfield, a wealthy farmer, said to me one day, Mr. Miner, Do you know what made me, a life long democrat, vote for Mr. Lincoln to be President? I said no. Well I will tell you. "Some years ago I got into a quarrell with my neighbor. Our farms lay join each other. We could not settle our difficulty and we

resolved to go to law. I came into Springfield early one morning to engage Mr. Lincoln as my counsel. My neighbor had anticipated me and was already closeted with Mr Lincoln when I arrived. I waited till they had finished their conference, when Mr. Lincoln came out his private room. He greeted me cordially as if we were all old friends, and then he said, "I am sorry you and your neighbor have got into difficulty. He has told me his story, now let me hear your side." After stating my case to him as clearly as possibly, he said, Well you have a pretty good case to take into the courts. But why do you wish to go to law. If you take this case into courts, one will be sure to get his case, and then the other will appeal, and before the matter is settled the lawyers will have all your property. And that is not the worst of it. A quarrel will be engendered among your families which may well result in a murder some day. Now my advice is not to go to law but to settle your difficulty here before you go home. We talked ~~talked~~ the matter over ~~till noon~~ without agreement till noon, when Mr Lincoln said he must go to dinner, but would meet us again, and added as he went out, that you may not be disturbed I will lock the door, and suiting the action to his words he locked us in, and putting the key in his pocket walked away, and we did not see him again till towas evening. Left to ourselves, confined in an upper room, with no way to get out without breaking down the door, we could but laugh at the joke he had perpetrated upon us. Being left to ourselves, we had time for reflection, and so good naturedly we went over the whole ground of difficulty, and we came to the conclusion, that it would be best for us and our families to follow the advice of Mr. Lincoln, to keep out of law, settle our differences and become friends. So when Mr Lincoln returned he drew writings of agreement which we signed, and we returned to our homes friends and have been friends ever since.

So when Mr Lincoln was nominated for the Presidency, I came to the conclusion there was one honest lawyer at least and that he would make a good president, and that was the reason why I voted for honest old Abe."

Lincoln and Douglas

Passing over the great debate of Lincoln and Douglas, in which I as a citizen of Illinois took a deep interest, and the remarkable campaign of 1860 which result in the Election of Mr. Lincoln, the secession of the Southern States and the war for the union, all of which have passed

into history we will come now to speak of Mr. Douglas relations to Mr. Lincoln during the short time he was permitted to have after the commencement of the war. The information in regard to this remarkable alliance was furnished me by Mr. Lincoln himself and which, so far as I know, has never been published.

It is a well known fact that Mr. Lincoln entered Washington in the disguise of a highland Scotchman. This was done for prudential reasons, fearing he might be assassinated. In proof of this statement I will quote from a letter which I have in my possession, written by Col. Ward H. Lamon to President Hayes on this subject. Col. Lamon was one of Mr. Lincoln's party who accompanied him from Springfield to Washington. Col Lamon says in his letter to Ex President Hayes. "At the time President Lincoln was at Trenton en route to Washington in 1861 Hon William L. Dayton brought a letter from Mr. Temple to Mr Lincoln's room setting forth the fact, of a plot, for the assassination in Baltimore, and urging him to change the programme and either go secretly through Baltimore or to go around that city. Mr Dayton stated, that the writer of the letter Mr. Temple was a gentleman of the highest respectability and integrity. This letter caused us to change our plans and it was well we did. I have always believed that the timely warning given by Mr Temple saved Mr. Lincoln's life at that time." Instead of going from Philadelphia to Baltimore the President and his party went to Harrisburg, and the time for going through Baltimore was unknown to the would be assassins of the President at that period.

Mr. Lincoln arrived at Washington very early in the morning, just at the break of day. The first man to meet me, said Mr. Lincoln whom I knew was Judge Douglas. He had intimation of his early arrival and came to meet, and welcome his old friend. For though opposed to each other politically they had always been personal friends. He greeted the President very warmly, "Saying good morning, Mr President. You are my President, and I have come to offer you my services. I have lived for a long time in Washington, and am better acquainted with the people and with those who sympathise with secession than you are, and whatever ability or influence I possess are at your disposal. How generous, how patriotic, how manly and noble in one who had been opposed to Mr. Lincoln in politics and by whom he had been defeated. Whatever mistakes Judge Douglas may have made in early life Politically, his last days, like those of Lord Byron's which he spent in aiding the Greeks to obtain their liberty, more than makes amends for all.

Mr Lincoln was deeply moved in this conversation, with me, in reference to Douglas. He invited him to seat in his carriage, they rode together to Willards Hotel, and from that day he was a frequent visitor and an intimate advisor to the President.

On the day of Mr. Lincoln's inauguration Judge Douglas called early in the morning and requested permission to ride with him in his carriage, remarking if any harm were to come to the President he wished to share it with him: and if he were to be shot he wanted the bullet of the assassin to first pass through his own body! I had this statement from Mr. Lincoln's own lips. It is a most remarkable example of disinterested friendship and love for one's country! His request was granted. He rode to the inauguration with his friend; stood by his side, and held his hat, while Mr. Lincoln read his first Inaugural address which thrilled the loyal heart of the world.

When Fort Sumter was fired on, Mr. Lincoln wrote his proclamation calling out 75000 volunteers. Before the ink was fairly dry on the paper Judge Douglas came in. Mr. Lincoln read it to him. Douglas said Well Mr. President that will do to begin with. There are more men than we can arm and equip at the present time, but he added, it will take more than a million of men to put down this rebellion. Douglas asked when will this proclamation be published? The President replied this afternoon. Douglas said. "The first troops that will start for the Capitol will come from Massachusetts. They will reach Baltimore to morrow noon. There they will be opposed, and trouble will ensue; and for some time to come we shall not be able to get troops to Washington through that city." And then he added, as they were seated opposite to each other at the table, "If you will hand me that sheet of paper, I will sketch a map showing the rout by which we must take troops to the Capitol." I mention this, said Mr. Lincoln, to show the wonderful sagacity of the man, and then he added, with deep emotion, O, if Douglas could have only lived, he would have been of great service to me and the country." All these predictions of Judge Douglas proved to be literally true.

A few days after this, Douglas called again on the President, and said, some of the people in Southern Illinois, and in Indiana, are acting very badly; troops are being raised there for the Southern Confederacy; and I fear an effort will be made to carry those States out of the Union. Dont you think it would be a good plan for me, having been a life long Democrat, to go there and make a few speeches in favor of the Union. The President replied that he thought such a measure, wise, and important, and said to him if he would go and perform that service for the country he would be greatly obliged to him. Verry well

replied Douglas, I will take the first train in the morning. "Good bye, Mr. President.

And here, Mr Lincoln was for a moment completely overcome. I never saw him so deeply moved. But after a little he commanded his feelings, and said, "That was the last time I ever saw poor Douglas!"

Mr Douglas came West, and spoke to large crowds of people in Southern Illinois and in Indiana, and imparted much strength to the Union cause, and then came to Springfield. The Legislature was in session. A public meeting was advertised to be held in the evening at the State House, and that Judge Douglas would speak. Illinois loved him. He was the idol of the Democratic party. Large numbers crowd[ed] the Capitol. We went early and got a seat near by him. We have heard Daniel Webster, and Rufus Choate, and Wendal Philips, and other great orators, but the speech of Judge Douglas on this occasion excelled in its eloquence and its effect on the people any thing to which we ever listened. His allusion to the old flag, as it floated from the dome of the Capitol on that cold winter's night:—his noble utterances for the Union of the States, brought that vast multitude to their feet, and waving their hats, cheer after cheer, ~~went up~~ long, and loud, went up for the old flag and the Union, and for the first and only time in my life, I hurraed in a public meeting, and the ladies in the galary catching the inspiration of the scene horraed too, and swing their muffs around their heads, they threw them over the galary on to the floor of the house—such was the effect of what is known as Douglas great Speech. Up to this time the parties in Springfield, for an against the movement of the South were about equally divided. But at the close of the speech, the tide set in strongly in favor of the Union, and thousands of Illinois' bravest and best men belonging to the Democratic party, enlisted for the war and fought it out to the bitter end.

Judge Douglas went from Springfield next day to Chicago, made one more great speech for the Union, equal in its effect to the one in Springfield, and in a few days after died.

I am glad of the opportunity of relating these interesting facts as communicated to me by President Lincoln concerning one of American's greatest Statesman. Lincoln and Douglas both belonged to Illinois, and within her borders repose their honored dust. Lincoln lies intombed in the beautiful semitary, Oak Ridge, near the City of Springfield, and Douglas in a beautiful Park, barring his own name in the City of Chicago, overlooking the waters of Lake Michigan. The people who honored them wile living have shown this love for them though dead, by building stately monuments to make the places where sleep their mortal remains.

Lincoln's Religious Character

A few years ago, a life of President Lincoln was written and published by William H. Herndon Esq of Springfield Illinois. This book is ~~untruthful~~ in many things and is calculated to mislead those who are unacquainted with the President. Mr. Herndon I knew intimately; his wife and children were members of my church, and I was a visitor to his family. His wife was an estimable Christian woman, but Mr. Herndon was an avowed infidel; and one object of his book was to show that infidelity could produce a great and good character like Lincoln. Now what we have to say further ~~in our lecture~~ will have a bearing on this point; and we will not give our opinion. That might not satisfy some of you; but we will let the martyred President speak for himself; and we think his own testimony will settle the matter of his infidelity beyond dispute.

At the time Mr Lincoln was elected president, I do not think he was what is termed an Experimental Christian. I used to see him sometimes at the funerals of his old neighbors, but he was not constant in his attendance at public worship. But during my long and intimate acquaintance with him and the many conversations I had with him on numerous subjects, I never heard a word fall from his lips that gave me even the remotest idea that his mind was even tinctured with infidel sentiments. But on the contrary, the more intimate I became acquainted with him, the more deeply was I impressed with the conviction that he believed completely in the overriding providence of God, but in the Divinity of the Bible, and had a profound reverence for every thing that was true and note and good. After the Election of Mr. Lincoln to the Presidency, he seemed to ~~have~~ fully comprehended the vast responsibility of his high office and the dangers and difficulties he would have to encounter in the discharge of his duties. This led him to serious reflection; and feeling that he was not able to discharge those duties on his own wisdom and strength, he asked Christians to pray for him that he might be guided by wisdom from on high.

In the early part of the winter of 1861 in view of the threatening attitude of the southern states in passing the ordinance of secession a national Fast was appointed by President Buchanan. The day, I remember, was generally observed in Springfield. The meeting was held in the First Bresbyterian Church, and largely attended by the most respectable and best people in the City. The various churches were represented. Many earnest prayers were offered up for our country, and for the man whom God had raised up to guide the "Ship of State"

over a rough and stormy sea. Mr. Lincoln was present and was not indifferent to the spiritual influence of that meeting. He listened attentively to those fervent prayers with tearful and thrilling interest. At the close of the meeting I passed down the isle in which Mr. Lincoln was standing, and taking me by the hand, he said, while the tears were standing in his eyes, Mr. Miner, "this has been a good meeting; I hardly see how it could have been much better. I feel grateful for the prayers offered up for our distracted country and on my behalf and I hope they may be answered.

On the morning of the 11 of February 1861, Mr. Lincoln, with his family left Springfield for Washington. The members of the state Legislature, and a large number of old friends, and neighbors assembled at Depot to bid him God speed and to say good bye. Just before the cars started he stepped up on the platform, uncovered his head, and delivered that short farewell speech which melted the hearts of those who heard it, and thrilled the hearts of those who read it. On that occasion, standing by his side, I heard him say, "A duty devolves upon me, which is, perhaps, greater than that which has devolved on any other man since the days of Washington. He never could have succeeded but for the aid of Divine Providence upon which at all times he relied. I feel that I cannot succeed without that same Divine Aid which sustained him; and in that same Almighty Being, I place my reliance for support, and I hope, you my friend, will pray that I may have that divine assistance without which I cannot succeed, but with which success is certain."

I did not see Mr. Lincoln again till April 1862. Death had entered the White House. There was mourning in almost all the families in the land. As it was in Egypt at the time Israel was delivered from the house of bondage, there was not a house in which there was not one death so through out our broad land there was "mourning, lamentation and woe." The Presidents family was not exempt. ~~Death had entered the "White House."~~ Willie Lincoln, a promising child, twelve years old, had suddenly sickened and died. The grief of the parents at the loss of this Son was deep and intense. Being an old neighbor, and a friend of the family, I went to see them, that if possible it might impart to them some spiritual consolation in their great sorrow. It was during this visit I learned more about the religious views and feelings of the President than I had ever known before.

Mr Lincoln expressed great pleasure upon seeing, and in the course of our conversation he said, I am glad that you have come; it is a relief to see an old friend from Springfield, and I can talk with you as I cannot with any one else. As it was my first visit to Washington,

he proposed to go out driving with me some day when he could find leisure to visit Smithsonian Institute, the Navy Yard, and other places of interest at the Capital. An afternoon of a Thursday was appointed for the drive. As we came down from the Cabinate room to enter the carriage we were met by a large delegation who had come to see the President, as they said, on important business. Mr. Lincoln said to them You must excuse me for the present, Elder Miner, an old friend and near neighbor of mine is visiting me from Springfield and I have promised to go out driving with him this after non, and I will see you later. And as we entered the carriage and drove away he remarked, I have been importuned all the forenoon by delegations and individuals urging me to this or that thing, and now that I am free I think we will keep out all the afternoon. Left to ourselves, we soon commenced conversation on the stirring events of the times. The battle of Shilo, had just been fought, and many of the Presedints friends and acquaintances were among the dead and wounded. The awful distruction of life, the loss of so many dear friends, weighed heavily on the good man's mind, and he was sore distressed.

The battle of Shilo, or Pittsburg Landig, was fought on Sunday and Monday, and this drive was on the Thursday of the same week. Mrs Lincoln told me that on Sunday night, after the first days fighting, when the Union Army was so badly cut up that its distruction seemed imminent, Mr Lincoln walked his room all night. He neve for one moment lay down to rest. And I doubt not that as those weary hours wore away the good President sas sending up his prays for the safety of the Union Army. And then too, the Elections, in some of the northern States, had been adverse to the Administration. Some were saying that the war was a failure, and others were clamering for peace at any terms, and the President was very much cast down at the State of things. Let it be remembered that these were the darkest days of the Civil War. Sorrow and gloom, like a dark cloud had spread itself all over the country and as yet not a ray of light had pierced the darkness. I had great sympathy for the President in his present heroic struggles. I felt as though I would give the world, if it were mine to give, if I could only relieve him of a part of the great burden which seemed crushing him, and I said, "Well, Mr Lincoln, you have this to encourage you. Christian people all over the country are praying for you as they never prayed for mortal man before." I believe that he said and this is an encouraging thought to me. If I were not sustained by the prayers of God's people I could not endure this constant pressure. I should give up hoping for success. In the course of our conversation at this time, I asked, Do you think we shall be able to put down this

rebellion? He answered, "You know I am not a man of a very hopeful temperament. I can take hold a thing and hold on a good while. But believing, as I do, that our cause is just, and relying on God for help I firmly believe we shall conquer in the end; but the struggle will be protracted and severe, involving a great loss both of property and life."

"What strange scenes, he continued to remark, are those through which we are now passing. I am sometimes astonished at the part I am acting in this terrible drama. I can hardly believe I am the same person I was a few months ago when I was living my humble [*caret: way*] with you in Springfield. I often ask myself the Question, When shall I wake up and find this all a dream. This getting the nomination for President, and being elected, is very gratifying to a man's ambition; but to be the President and to meet the responsibilities and discharge the duties of office in times like these is any thing but pleasant. I would gladly, if I could, take my neck from under the yoke, and go home with you to Springfield, and live as I was accustomed to, and live in peace with my friends, than to endure this harassing kind of life. But, he added, with great solemnity, "It has pleased Almighty God to put me in my present position, and looking up to him for divine guidance, I must work out my destiny as best I can."

Our conversation on this occasion, (of which I afterwards took full notes) was free, and without oven a thought of its publication. But all that was said, ~~to me~~ during that memorable after noon I spent alone with that great and good man, is too deeply engraven on my memory ever to be effaced. I felt certain of this fact, If ever Mr. Lincoln was not a Christian he was acting like one. He was doing his duty heroically, manfully, and looking up to God for help in time of need, and like the father of his country, he believed in the efficacy of prayer, and it was his custom to read the Bible and pray himself.

And here I would relate an incident which occurred on the 4th of March 1861. Which was told to me by Mrs. Lincoln herself. The President finished his Inaugural address the morning it was delivered. The family being present he read it to them. He then said he wished to left alone for a little while. The family retired to an adjoining room, not so far distant but the voice of prayer could be heard, the door being left ajar. There closed with God alone, and like Daniel the prophet, surrounded by his enemies, or those who worked to take his life, he commended his family, his country and himself to God's protecting care, and with a mind calmed by communing with his Heavenly Father, and with a courage equal to the danger, he came forth from that retirement ready for duty. Like the immortal Washington whose

life and character had been an inspiration to him in time of impending death he sought and obtained help from Heaven!

Mr. Lincoln's Death!

But before bringing my Lecture to its end let me say a few words about his going to the theatre the night he was assassinated

It has been a matter of universal regret, among good people, that he came to his tragic end in such a place. But if the circumstances of his going there were fully known they might relieve their minds somewhat.

It has been said that Mrs. Lincoln urged her husband to go to the theater against his will. This is not so. On the contrary she ~~urged~~ she tried to persuade him not to go. But he insisted. I have this statement from Mrs. Lincoln herself. [*The next 18 sentences are struck through:*] And just here let me say a word in regard to my friend and neighbor Mrs. Lincoln. No woman has been more misunderstood and misrepresented by the press of this country. It was said, during the war that Mrs. Lincoln was not a loyal woman. That she imparted to the enemy, the plans of the government and the movements of our troops. And that many of the defeats at the commencement of the war were owing to her meddling interference. This is not true. She said to me on the occasion of my visit to Washington already referred to, "Mr. Miner, I have two brothers who were in that Battle at Shilo. And I hope they are either dead or taken prisoner. You seemed surprised at my saying so. But they would kill my husband if they could, and destroy our Government, and I repeat it, 'I hope they are either dead or taken prisoners.'" And then it is a well known fact, that after the death of her son Willie she seems to have found her chief satisfaction in visiting the hospitals of the Soldiers and Sailors in the City of Washington. It is true that Mrs. Lincoln said and did some strange things after the death of her husband that provoked criticism. From the time he was shot down by her side as though was a vile dog, her nervous system became so completely shattered, that a good deal of the time she was hardly responsible for any thing she did or said, and the press did not know that they were criticising the acts of a woman bereft of her reason. From the day of the assassination to the present time she ~~has~~ did not see a well hour. No tongue can tell how much she suffered after the death of her devoted husband. She was a faithful wife, a loving mother and an obliging neighbor and a true friend. Coming back now to Mr Lincoln's going to the theater. She tried to persuade him not to go. [*End strikethrough*] He said a large number of overjoyed

[*caret*: and excited] people will visit me to night. I must have a little rest. My hands are swollen and my arms are lame by shaking hands with the multitude, and the people will pull me to pieces. He went to the theatre that night, not that he had any particular interest in the play, but because he was careworn and weary and needed quiet and repose. Mrs. Lincoln informed me that he seemed to take no notice of what was going on in the theatre from the time he entered till the discharge of the fatal pistol. He was overjoyed at the thought that the war was over and that the people would stop killing each other. She said the last day he lived was the happiest of his life. He went from room to room in the White House, and up and down stairs, and even tried to sing. Though fond of singing Mr. Lincoln could not sing. He said he felt like a boy let out of school. The great joy that thrilled his heart, was expressed in his own words, "The War Is Over, And The People Will Stop Killing Each Other!"

The very last moments of his conscious ~~moments~~ life were spent in conversation with his wife about his future plans, and what he wanted to do, should he live till the expiration of his term of office. He said, "We will not return immediately to Springfield. We will go abroad among strangers where I can rest." Rest that is what the good man longed for. When he was inaugurated President he took up a heavy load; he carried it constantly and never once laid it down till death relieved him of the burden. He said we will visit the Holy Land, and see the places hallowed by the footsteps of the Saviour. He was saying there is no city on Earth he so much desired to see as Jerusalem:—and with that word half spoken on his tongue, the bullet from the ~~pistol~~ of the assassin's pistol entered his brain, and the soul of the great and good President was carried by the Angels to the New Jerusalem + above.

Abraham Lincoln, and James Abram Garfield! Both royal men. Both sprang from poor parents and were born in log cabins which their fathers reared in the wilderness for their homes. Both struggled hard with poverty, and overcame almost insurmountable obstacles in acquiring an education, and in rising to commanding positions of usefulness—Both were elected to the highest office in the gift of the people.—Both were killed by the bullet of the assassin during their terms of office,—Both were carried to their graves by a nation of mourners.—Both will go down together side by side in history as two of the best men ever born in America, equal in greatness and heroic deeds to the immortal Washington!

Re written at Waterbury Conn. July 10.th 1882

N. W. Miner