

## U. S. President Abraham Lincoln, one of our family members!

These are quarterly stories sent to subscribing genealogically interested friends as samples of family stories that older family members are the targets of my encouragements to formulate similar stories about themselves for the purpose of handing them down to their family and descendants. Most of these stories have been about my own contemporary experiences. However, this one, of very few, is about an ancestral family member whose story from the past is now shared with you.

Admittedly, most people have not spent the breath of 38 years, as have I, in the pursuit of genealogy. Fortunately, much of my mother's ancestry had English roots, which included royalty. Obviously, much more data is recorded on those lines, and it was somewhat connectable from Mom's family to the royal people and their subsequent descendants of fame in early America. This included identifying a number of cousin (lateral) relationships between 20 of our 44 U.S. Presidents and my family. My conviction is that most people who are willing to apply their enduring research efforts can accumulate many extensive family links, as has been my experience.

This quarter's story is about President Abraham Lincoln! He was the very first nominated and successful Presidential candidate for the Republican Party, which initially formed in 1854. Interestingly, Suzanne and I have been Delegates to the Texas Republican biennial State Convention for every session since 1988, except for one year when we were in Europe and one time when I was recovering from surgery! We are Delegates again in May 2016, just a few weeks after composing this story. Actually, I was a delegate to the 1980 Missouri Republican State Convention once when we lived in Saint Louis, and in 2012 to the National Republican Convention.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_Republican\\_Party](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_United_States_Republican_Party)

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, is my 33rd cousin. Our ancestors in common are Eystein Glumra Ivarsson and Aseda Rognvaldsdatter. They are ninth century Vikings of Norway who are Lincoln's 30th great grandparents and my 32nd great grandparents. Viewed another way, Abraham Lincoln is the 8th cousin, six times removed of the husband of the stepdaughter of my 6th great grand uncle, Danette Abney.

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President Lincoln is the thirteenth cousin, six times removed to President George Washington. Lincoln is the 19th cousin, six times removed to my son-in-law, Steven O. Westmoreland. Lincoln is a 33rd cousin, once removed, to Steve's wife (our daughter), Tiffany Lenn Sharpe Westmoreland. Actually, Tiffany and Steven are 34th cousins, four times removed to each other. I'm presuming that is not too close of family relation to be a marriage problem!

Abraham Lincoln represents the attitudes of freedom for all people and union in government. He presided over the War Between the States, the war in which more Americans lost lives than in any war in which we have been engaged. Its formal name is the War Between the States, even though most people refer to it as the Civil War.

"As President, he built the Republican Party into a strong national organization. Further, he rallied most of the northern Democrats to the Union cause. On January 1, 1863, he issued the Emancipation Proclamation that declared forever free those slaves within the Confederacy.

"Lincoln never let the world forget that the Civil War involved an even larger issue. This he stated most movingly in dedicating the military cemetery at Gettysburg: 'that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain --- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom --- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.'"

Source: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/al16.html>

Lincoln wrote, "I was born Feb. 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. My parents were both born in Virginia, of undistinguished families--second families, perhaps I should say. My mother, who died in my tenth year, was of a family of the name of Hanks.... My father ... removed from Kentucky to ... Indiana, in my eighth year.... It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up.... Of course when I came of age I did not know much. Still somehow, I could read, write, and cipher ... but that was all."

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“Born in the town of Hodgenville, Harden County, Kentucky, Lincoln grew up on the western frontier in Kentucky and in Indiana. Largely self-educated, he became a lawyer in Illinois, a Whig Party leader, and a member of the Illinois House of Representatives, in which he served for twelve years. Elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1846, Lincoln promoted rapid modernization of the economy through banks, tariffs, and railroads. Because he had originally agreed not to run for a second term in Congress, and because his opposition to the Mexican–American War was unpopular among Illinois voters, Lincoln returned to Springfield, and resumed his successful law practice. Re-entering politics in 1854, he became a leader in building what became the new Republican Party, which had a statewide majority in Illinois. In 1858, while taking part in a series of highly publicized debates with his opponent and rival, Democrat Stephen A. Douglas, Lincoln spoke against the expansion of slavery, but lost the U.S. Senate race to Douglas.

“In 1860, Lincoln secured the Republican Party presidential nomination as a moderate from a swing state. Though he gained very little support in the slaveholding states of the South, he swept the North, and was elected president in 1860. Lincoln's victory prompted seven southern slave states to form the Confederate States of America before he moved into the White House. No compromise or reconciliation was found regarding slavery and secession. Subsequently, on April 12, 1861, an attack on Fort Sumter by the Confederates inspired the North enthusiastically to rally behind the Union in a declaration of war. As the leader of the moderate faction of the Republican Party, Lincoln confronted Radical Republicans, who demanded harsher treatment of the South, War Democrats, who called for more compromise, anti-war Democrats (called Copperheads), who despised him, and irreconcilable secessionists, who plotted his assassination. Politically, Lincoln fought back by pitting his opponents against each other, by carefully planned political patronage, and by appealing to the American people with his powers of oratory. His Gettysburg Address became an iconic endorsement of the principles of nationalism, republicanism, equal rights, liberty, and democracy.”

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham\\_Lincoln](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln)

Looking back on June 16, 1858, in Springfield, Illinois, upon accepting the State's nomination for its U. S. Senate position, Lincoln delivered perhaps his most remembered address, the "House Divided" speech. "The speech contains the quotation, 'A house divided against itself cannot stand,' which

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is paraphrased from the Biblical passage, Matthew 12:25. This useful illustration of a house divided was used earlier by United States Senator Sam Houston from Texas in 1850 when he said in an emotional address that 'A nation divided against itself cannot stand.'

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lincoln%27s\\_House\\_Divided\\_Speech](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lincoln%27s_House_Divided_Speech)

On **April 14**, 1865, Lincoln attended the play, "Our American Cousin," a play in three acts by Tom Taylor. The play is a farcical comedy whose plot is based on the introduction of an awkward, boorish American to his aristocratic English relatives. It premiered at Laura Keane's Theatre in New York City on October 15, 1858. The play's most famous performance came seven years later, however, at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. on April 14, 1865. Halfway through Act III, Scene 2, the character, Asa Trenchard (the title role), played that night by Harry Hawk, utters a line that, while considered one of the play's funniest, makes little sense out of context: "Don't know the manners of good society, eh? Well, I guess I know enough to turn you inside out, old gal, you sockdologizing old man-trap!" During the raucous laughter that followed this line, John Wilkes Booth, an actor who received his mail at Ford's Theatre, but who was not in the cast of "Our American Cousin," shot President Abraham Lincoln with a small handgun. He chose the timing in hopes that the sound of the laughter would mask the sound of the gunshot. Immediately he leapt from Lincoln's box to the stage, and ran outside to his awaiting horse. As he leapt, Booth shouted "Sic semper tyrannis!" the state motto of Virginia. Others in the audience heard it as: "The South is avenged!"

Following the shooting, Booth fled by horseback to southern Maryland and eventually to a farm in rural northern Virginia. He was tracked down and killed by Union soldiers twelve days later. Four people were hanged in Washington, D.C., on July 7, 1865 after being convicted of conspiring with John Wilkes Booth to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln. This carrying out of the sentence is slightly under three months following the incident. It seems that capital punishment time schedules were more time-efficient back in those days!

Sources: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham\\_Lincoln](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Lincoln)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Wilkes\\_Booth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Wilkes_Booth)

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### Trivia about Abraham Lincoln:

- Lincoln stood 6 feet 4 inches (193.0 cm) tall (not including his hat) and thus was the tallest president in U.S. history, just edging out Lyndon Johnson at 6 feet 3 inches (192.0 cm) tall.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heights\\_of\\_presidents\\_and\\_presidential\\_candidates\\_of\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heights_of_presidents_and_presidential_candidates_of_the_United_States)

- Lincoln was born on the same day as Charles Darwin.
- In 1853, three speculators began to develop a town 30 miles north of the capital of Springfield, on the alignment of the St. Louis, Alton & Chicago Railroad, as it advanced toward Chicago. These speculators asked Lincoln, their attorney and the attorney for that railroad, for permission to name the town in his honor. He agreed, and in August 1853, it was christened Lincoln, Illinois, with watermelon juice for the onlookers. This town thus became the first Lincoln namesake town, even before he became nationally famous.
- According to legend, his opponent in the 1858 Senate election, Stephen Douglas, referred to Lincoln as “two-faced.” Upon hearing about this, Lincoln jokingly replied, "If I had another face to wear, do you really think I would be wearing this one?"
- According to legend, Lincoln also said, as a young man, commenting on his appearance one day when looking in the mirror: "It's a fact, Abe! You are the ugliest man in the world! If ever I see a man uglier than you, I'm going to shoot him on the spot!" It would be, no doubt, he thought, an act of mercy.
- Based on written descriptions of Lincoln, it has been conjectured since the 1960s that Lincoln may have suffered from Marfan Syndrome, including the observations that he was much taller than most men of his day, and had long limbs, an abnormally-shaped chest, and loose orlax joints.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marfan\\_syndrome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marfan_syndrome)

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- Lincoln is the only American president to hold a patent. The patent is for a device that lifts boats over shoals.
- Lincoln was famous for many presidential speeches and quotes, one short quote being 'No man has a good enough memory to be a successful liar.'
- Lincoln was the first President to wear a beard while in office.
- Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln, was returning home on a train from Harvard University, when he lost his balance, and fell between two railway cars. A fellow passenger reacted quickly, pulling him away from serious injury, or even death. The helping hand was that of Edwin Booth, a brother of the man who later would assassinate the young man's father.
- In 1865 Lincoln received a letter from the International Working Men's Association, congratulating him on his re-election, and praising his anti-slavery stance. Karl Marx penned it.
- Lincoln's death chair resides at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. The Logan County Courtroom of Illinois, where Lincoln practiced law and argued cases, has been re-located to the Henry Ford Museum.
- When Lincoln established the Secret Service, its mandate did not include presidential protection. Just days after the creation of that agency, Lincoln was assonated. Obviously, those plans were changed!

Source for Trivia:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/presidents/al16.html>

When Lincoln was asked how he liked being President, he referred to the story of the man who was carried out of town on a pole, tarred and feathered. Someone asked how he liked the ride, to which the man replied, "If it were not for the honor of the thing, he'd rather walk!"

Source: Bill Adler, "Presidential Wit," New York: Trident Press, 1966, pages 62-63.

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