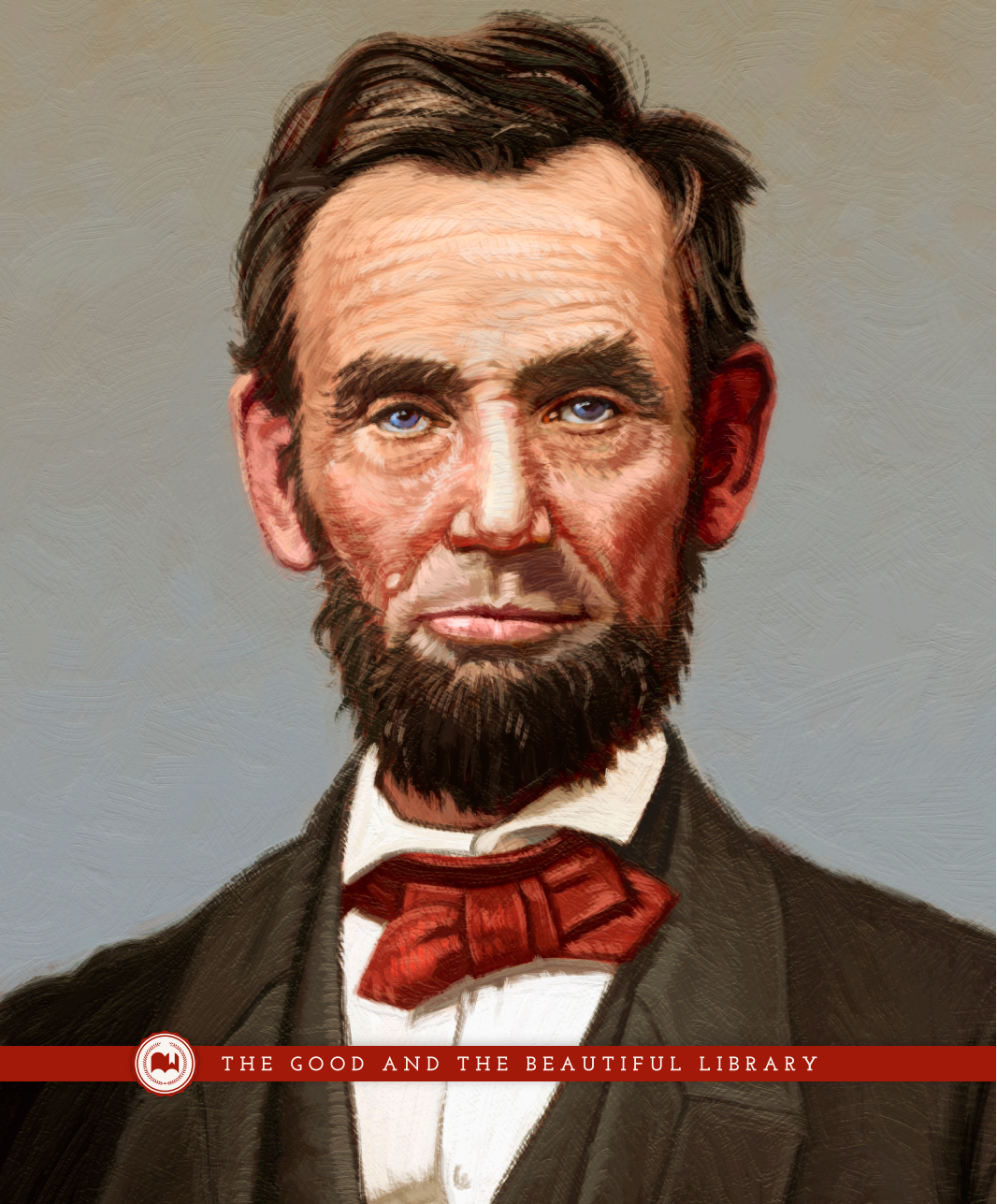


Abraham Lincoln

BY WILBUR FISK GORDY



THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY

Abraham Lincoln

Written in 1917, Wilbur Gordy's biography of Abraham Lincoln brings to life one of the great men of history. The biography is not fictionalized; it sticks to factual information and stories, but it is presented in a way that makes history interesting and meaningful. As the book travels through the life of Abraham Lincoln, from boyhood on up, valuable lessons are taught about wisdom, kindness, honesty, hard work, love of learning, and persevering through trials.

"Wilbur Fisk Gordy's book *Abraham Lincoln* is wonderfully inspiring. It is a book I feel I could read over and over again and glean different lessons from each time because it is packed with so much goodness and truth."

—Jenny Phillips



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By Wilbur F. Gordy

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active, and all day long he worked with his axe, clearing away the bushes and thick underbrush, while his father cut down saplings and made poles for their “camp.”

This “camp,” in which they must live until they could build a good cabin, was a mere shed, fourteen feet square, with one side open. The poles were laid one upon the



LINCOLN HELPING HIS FATHER MAKE “CAMP”

other, and were topped by a thatched roof of boughs and leaves. As there was no chimney, there could be no fire inside, and it was necessary to keep one burning all the time just in front of the “camp.”

During this first winter in the wild woods of Indiana, the little boy must have lived a very busy life. Besides the building of the cabin, which was to take the place of the “camp,” a clearing had to be made for the corn-planting of the coming spring.

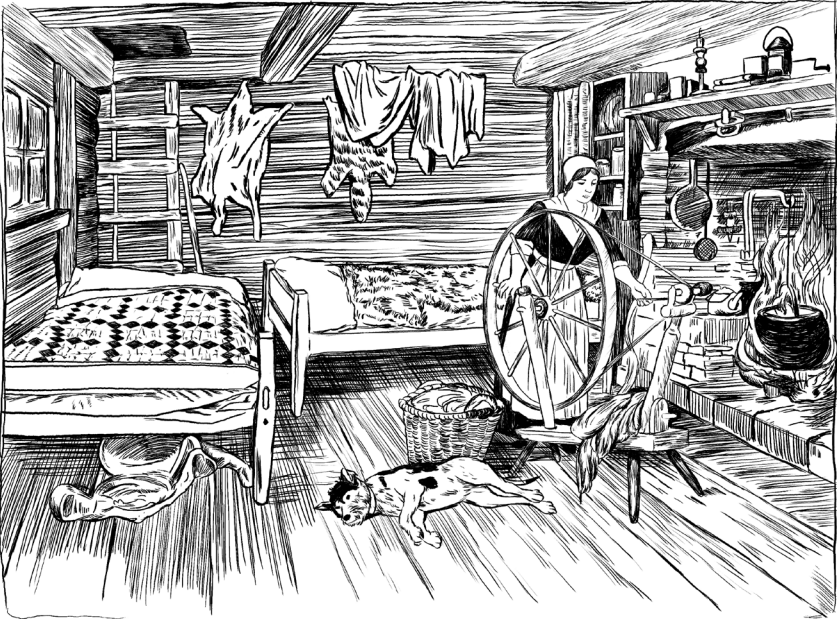
A whole year passed before the Lincoln family moved into the newly built log cabin, giving up the “camp” to some friends, Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow, who had followed them from Kentucky. With the Sparrows lived Dennis Hanks, a young cousin of Mrs. Lincoln.

The new cabin had no windows and no floor except the bare earth. There was an opening on one side that was used as a doorway; but there was no door, nor was there so much as a deerskin to keep out the rain or the snow, or to give protection from the cold wind.

In this rough abode, the furniture was scanty and of the rudest sort. The chairs were only three-legged stools, made by smoothing the flat side of a split log and putting sticks into holes bored underneath. The table was of the same simple kind, with four legs instead of three. The rude bedsteads in the corners of the cabin were made by sticking two poles into the logs at right angles to the walls, the outside corner, where the poles met, being supported by a crotched stick driven into the ground. Then boards were placed across the poles, making a framework upon which shucks and leaves were heaped, and over all were

laid the skins of wild animals.

Abe's bed was a pile of dried leaves in a corner of the loft, and he reached it by climbing on pegs driven into the wall. In winter the cold winds whistled about his head, the snow sifted in through cracks, and even the drip of rain fell on his face.



The food was simple, but there usually was plenty of it. The Lincolns raised enough corn to supply the household, the meal being made into “corn dodgers,” roasted in the ashes, which was their everyday bread. Wheat was so hard to raise and so scarce that flour bread was reserved for Sunday mornings. The principal vegetable was the common white potato, and sometimes that was all the Lincolns had to eat. We get a flash of Abraham's humor and learn something of his father's religious habits from

Abraham's remark to his father, who had just asked a blessing on a dish of roasted potatoes, that "they were mighty poor blessings." But, as a rule, there was an abundance of game, such as deer, bears, wild turkeys, ducks, and pheasants, many kinds of fish from the streams close by, and in summer, wild fruits from the woods. These were so plentiful that they were dried for winter use.

It was easy to get game, for not far from the Lincoln cabin was a glade in which there were deer-licks. Waiting here one or two hours usually resulted in getting a shot at a deer, which would furnish food for a week and also material for moccasins or shoes and breeches. But the cooking was rudely done, because there were few groceries and few cooking utensils. A simple but most useful article in every pioneer household was the gritter. It was a piece of flattened tin punched full of holes and nailed to a board. Many articles of food could be grated on it, and at times the housewife secured by this slow method enough cornmeal for bread.

When washing-day came, the clothes were taken down either to the flowing stream or to the watering trough, which at that time was the closest approach to our modern set tubs. Indeed, the backwoodsmen had to devise many contrivances to supply their lack of manufactured things. Thorns, for instance, were used for pins, bits of stone for buttons, while for a looking-glass a woman would scour a tin pan. As there was almost no money in circulation, people exchanged, or "bartered," for things they wished, one man paying maple sugar for a marriage license, and another giving wolf scalps! Candles were a luxury much of