

# SELF CULTURE

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## ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S OLD HOME, SPRINGFIELD, ILL.\*

IT WAS soon after John P. Altgeld was installed as Governor of Illinois, that Robert T. Lincoln, in a carefully-worded letter addressed to His Excellency, offered the old Springfield home of his famous father as a gift to the State of Illinois, under certain prescribed conditions. These conditions were that the State should keep the old historic home in good repair until the frosts of

time had withered and destroyed forever the famous wooden structure.

Yes, the old home, the haven of rest, of Lincoln's law-practicing days in Springfield was to become the property of the State, as long as beam and rafter successfully fought the ravages of decay, and when that inevitable hour was ushered in, the naked ground was to revert to Robert T. Lincoln, or his lawful heirs. After this manner did the honored son of an illustrious countryman make gift to the Commonwealth of Illinois of the home of his childhood and youth.

For some years previous to the administrations of Governors Fifer and Altgeld,



LINCOLN'S HOME, SPRINGFIELD, ILL.  
(Rear View, Looking Northwest)

Mr. Lincoln had expressed to old-time friends in Springfield and elsewhere his displeasure at the manner in which his father's old home was being used and cared for. By every tie of blood and affection did the son claim the right to change the aspect of things in his father's old home and to preserve it as a worthy historic memorial.

The occupants of the home during the period referred to were pursuing a line not in accord with Robert Lincoln's views or with those he soon afterwards adopted. In every nook and corner it looked, and indeed presented to the visitor the aspect of a most interesting museum. It was

\* For the illustrations that embellish this article the author is indebted to Messrs. Burleigh and Lapham, Photographers, Springfield, Ill.

the storehouse for old desks and chairs, very many of which Abraham Lincoln never beheld. The custodians of the place had ransacked the country and brought from near and far all the alleged

holders the exciting and thrilling Campaign of "60." In one corner stood an old-fashioned cook-stove, once used in preparing the family meals, and in another was to be seen the low wooden cradle



ABRAHAM LINCOLN (BORN FEB. 12, 1809; DIED APRIL 15, 1865)

relics, from an old splintered rail to a neck yoke, and proclaimed to the world that they were the handiwork of the martyred President.

The walls of the rooms were plastered over or hung with Presidential campaign pictures and "Wide Awake" uniforms, bringing to the realization of curious be-

where, in years gone by, nestled in innocent slumber the little Lincoln children. All these articles, and countless others, were on exhibition in one large room (the double parlor of Lincoln's time); while the other portion of the house the custodians utilized for their own and their family's comfort.

The rooms of the first floor were bare of carpets, and the want of paint and good honest scrubbing met you at every step. It was Lincoln's old home, but, alas! how different from that home when the telegraph clicked the news that the simple Springfield lawyer had been elevated to the Presidency.

Old friends and relatives still residing in Springfield declare that Lincoln's house was one of the best furnished in the city; at least no Springfield lawyer could surpass his in this respect. The furniture

self in having a little painting and papering done and he went down town, it seems, and purchased the paper himself. "It looks quite respectable now," he said, as he stood gazing at one of the rooms for the last time. "When I shall return to live here again, I know not," and as he spoke these words to one or two of his friendly neighbors, the sad-faced man took a final look at his old home, and went forth in the bright sunlight of the February morning never to behold it again. From Springfield, whence, in the



LINCOLN'S SITTING ROOM

was good, and as Mrs. Lincoln was a lover of rather gay colors, several articles of the parlor were of the most stylish pattern for those early times. Lincoln was a prosperous lawyer, enjoying a yearly practice of four thousand dollars, and why should not Mrs. Lincoln, a recognized society leader, furnish her home in a manner as attractive and beautiful as possible?

It was in the month of February, a few weeks before his inauguration, when Lincoln rented his house and packed up his furniture. Mrs. Ninian W. Edwards, a sister of Mrs. Lincoln, came into possession of a good many of the articles, while a considerable portion was destroyed later on by fire. Mr. Lincoln busied him-

spring of 1831, he had journeyed down the Sangamon River, a friendless strange young man, he left, thirty years after, the same peculiar man, with the prayers fresh upon the lips of his old friends and neighbors.

Lincoln was married November 4, 1842, and after residing for some time at the home of his wife's sister, Mrs. Edwards, he boarded at the old Globe Tavern until 1844, when he purchased the now famous house on South Eighth Street, Springfield, Ill., which was the only place outside of the White House and his early cabin home where he ever resided. The house was erected in 1839 by Rev. Charles Dresser, an Episcopal clergyman,

at a cost of eleven hundred dollars. It was at the time a very pretty, story-and-a-half cottage, painted white, possessing the village simplicity of green window shutters. The bond for a deed of the property was written in Lincoln's handwriting and signed by Charles Dresser and A. Lincoln. The stipulation, embodied in the most important legal instrument executed during Lincoln's early manhood, was to the effect that Dresser was to give Lincoln possession of the premises on or before April, 1844, for which Lincoln was to pay the sum of twelve hundred dollars. The time was not long before the title was made clear, and in the following year, Lincoln for the first time tasted the sweetness and comforts of housekeeping in a home of his own.

Robert S. Todd (Mrs. Lincoln's father), of Lexington, Ky., made his daughter a

bush or plant on its surface. The familiar brick wall, on which is erected the paling fence, Lincoln was compelled to build, for the reason that there was a grade made in the street, and by so doing he prevented the excavation of the foundation of his home.

Dealers in historical relics have placed on the market a vast number of canes, gavels, penholders, and other articles, claiming the same to have been manufactured from the identical timber entering into the construction of Abraham Lincoln's old Springfield home. The strength of this reckless assertion becomes weak, when the plain truth confronts us. If this were true, a complete demolition of the entire structure would have occurred many years ago. The rafters, floors, sills, the weather-boarding, and even the very doors, would have been torn from their hinges, to mingle in this vast construc-



THE DOUBLE PARLOR

present of a sum of money sufficient to equip the home with new furniture, to which additions were made as time passed on. Lincoln, it seems, never had any passion for flowers, trees, or shrubbery. He never planted a tree, and at the time he was elected to the Presidency his backyard was a green grass plot, without a

tion of relics of Lincoln's Home, to make the articles genuine. Enough spurious crutches and canes have already been constructed out of the timber of this historic dwelling to equip no small army of the lame and halt, yet, despite the present perfect state of preservation of the building, the supply still goes on at an amazing rate.



THE DINING-ROOM

Now and then the painter and the paper-hanger brighten things up a little, and it was only a short time ago that some work of this character was done. Let the truth be known that if a paling, shingle, or shutter is ever stolen, when deep slumber comes to the family of the present custodian, the same is never missed by those who would most naturally come into the possession of the knowledge of such a theft.

The most important social function held at the Springfield home of the Lincolns was in the year 1849, and is still remembered by many residents of the town. Mrs. Lincoln, as Mary Todd, was from her first visit to the Illinois capital a belle much sought after, fond of company and admiration. Lincoln was never a man to shine in society, or even to seek to do so, yet he liked his wife to have company, and during the hours of gaiety in his own home no man could succeed in being more pleasant and entertaining. The coming Lincoln party seemed to be quite an important event in the social life of Springfield. Invitations were sent not only to Springfield families, but to others in various portions of the State, whence guests came to swell the joyous throng. "Fair women and brave men" were present;

men who became famous in after years in the councils of the nation and were heroic upon many Union battlefields. There were in attendance General John A. McClernand, still living in Springfield, and now in his 89th year; General John M. Palmer, who afterwards won distinction as a Union soldier and fame as a Governor and United States Senator from Illinois; the brave Colonel Edward D. Baker, a United States Senator from Oregon, who fell at Ball's Bluff; David Davis, Lincoln's closest friend and political collaborator; Stephen A. Douglas, polished and courtly; John T. Stuart, his preceptor and former law partner; General James Shields, the hero of two wars and the Senator from two States; Leonard Sweet, a distinguished lawyer and ever a trusted friend of Lincoln; Senator Lyman Trumbull; Judge Stephen T. Logan, Lincoln's second law partner; Norman B. Judd; and Secretary of the Interior O. H. Browning. Of this bright galaxy there remain but two living, Governor Palmer and General McClernand, the former having recently passed his 88th year and is still residing in Springfield busily engaged in writing a book of reminiscences of his life.

It was soon after the departure, now three years ago, of the last custodian of

the Lincoln home, who left nothing but bare walls and naked floors, that Mr. and Mrs. Albert S. Edwards (the former a nephew of Mrs. Lincoln) assumed the entire management of the home. Their predecessors had left it in an uninviting condition. Dirt and rubbish were *en evidence*, while a glimpse at the backyard revealed the sight of ash-piles and battered fruit cans. It was at this time that Robert T. Lincoln came forward and expressed his determination to make the place as nearly as possible like the old home of his father. Furniture from the

large marble-top centre-table, on which rests a tall silver lamp, and by the side of this table, and in the shade of the lamp, the marriage ceremony uniting Lincoln to the woman of his choice took place. Another old relic of the Lincoln furniture world was an old, strongly constructed "what-not," filled with innumerable articles,—Indian beads, ocean shells, and time-honored and much worn ambrotypes of the living and the dead. This family heirloom now stands in the double parlor. In the sitting room there is a large bookcase and desk, with glass front, contain-



UP-STAIRS BED-ROOM

old Ninian Edwards home, where Lincoln was married, came into use in the re-furnishing of the house. The transformation at length was perfected, and many of the neighbors of the early day raised their hands on entering and exclaimed: "This indeed is the home of Abraham Lincoln as he left it in 1860." Many of the articles had one time belonged to the Lincolns, while the carpets and chairs were similar to those purchased by Mrs. Lincoln in by-gone days.

There was brought from the Edwards home a large old-fashioned hair-cloth lounge, on which both Lincoln and Douglas courted the handsome Mary Todd; a

ing many interesting objects connected with the early life of the Lincolns. Before the desk there stands a cane-bottomed arm chair, once the property of Daniel Webster.

Looking through the glass, the visitor gazes at a lock of hair cut from the head of Mrs. Lincoln after her death in Springfield. The hair shows the first traces of a woman turning gray. Displayed also are a set of rather heavy jet jewellery, worn by Mrs. Lincoln when in mourning for her husband; and a linen table-cloth of historic value, purchased in the year 1824 by Governor Ninian W. Edwards from the Spanish Minister at Washington.

On this table, where had dined the famous of the land, Lincoln and his young bride ate their wedding supper. A number of Lincoln's most cherished volumes of early days lie about on tables here and there; in short, the Edwards have succeeded in making the home as much Lincoln-like as labor and actual knowledge of the past could accomplish.

Of course, the home is a great resort for all visitors who come to Springfield; the register shows a visitation of twelve thousand last year. The custodian is paid a salary, and the State keeps the premises now in the best of repair. All the rooms have been repainted and repapered, with the exception of one bed-room up-stairs, and in this apartment the same paper has clung to the walls for over forty years.

It is indeed the restoration of the old Lincoln home, and there is a nicety in the arrangement of the furniture characteristic of Mrs. Lincoln's taste. "It is now," said Senator Palmer, "like an old familiar picture—just as Lincoln's home looked when he commenced his preparations for breaking up housekeeping in Springfield."

Sheltered beneath the roof of historic Mount Vernon, where lived and died the Father of his Country, there is a feeling of pride and patriotic devotion dear to



SITTING ROOM, WITH MARBLE TOP TABLE AND SILVER LAMP, BY THE SIDE OF WHICH LINCOLN WAS MARRIED TO MARY TODD

every American heart. So, too, when one slowly lingers in and about the rooms of the old Springfield home of Abraham Lincoln, one cannot forget the glory and grandeur his illustrious name has added to the pages of history. It is one of the most cherished realities of the Nation's life.

PARKE EDWIN TEMPLE.

DECATUR, ILL.



## IN THE HEART OF THE ROCKIES



HEAD OF EMERALD LAKE, NEAR FIELD, BRITISH COLUMBIA

AFTER having crossed the continent over a score of times and spent twelve years in British Columbia the beaten roads of travel become monotonous, and one sighs for fresh fields to conquer. So when I met the photographer of the Canadian Pacific Railway\* in August at Banff and learnt from him of the newly-discovered Wapta Falls, on the north fork of the Kicking Horse river, in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, I made up my mind, in Western parlance, to get there if possible.

From Banff I moved on to Field, where I came across an old acquaintance who had been promoted from locomotive engineer to train-master in charge of the section from Field to Laggan; he suggested what was already in my mind, an expedition to Emerald Lake, eight miles from Field, and the Wapta Falls. I named the 11th of September as the date

that would suit me and after an interchange of letters and telegrams I arrived at Field at noon on Monday the day appointed. Its now well-known chalet hotel and meal station, on the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, lies at the foot of Mount Stephen, the most imposing peak of the Rockies, in the valley of the Wapta or Kicking Horse river, which spreads here at low water — as I saw it — in sinuous pale green channels over a wide clay bed. From the wide verandahs of the hotel one looks out over the Ottertail Mountains on the left and the Van Horne range on the right, with their fine snow-capped pinnacles which, however, possessed not for me the charms of novelty.

I waited long and anxiously for my expected friend's advent, only to hear that two of the horses he had secured for our expedition had been killed on the track and that but one steed remained for my own use. My counsellor, however, was fertile in resources and soon procured two

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