

The Essential Abraham Lincoln

Speeches • Letters • Biography

Written and compiled by Garrick Hagon and Peter Whitfield
Read by Peter Marinker and Garrick Hagon



NA394312D

	Abraham Lincoln: A Life by Peter Whitfield	
1	Lincoln is honoured as perhaps the greatest leader...	7:50
2	In 1830 the Lincoln family were once again on the move...	7:02
3	We know a great deal about Lincoln the man...	6:46
4	He was propelled back into politics in 1854...	6:49
5	It was this ill-judged and disastrous measure...	6:15
6	Lincoln was appalled by the judgement...	5:25
7	The South watched this result...	7:41
8	Lincoln's first acts as war president...	8:27
9	But better news was coming from the western theatre...	6:13
10	During those years...	7:08
11	Standing among the crowd that evening...	5:11
12	Abraham Lincoln's influence on American history...	3:44

	Selected Speeches compiled and introduced by Garrick Hagon	
13	27 January 1838: The Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois	8:52
14	– But you are, perhaps, ready to ask...	7:56
15	16 October 1854: Peoria, Illinois	7:49
16	– I think, and shall try to show, that it is wrong...	5:31
17	– I insist...	3:40
18	16 June 1858: Springfield, Illinois	7:34
19	11 February 1861: Springfield, Illinois railroad station	1:38
20	22 February 1861: Independence Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	3:46
21	4 March 1861: Springfield, Illinois	3:54
22	– I take the official oath today...	6:56
23	– From questions of this class...	5:14
24	19 November 1863: Gettysburg, Pennsylvania	3:07
25	4 March 1865: Washington, D.C.	4:57
26	9 April 1865: The White House, Washington, D.C.	5:57

	Selected Letters compiled and introduced by Garrick Hagon	
27	13 June 1836: To the Editor of the Sangamo Journal	3:14
28	23 January 1841: To John T. Stuart	1:45
29	25 February 1842: To Joshua F. Speed	2:57
30	11 November 1842: To Samuel D. Marshall	1:13
31	11 August 1846: To Allen N. Ford	2:39
32	6 September 1846: To Andrew Johnson	3:04
33	5 November 1855: To Isham Reavis	1:26
34	2 December 1858: To James T. Thornton	0:42
35	15 August 1855: To the Hon. George Robertson	3:36
36	24 August 1855: To Joshua F. Speed	4:57
37	13 February 1856: To R.P. Morgan	0:53
38	15 May 1858: To J.F. Alexander, Esq.	2:01
39	6 April 1859: To Henry L. Pierce and others	3:32
40	April 1860: To Lyman Trumbul	1:43
41	22 July 1860: To George Latham	1:38

42	15 October 1860: From Grace Bedell	1:35
43	19 October 1860: To Grace Bedell	0:41
44	19 October 1860: To Mr. and Mrs. Ellsworth	2:33
45	22 September 1861: To the Hon. O.H. Browning	3:25
46	4 December 1861: To Mrs. Susannah Weathers	1:10
47	28 June 1862: Telegram To General G.B. McClellan	1:25
48	August 1862: To the Hon. Horace Greeley	2:28
49	12 June 1863: To the Hon. Erastus Corning and others	9:36
50	26 August 1863: To the Hon. James C. Conkling	7:27
51	13 July 1863: To Major General Ulysses S. Grant	1:32
52	20 November 1863: To the Hon. Edward Everett	1:40
53	4 April 1864: To Albert G. Hodges	4:52
54	27 December 1864: To President of Princeton, Dr. John Maclean	1:44
55	15 March 1865: To Thurlow Weed	1:15
56	21 November 1864: To Mrs. Bixby	2:32

Total time: 3:55:11

The Essential

Abraham Lincoln

The momentous events of Abraham Lincoln's presidency coupled with the advent of photography meant that Lincoln's was one of the best-documented lives of 19th-century American presidents. He wrote letters throughout his life to people of differing backgrounds and ages, even during the intensely busy years of the Civil War; thus we see that he was humane and considerate as well as a decisive and visionary leader.

The existing letters, written in his clear and steady hand, contain nearly a million words penned over three decades, from the early 1830s to his death in 1865. His speeches, too, are well documented: they were given in an age when people flocked to meetings to hear talks of all kinds, though of course notes were also taken of his presentations as a lawyer and a politician. It is clear that Lincoln was aware of the importance of the written word and took care to prepare his talks;

occasionally he would slightly rewrite a speech (as with the Gettysburg Address) after having given it, in order to improve it for print.

Despite the growth of photography, there is no pictorial record of Lincoln giving his key speeches. The photographic archive that does exist shows the effect that the responsibility of presidency had on his face, and this, in addition to accounts from friends and observers, gives us a good idea of what the public face of Lincoln was like.

In a talk given shortly after the assassination, William Herndon – friend, law partner and Lincoln's biographer – said:

Mr. Lincoln thought his speeches out on his feet walking in the streets: he penned them in small scraps – sentences, & paragraphs, depositing them in his hat for

safety. When fully finished, he would recopy, and could always repeat easily by heart – so well thought, shotted, and matured were they.

We don't know exactly what Lincoln sounded like, though he evidently had a high voice, accentuated by nervousness in the early part of his career. Herndon, remembering Lincoln in a letter 20 years after the president's death, said:

Lincoln's voice was, when he first began speaking, shrill, squeaking, piping, unpleasant; his general look, his form, his pose, the color of his flesh, wrinkled and dry, his sensitiveness, and his momentary diffidence, everything seemed to be against him, but he soon recovered.

Herndon continues:

On rising to address the jury or the crowd he quite generally placed his hands behind him, the back part

of his left hand resting in the palm of his right hand. As he proceeded and grew warmer, he moved his hands to the front of his person, generally interlocking his fingers and running one thumb around the other. Sometimes his hands, for a short while, would hang by his side. In still growing warmer, as he proceeded in his address, he used his hands – especially and generally his right hand – in his gestures; he used his head a great deal in speaking, throwing or jerking or moving it now here and now there, now in this position and now in that, in order to be more emphatic, to drive the idea home. Mr. Lincoln never beat the air, never sawed space with his hands, never acted for stage effect: was cool, careful, earnest, sincere, truthful, fair, self-possessed, not insulting, not dictatorial; was pleasing, good-natured; had great strong naturalness of look, pose, and act; was clear in his ideas, simple in his words, strong, terse,

and demonstrative; he spoke and acted to convince individuals and masses; he used in his gestures his right hand, sometimes shooting out that long bony forefinger of his to dot an idea or to express a thought, resting his thumb on his middle finger. Bear in mind that he did not gesticulate much and yet it is true that every organ of his body was in motion and acted with ease, elegance, and grace, so it all looked to me.

Lincoln certainly possessed a natural eloquence, a clear logical mind for progressive argument, and an unmistakable charisma, helped by his imposing 6'4" form. His speeches regularly lasted for two hours or more. As one report of such a presentation in 1860 points out: 'Mr. Lincoln spoke nearly two hours and we believe he would have held his audience had he spoken all night.' (*The Inquirer*, 8 March 1860)

His close friends saw him more intimately, and revealed the human yet highly principled aspects of Lincoln's

personality. Joshua Speed, a friend of long standing, from the Kentucky days, recalled:

Mr. Lincoln's person was ungainly. He was six feet four inches in height; a little stooped in the shoulders; his legs and arms were long; his feet and hands large; his forehead was high. His head was over the average size. His eyes were gray. His face and forehead were wrinkled even in his youth. They deepened with age, 'as streams their channels deeper wear.' Generally he was a very sad man, and his countenance indicated it. But when he warmed up all sadness vanished, his face was radiant and glowing, and almost gave expression to his thoughts before his tongue would utter them.

Certainly, the campaigning pressure and the presidential years exacted a toll. Here are some of the key photographs from his career.



This daguerreotype, thought to have been taken in 1846/47 by Nicholas Shepherd, is the earliest photograph of Abraham Lincoln.



Perhaps the most dramatic shot of Abraham Lincoln. It was taken on 3 October 1862 – several days after the Battle of Antietam. With Lincoln is Detective Allen Pinkerton (left) and General McClelland (right).



This is the last known picture of Lincoln, taken on 10 April 1865, four days before his assassination.

Executive Mansion,
Washington, April 5, 1864

Mr. Horace Mann
Boston

The petition of your
sons comes sighted, praying that
I would free all slave children
and the tendency of which petition
it appears you wrote, was to request
me a few days since by letter
for decision. Please tell these
little people I am very glad their
young hearts are so full of just
and generous sympathy, and
that while I have not the
power to grant all they ask,
I trust they will remember
that God has, and that, as
it seems, He will do it.

Yours truly,
Abraham Lincoln

In April 2008, one of Lincoln's letters sold for a record \$3.4m (£1.7m) at auction in New York. This letter, dated 5 April 1864 and sent from the Executive Mansion, Washington, was an answer to a document entitled: 'Children's petition to the president asking him to free all the little slave children in this country'. Lincoln replied:

'Please tell these little people, I am very glad their young hearts are so full of just and generous sympathy, and that while I have not the power to grant all they ask, I trust that they will remember that God has, and that, as it seems, He will do it.'

By Nicolas Soames



Garrick Hagon has appeared in many films including *Batman*, *Star Wars*, *Cry Freedom*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Fatherland*, *Black Book*, *The Walker*, *La Vie en Rose* and *Churchill at War*. His television credits include *A Perfect Spy*, *The Nightmare Years*, *Henry V*, *The Chief* and *Love Hurts*. On London's West End he played Chris Keller in *All My Sons*, and he is a frequent story reader for the BBC. He has also read *The Call of the Wild*, *Classic American Poetry*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* for Naxos AudioBooks.



Peter Marinker has worked extensively in theatre nationwide throughout the UK and in the USA, including leading roles in *Lancelot and Guinevere* and *The Merchant of Venice* at the Old Vic, and the title role in *Macbeth* for the Open Space Theatre. His TV work includes numerous roles for the BBC, and his film credits include *The Russia House* and *Emerald Forest*. He features on *Great Speeches in History* and Beckett's *A Piece of Monologue* and reads *The House of Seven Gables* for Naxos AudioBooks.



Peter Whitfield is a historian and a poet. Among his recent books are *A Universe of Books: Readings in World Literature*, *Landmarks in Western Science*, *New Found Lands – Maps in the History of Exploration* and for Naxos AudioBooks *Charles Darwin – In a Nutshell* and *The History of English Poetry*. He is a keen cyclist and has written books on his sport.

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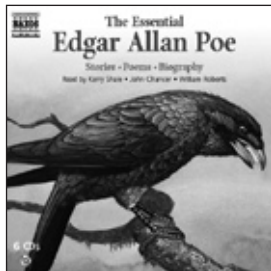
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Post-production by Wolfgang Dienst
Edited by Sarah Butcher

Grace Bedell's letter read by Camilla Seward
Mary A. Dodge's letter read by Liza Ross

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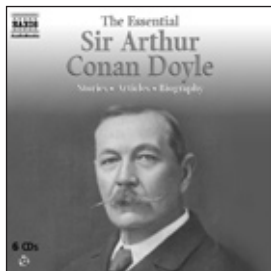
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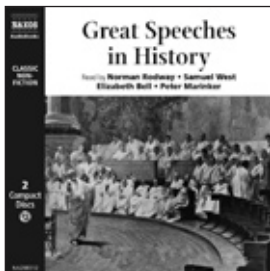
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The Essential Abraham Lincoln

Biography • Speeches • Letters

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Read by Peter Marinker and Garrick Hagon

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) was one of the most influential presidents of the USA, uniting the country and abolishing slavery after a terrible civil war. On the 200th anniversary of his birth, his life and works are presented here in accessible form. The story of his remarkable rise from a poor farming background to triumph in one of the most challenging presidencies in US history, and sudden tragic death, is told on CD 1. A varied selection of his major speeches is on CD 2, including *The House Divided* and *The Gettysburg Address*. CD 3 contains a revealing collection of letters: forthright, intimate, caring and direct, they demonstrate his natural eloquence and humanity. This portrait shows Lincoln to be a man of principle, with keen intelligence balanced by vision and determination – certainly one of the most outstanding men in American history.

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Garrick Hagon
and
The Story Circle

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FICTION**

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