

Abraham Lincoln Not White Trash

Ida M. Tarbell Gives Record of Family of the Immortal Man of America.

"IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE LINCOLNS" by Ida M. Tarbell. Harper Brothers, New York.

Abraham Lincoln was not the scion of a played-out, gone to seed family, nor is there any stain on the fair name of his gentle mother. He was one of 3,100 known descendants of a man who came to America from England while yet a lad, and who made for himself an important place in the British colony through his industry, thrift and prudence. From this family came landowners, manufacturers, soldiers, and other citizens of influence and substance. Abraham Lincoln came up from obscurity through poverty to greatness and immortality, but he was fulfilling the destiny of a strong race, already tested for its strength and virility.

Miss Tarbell has made a noteworthy addition to the growing volume of literature concerning Abraham Lincoln's forebears. While she deals with the great emancipator to the extent of touching on some incidents of his own early life, and his ventures into politics, the larger part of her latest volume is given over to his American ancestors.

These she follows from the time the first of them set foot on American soil at Salem, in the Puritan colony in 1637, through their migrations and varying fortunes until she comes to the great Abraham. The way lies over an interesting and diversified country, in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Indiana and Illinois. Many Lincolns inhabit the volume, and they are all, industrious, though not always thrifty; they are energetic, mechanics, land owners, farmers, substantial citizens, pioneers, builders, and in all ways worthy to be the precursors of one whose name is truly immortal.

Moreover, she effectually does away with the poor white trash stock that has clung around the name of Lincoln for a century. The first of the Lincolns to reach America was Samuel, native of Norfolk, England, apprenticed to a weaver, who removed to

America in 1637, when Samuel was about 18 years old. Samuel thrived in the new land, became an important personage at New Hingham. He married, raised a family, accumulated much property, and died in 1690. His third son, Mordecai, is the one to whom Abraham Lincoln traces. Mordecai learned the blacksmith trade at Hull, and later set up a forge at Cohasset. He paid \$35 for a site and a water right, set up a sawmill and built a home. Later he established a second mill and forge and finally a grist mill. His three enterprises prospered and his family increased. When his wife died and he married again, two of his sons, Mordecai and Abraham, migrated to New Jersey, and there Mordecai married well. The brothers operated a forge, finally becoming prominent in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania, where they owned much land and operated iron works.

Fought Under Washington.

Mordecai's oldest son was to carry on the New Jersey business after his father's death. He was well established there, his mother's brother was a member of the New Jersey council, and later justice of the supreme court of the state, and the young man had every encouraging prospect. He went to Pennsylvania, however, and later to Rockingham county, Virginia. His oldest son, Abraham, grandfather of the president, established himself in the Shenandoah valley, where he became a landowner, and a captain of militia in 1776, serving through until 1778, while a great many other Lincolns in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania also were in the patriotic army. He had the family gift of imagination, and the friendship of Daniel Boone, a combination fatal to the prospects of a long and quiet life in Virginia.

Early Days in Kentucky.

Over the mountain trail through Virginia and Tennessee in 1782 Abraham Lincoln trekked with his wife and four children, Mordecai, Josiah, Mary and Thomas. Here he entered several tracts of land, several thousand acres in all, and settled on one not far from Louisville. One day in May, 1785, while working on his clearing, an Indian dashed from the woods and killed him. His oldest son, Mordecai, seized a gun and killed the Indian, who was making off with little Thomas Lincoln, then aged about 8 years.

This brings us down to Lincoln's father. How his mother toiled to keep her family of orphaned children together, how the youngest was apprenticed to a carpenter; how he

Veteran Record Clerk at State House Nominated

David Butler, First Nebraska Governor, in Convention

Col. J. H. Presson, 84, Has Served State so Long He Has "Lost Political Identity."

By R. H. PETERS, Staff Correspondent The Omaha Bee.

Lincoln, Feb. 9.—The majority of men, when they have reached the age of 84, are content to sit quietly in the home that a loving son or daughter provides and find enjoyment in occasional reminiscences with old cronies. Not so with Col. J. H. Presson of Lincoln, who can be found every day before a large rolltop desk in the office of the governor of the state.

Small and active, he greets with a quick smile every one of the long stream of callers that come daily, seeking the governor, calling many of them by name. Whether democrats or republicans, the greeting is the same, for Colonel Presson has grown beyond any partisan spirit that he may have had in the past. As record and chief executive clerk to the governor and as an appointee of Nebraska's chief executive he has served under both parties during the 14 years he has held office. Occasionally some one asks his political affiliations and the colonel's reply is always the same, the tale of a dandy who was a prisoner so many times of both confederates and northerners that he finally declared "he had done lost his identity."

"That's the way it is with me," the colonel laughingly concludes. "I've done lost my identity."

Duties manifold.

His duties in Nebraska's capitol require him to draw up requests for extradition, file numerous deeds, and handle a thousand and one details that come through the office of the governor. It is a task that keeps

him busy from early morning until 5 at night, when the state house is closed.

Colonel Presson has always led a vigorous life. Born in Franklin, Warren county, O., in 1840, he came from pioneer American stock. His father was born in Maine in 1816 and his mother came from Kentucky, having been born in a log house in 1818.

The colonel's first recollection of dates goes back to 1844 during the campaign in which James K. Polk was elected president.

"I remember seeing the long procession pass by where we lived at that time in Germantown, Ill," he said, leaning back in his chair and calling back the old election scenes when torch light parades and bitter personal quarrels marked the campaigns.

Paper "Fortune" Voided.

At the age of 17, Colonel Presson gave evidence of the vigor and persistence that keep him still active today. On foot he left Berwick, Ill., for Henderson, Minn., 40 miles above St. Paul. Provided with \$100 in paper bills, the first part of the trip was comparatively easy, but the bank issuing the currency failed, so that his paper became worthless. Days of intense hardship followed.

"As I thought of my worn boots and scanty purse, I admit my heart was faint and my eye moist, but I had the grit of the American boy used to hard knocks, with harder ones just ahead," he said. "There was no railroad in the then territory of Minnesota and I do not remember seeing a telegraph pole. Ox teams were in evidence and even farmers were small and far between. I only passed three towns in 150 miles, Faribault, Watertown, and LeSeur."

Fought With Sherman.

A few months later the boy was again in Illinois and apprenticed to a harness maker. For four years he labored at the task, to drop it when war broke out. With the 65th regiment of Illinois volunteers he served for 38 months, taking part in every battle in which General Sherman was engaged, from Shiloh to the fall of Atlanta. Two months after his honorable discharge he was out in the territory of Nebraska, where he set up a mercantile business.

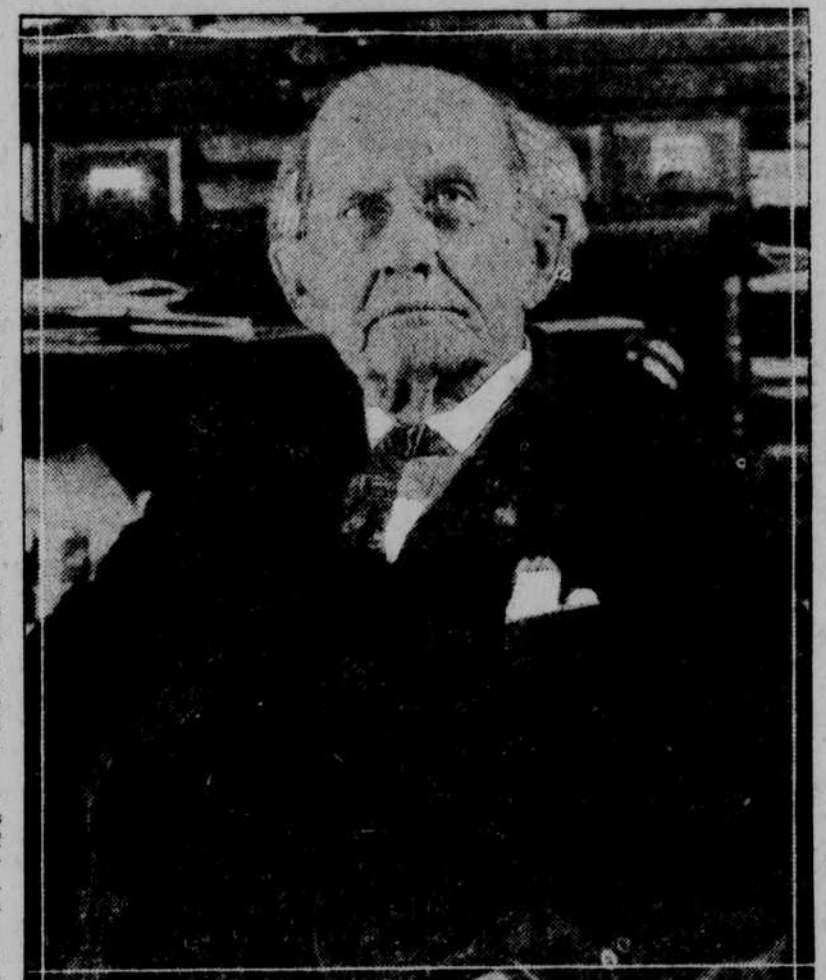
Shortly afterwards he took his first step into politics when he was elected county clerk of Johnson county. At the first republican territorial convention he was present as secretary and placed in nomination David Butler, subsequently elected first governor of Nebraska.

Following in the footsteps of his father, Colonel Presson became a member, in 1871, of the Nebraska conference of the Methodist church. For 10 years he was a supernumerary preacher and is now on the retired list. He was chaplain of the state house of representatives in 1891 and of the state senate in 1903. Later he was proof reader of the senate, and while serving in that capacity, was elected commandant of the Soldiers and Sailors' home at Milford, Neb., a post that he held four years.

Just "Average Life."

"My life, on the whole, has been about the average of human beings," Colonel Presson declares. "Made up of lights and shades, successes and failures. I have always had enough to make life comfortable and happy."

In 1914, in a brief biographical sketch prepared for his immediate family, the colonel wrote, "I have now lived more than the allotted time of man and the years of life are about spent. Yet in spirit I feel young and



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Tree "Proprietor" Diseased.

Athens, Ga., Feb. 9.—The "tree that owns itself", one of Athens' curiosities, known to all tourists who have passed

through this section, was this week receiving the attention of "tree doctors." The tree, a large oak, deeded to itself by a Mr. Jackson before his death, when a new street was being opened nearby, has been in decaying health for several years. Specialists in diseases of trees have been employed by local citizens in a final effort to save this old historical landmark.



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