

1809—The Lincoln Centenary—1909

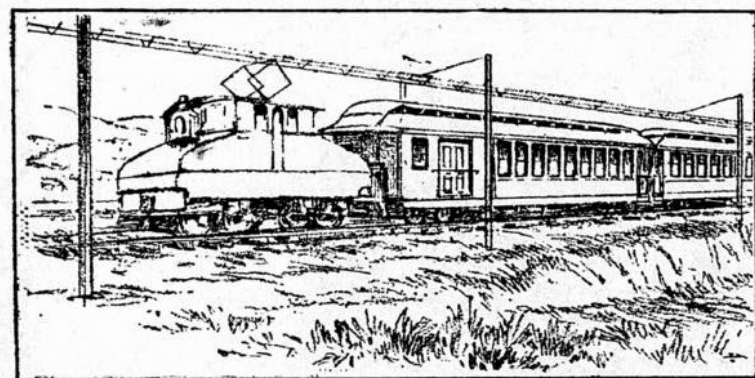
The World When

Steam Was In Its Infancy, Electricity Only a Scientific Curiosity—Darwin Born the Same Day

THE world of 1809 was somewhat different from that of 1909. In many lines of human endeavor it is doubtful if all the previous centuries saw as great changes as have taken place in that single century. The age of steam was then in its earliest infancy. Watt had watched his teakettle and invented his engine, it is true; Fulton had made his steamboat traverse the Hudson and was in that very year, 1809, taking out his patent, but George Stephenson was then a laborer and was only dreaming of his locomotive, which was not to materialize until five years later. Thus, while the use of steam as a motive power was barely known, the marvelous revolution to be wrought by it had not yet started.

As for electricity, it was only a scientific curiosity. As far as any practical employment of it was concerned, that did not come till years later. In 1809 water and horseflesh were the chief motor powers; boats, wagons and stagecoaches were the almost exclusive methods of travel; candles and tallow dips were used as illuminants; there were but few newspapers, and these small and poorly printed, and letters were infrequent, voluminous and cost much for postage. Only a small percentage of the population was educated, dueling was in vogue, slavery was in existence on both sides of the ocean, there was little democracy or liberty anywhere except in America, and about the only things that were as they are now were love, death and taxes. Yet that was only a hundred years ago, barely a lifetime for some people. Truly, the world moves. It took it a long time to get into the habit, but it is "going some" now.

In 1809 about all the world that was known were Europe, a fringe of land



1809

1909

In Asia and Africa around the Mediterranean, a little broader fringe down the eastern coast of the two Americas and a rather vague and grotesque notion in the public mind concerning China, India, Japan and the African continent. The chief use of Asia in those days was as a basis for fables, while Africa was only good for stealing "niggers" from and selling them into slavery.

In the United States, Indiana was on the extreme frontier; the Louisiana purchase had just been made, Florida and Texas were not yet acquired, and the entire population of the nation was but a trifle over 7,000,000. Madison had been elected president the first time and was about to take his seat. The second war with Great Britain had not yet been fought. The great political fact of the entire world was then Napoleon. He was in the zenith of his power and for a little man was casting a remarkably long shadow. Indeed, just about this time Napoleon was Europe. He dominated France, Italy and Germany and had England and Russia scared into a political ague. True, Wellington was winning his first victories in Spain, but Waterloo, of which these were prophetic, was yet six years distant.

In all material respects, to compare the year 1809 with 1909 would be like comparing a tallow dip with an arc

Centenary—1909

Lincoln Was Born

By James A. Edgerton

Copyright, 1908, by the American Press Association

Light, a sail ship with a Lusitania or an ancient stagecoach with a modern locomotive.

Politically the showing is almost as bad for "the good old times." England was at about her lowest ebb of despotism. Napoleon had snuffed out the liberty gained by the French revolution. Most of the rest of Europe had but traded the rule of the kings for the personal military rule of this one man. In America alone were liberty and democracy recognized. They had no home elsewhere.

Spiritually the world was emerging out of the semi-athelism of the eighteenth century into the revived dogmatism of the nineteenth. No; looked at from any possible standpoint 1909 is just about a million miles ahead of the corresponding year in the preceding century. And that is not mere boasting. It is history.

For all that, 1809 was a noteworthy year—noteworthy for its promise rather than its performance. During it were born two of the great poets of the last century, Edgar A. Poe and Alfred Tennyson. And on Feb. 12, 1809, the very day that Lincoln was born, Charles Robert Darwin saw the light. Lincoln and Darwin! Where could be found two mightier names in their respective spheres—Lincoln, who freed the bodies of men, and Darwin, who freed their minds; Lincoln, who taught us that the black man is our brother, and Darwin, who taught us that the ape is our great-grandfather; both men majestic in their patient, homely simplicity; both earning the right of earthly immortality by their unexampled services to the human race; Darwin, the founder of evolution, who has revolutionized the thought of the world; Lincoln, the liberator of the negro, the preserver of the republic, the incarnation of democracy, who has shown the world what

ographers of the martyr president who knew him well state that he did not materially change his views till the day of his death.

It was in the political domain, however, where Paine influenced Lincoln most profoundly. As one was the author of the Declaration of Independence, so the other became its defender and apostle. One of the greatest pieces of eloquence that ever fell from the emancipator's lips was in support of this charter of the rights of man.

Indeed, both Jefferson and Lincoln were pupils of Paine, whom the world will some day recognize as the founder of modern democracy. Jefferson sullied his work by trying to steal the honor due his teacher. Lincoln was the truer and more honorable soul and practiced the teachings of the new political gospel with more fidelity.

When Lincoln was born Paine was about to take his deathbed and Jefferson in three weeks would relinquish the presidency. In Europe Napoleon had reached his zenith and in a few years would begin his downfall. The steam engine was invented, and the steamboat was launched, but nobody knew what either meant. The world had not awakened to modern progress, but was stirring in its sleep.

The particular corner of the earth in which Lincoln saw the light was almost virgin wilderness. Kentucky at that time was not only frontier, but raw frontier at that. It was nature unmodified and unadorned. It was good fundamental stuff out of which to make a man, provided the man was fundamental enough and strong enough to build himself out of such material. It takes a bright soul to shine out through a casing of such environment and such heredity.

But there has been a vast amount of unintentional running down of Lincoln's surroundings. His parents, relatives, neighbors, education, associates and even his wife have come in for a share of the indirect abuse. This course is both unnecessary and unjust. Lincoln does not need to have his circumstances or his people minimized in order that he may seem great. Probably they do not show well by the contrast, but that is not their fault. They were fully as good as the average circumstances and people of that time. The ordinary hill may look very insignificant beside a mountain, but the hill cannot help that.

The Lincolns were poor, but so was everybody else. Equality is a heaven which leaves poverty not one-half so bitter. Lincoln was born in a log house with one room and a dirt floor, but so was almost everybody else who first saw light on the Kentucky frontier of that day. Ida Tarbell indignantly denies that Thomas Lincoln, Abraham's father, was the lazy loafer he has been pictured, and as that is the more charitable view and as Miss Tarbell is a woman I am going to side with her. Miss Tarbell also takes up the cudgels for Lincoln's mother, and as there are two women in this case I side with her more than ever. Moreover, a fair investigation shows that the charitable view is the right one. Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln were an honorable, self-respecting and industrious couple fully up to the average or above the average of the time in which they lived.

The same thing applies to Lincoln's environment. It was not bad; it was only crude. All these things are comparative. Besides, there is a whole lot of unnecessary fuss made about the early accidents that surround great men. An acorn will grow an oak if the soil is anywhere near to being half decent in which it is dropped. One of the immortals cannot be explained by the presence or absence of plush carpet on the floor of the bedroom in which he is born. Neither bank credits nor their effects can make or seriously mar a real genius who inherits their command. Poverty could not overwhelm Lincoln any more than wealth could spoil Roosevelt.

The worst that can be said of the Kentucky of Lincoln's day is that it was new, but it was also wholesome. As for the hard life, the simple fare, the primitive surroundings, what worth while man was ever retarded by things such as these?

Man is not a slave of things. He is in the image of the Maker of things; therefore he is a ruler of things by divine right.

All of Abraham Lincoln's life was a proof of this principle. By the sheer greatness of his heart, his intellect and his soul he overcame an adverse environment. He had few of the helps that are regarded as essential by most men. He was without the assistance of family or wealth, early training or influential connections, the prepared steps of the stairway to success. He had to climb the heights alone.

Mr. Lincoln said and did many great things, but was greater than anything he said or did. He was in the forefront of one of earth's fiercest struggles and yet is known chiefly as an exponent of liberty, brotherhood and peace. He was the largest figure in one of the crises in the world's history and yet lent more luster to his epoch than he gained from it. Lincoln will be a live figure in the minds of men when the occasion that gave him prominence shall have grown vague and distant. The event that brings a great soul into men's view is at best but the stage setting; he is the actor. It is but the background of the picture, he the chief figure and reason of the painting's existence. It is but the pedestal; he is the statue. Who remembers that Socrates fought in a war or that Buddha was held to a kingdom? Alexander did not derive his importance from Macedon nor Cicero from Catiline. It was great for Lincoln to free the slave and save the Union, but greater to be Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln The Politician

1809—The Lincoln Centenary—1909

By JAMES A. EDGERTON

(Copyright, 1908, by American Press Association.)



THAT ONE WORD WAS "UNION."

ITCIANS. We do not sufficiently discriminate. We are too sweeping in our denunciations. Because some religionists are hypocrites is no reason we should abuse religion. We might as well refuse to accept money because there are counterfeiters in circulation or resolve never to sit again if one chair happens to break under us. Some of the best and most public spirited men in our history have been politicians. They have not been the criminal variety of politician, however. They have been the sort of politicians that are wise generals in political campaigns.

To this class belonged Lincoln. Make no mistake about his shrewdness, farsightedness and ability as a tactician. In the struggle with Douglas he not only got the better of his opponent in debate, but outgeneraled him. He was playing to beat Douglas for the presidency. He did not count on getting the senatorship for himself or on gaining anything for himself. Lincoln was a politician, but not a selfish one. He looked the situation squarely in the face, decided what was best for his party and the country and fought for that, regardless of the effects on his own fortunes. The difference between Lincoln and

other politicians of his time, or of any time, for the matter of that, is that he saw further ahead, cared more for principle and would not allow private gain to stand in the way of public good. His associates looked only to the election immediately involved. He gazed beyond that to future elections. They desired only to win the nearby victory. He kept his eye on the faroff greater victory. They dealt with the ordinary campaign methods. While not neglectful of these, he measured the effects of principles and used his unerring logical faculty in determining the working of cause and effect in the political world.

One other thing should be borne in mind. In his political capacity Abraham Lincoln was essentially a Republican. His great fight was made to maintain the power of the general government over the subject of slavery in the territories. His whole attitude during the war was for nationality. Whatever may be our own views on the subject of state and nation, if we have failed to see this side of Lincoln we have failed to see him at all. His struggle against Douglas was to maintain the traditions and powers of the nation against any vaguely phrased popular sovereignty that was not properly safeguarded by law and order. After becoming president his insistence was that self preservation and continuity is the basic law of any nation's existence. Therefore no state could withdraw from the Union without the consent of all the other states. His cry was for saving the nation in the form in which it was turned over to him. When he met Alexander H. Stephens at the Hampton Roads conference, he told Stephens that he would write only one word and the south might have everything else. That one word was "Union." He expressed the same sentiment to Horace Greeley and others. To Abraham Lincoln the United States of America was distinctly and eternally a nation, not a confederation of states. I feel bound to say this, because I am trying to give a whole and truthful view of the man. He was constructive, always and everywhere constructive. He was in favor of public improvements and public improvements made by the state. He was in favor of a tariff. He was for government issue of money—a government man all through.

People who looked only at the surface of things accused President Lincoln of lacking a policy. They were mistaken. He had a policy, a very large but a very definite policy. He never shrank from carrying it out. He was no stickler on small things, but none could be firmer on great things. His faculty of going to the fundamentals of every question made him settle on one thing at the begin-

ning of his administration. It was that the nation must be preserved intact. This was his pole star. He steered by it without varying. When Seward and others would have temporized he kept steadfast to that one fundamental ideal.

A Spanish Commercial Float. A number of influential merchants of Barcelona, Spain, have under contemplation the chartering of a large vessel upon which they intend to install an exposition of Spanish manufactures and Spanish agricultural products. This vessel is to make a ten months' cruise, visiting the principal commercial ports of the world for the purpose of creating a larger demand for Spanish merchandise.

A CURE FOR RHEUMATISM GUARANTEED

MATT J. JOHNSON'S "6088"

Is by Far the Best Blood Purifier and Rheumatism Cure Ever Offered.

People suffering with RHEUMATISM, KIDNEY TROUBLE, CATARRH OR ANY OTHER BLOOD TROUBLE will find immediate relief in "6088"

YOUR MONEY REFUNDED if you are not satisfied on taking half a bottle. Could anything be fairer?

Sold and Guaranteed by Eugene A. Pfefferle

Real Estate For Sale or Rent.

Lot 4, block 75, N New Ulm, must be sold within 30 days and will be sold cheap.

FOR SALE—Lot 2, Block 156, North. FOR SALE—Lot 6, Block 206, North. FOR SALE—Lot 6, Block 15, South. FOR SALE—Lot 14, Block 57, South. FOR SALE—Lot 1, Block 119, South. FOR SALE—Outlot N. 138. FOR SALE—Lots 5 and 6, Block 31 North, New Ulm, with dwelling house, very cheap. Inquire of ALBERT STEINHAUSER.

Don't Get A Divorce.

A western judge granted a divorce on account of ill-temper and bad breath. Dr. King's New Life Pills would have prevented it. They cure Constipation, causing bad breath and Liver Trouble the ill-temper, dispel colds, banish headaches, conquer chills. 25c at O. M. Olsen's.

CLOSING OUT

SALE OF Hardware and Stoves

AT

Wm. F. Laudenschlager's

BEGINNING JANUARY 26TH.

I am going out of the hardware business to go entirely into the Ventilating and Heating work, and all goods in my store must be closed out in the next fifteen days. So here's your chance to buy first class goods at remarkably low prices. These Goods must go and will be sold

AT AND BELOW COST.

So do not fail to come in and see how much you can buy for very little money.

THE FOLLOWING GOODS WILL BE FOR SALE:

Stoves, Tools, Shears, Razors, Pocket Knives, Butcher Knives, All kinds of Spoons silver and plated, Sewing Machines, All kinds of Granite Ware, Tin Ware, Hardware, Wash Boilers, Wash Tubs, Wringers, Garden Rakes, Hoes, Shovels, Paints and Varnishes of all kinds, and many other small articles too numerous to mention, and all must be sold.

Here is your chance to save money by buying now. Be the first to come and pick out your goods while the stock is complete, as no more goods will be added.

This is positively a CLOSING OUT SALE.