

From the Principal

February 11, 2008

Celebration of Famous Americans

The month of February brings the opportunity to celebrate the historical lives of Famous Americans. As part of the Grade Three curriculum plans, the Famous American reports and presentations once again bring history alive. Each day this past week, our enthusiastic third grade students “marched” onto the Springer campus ready to “live the life” of their favorite famous American.

This year, their reenactment takes on even more meaning with the American political season in full swing.

We have a great deal to learn from our historical heroes.

In addition to classroom presentations, a Famous American “actually” visited with the students of the entire school on Thursday morning at our flag assembly.

Here is an example of one student presentation...



Abraham Lincoln by Kendall C.

Action: (Walk in while “Hail to the Chief” is playing on iPod stereo. Take position behind podium. Step up onto stool. Start speech after “Hail to the Chief” fades out.

Spoken Words: What, no standing ovation?! Aren’t you supposed to rise when a U.S. President walks in? Oh, and I forgot – no flash photography, please. (Pause) Hi, my

name is Abraham Lincoln, and I was the 16th President of the United States. I led the country during the Civil War, and I am credited with ending slavery. Let me share with you my life story. (Pause)

9 score and 19 years ago today, I was born. On February 12, 1809, I was born in Knob Creek, Kentucky in a log cabin near the woods, and I grew up on a farm. The members of my family were my mom, Nancy, my Dad, Thomas, and my older sister, Sarah. When I was seven, my mom died of typhoid fever so I had a stepfamily, too. My stepmom's name was Sarah, my stepbrother's name was John, and my two stepsisters were named Mathilda and Sarah.

When I was growing up, I dreamed of becoming a lawyer and president. The reason why I wanted to be a lawyer was that I believed in doing what was right, which demonstrated my integrity. I never cheated in games or at school, and I always told the truth to everyone, including my mom and dad. Because of this, my nickname was "Honest Abe". I wanted to be president because I wanted to stop slavery.

Some of my special talents were splitting rail fences, planting our food, spelling and grammar, taking care of animals, and making people laugh. A few of my special interests were exploring, reading, and writing. My sons, Tad and Willie, loved to wrestle with me. At age 16, I was 6 feet tall and wore a size 14 shoe. My grandfather's cousin was Daniel Boone.

There were many obstacles in my life. For example, it was difficult to get Congress to agree to free slaves in 14 states. Another obstacle I faced was losing elections and debates. I acted like I had won even when I didn't because no one likes a sore loser (including me). Working on ending slavery and running for president required lots of patience on my part.

My personal life also contained many difficulties. My sister, Sarah, died trying to give birth to a baby boy. When I was about 30, I was in love with a lady named Ann Rutledge, who died of typhoid fever while we were engaged. My son, Willie, also died of typhoid fever. Last, but not least, Mary (my wife) had lots of anger problems I had to deal with.

I had to sacrifice many things in my life, such as leaving my children to visit the soldiers during the Civil War and giving up my family time to run for and serve as president. Being elected the President of the United States is what I consider the highest honor that anyone can earn.

Protecting the United States is the reason I became president. I demonstrated initiative by leading the effort to end slavery in the United States. It was not easy to get agreement from Congress and the people that slavery was wrong, but I fought hard to convince them because it was the right thing to do. It was important to end slavery because I wanted everybody to be treated the same way, no matter what the color of their skin was.

I am famous for many things. Twice elected as the 16th President of the United States, I was the tallest and first bearded president. My face is on Mount Rushmore, the penny and the five dollar bill. The Emancipation Proclamation was signed in 1863 which ended slavery and gave slaves their freedom. During the Civil War, I delivered the 272-word Gettysburg Address, one of the most quoted speeches of all time and one that I wrote on an envelope in a train.

The world would be really different if I had not achieved the accomplishments I did. Slavery would have lasted longer as well as the different treatment of people per the color of

their skin. Someone else would have been the 16th President of the United States, and the Gettysburg Address would have never been written.

Abraham Lincoln was shot at age 59 and killed by John Wilkes Booth on April 15, 1865 while he was watching the play, "Our American Cousin".

I hope you enjoyed learning about Abraham Lincoln.