



LINCOLN (1992)  
PART 1: THE MAKING OF A PRESIDENT

**August 24, 1992**  
**Total Running Time: 00:54:10:00**

START TC: 00:00:00:00

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Certain historical images may be difficult to see.  
Some language is outdated and considered  
inappropriate by contemporary standards.

ON SCREEN TEXT:

Life Stories Presents  
LINCOLN  
Part 1: The Making of a President

00:00:21:00

NARRATOR:

What you were about to witness is the great American story. It is told in Abraham Lincoln's own words and in the words of the people who knew him. The photographs that illuminate these words are authentic images from the 19th century. The events you will see in here actually happened. [MUSIC] The year 1901. A place. Springfield, Illinois. Their plain faces do not reveal the history they were witnessing. Body of Abraham Lincoln was hoisted out of the earth. It had been an uneasy rest for the 16th president. Assassinated 36



years earlier. No coffin had ever been plagued in such a profane condition. It had survived attempts by Kidnapers. It had been hidden beneath cellar timbers. It had been buried at a secret spot, leaving the public to pay homage at an empty sarcophagus. It had been opened and reopened to check on who was really inside. Now, finally, Lincoln would be encased in 64ft<sup>2</sup> of cement. Never to be disturbed again. A generation had passed since the bullet was fired in 1865. The 20th century had arrived. Again and again, we pay him tribute. Again and again, we act out his life. Again and again, he tells his. It is the great American story. Story of the man at the center of this nation's history. A man who stepped forth out of the wilderness.

00:02:57:00

LINCOLN:

I was born February 12th, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky, a mile or a mile and a half from where Hodgenville is. I know no means of identifying a precise account. It was on Noland Creek. My earliest recollection, however, is of the Knob Creek place. I remember that very well. Lay in the valley, surrounded by high hills and deep gardens. We have a vague tradition that my great grandfather went from Pennsylvania to Virginia, and that he was a Quaker. My grandfather's name was Abraham. It was my own. He was killed by the Indians. Further back than this, I have never heard anything. My father, being left an orphan at the age of six years in poverty, became a wholly uneducated man, which I suppose is a reason why I know so little of our family history. It's very strange that I, a boy brought up in the woods, and seeing as it were, but little of the world should be drafted into the very apex of this great event.

00:04:59:00

NARRATOR:

Chicago, 1860. It all started here at the Republican National Convention. With a surprise nomination of a little-known politician named Abraham Lincoln. He was a 51-year-old prairie lawyer from Illinois without any executive experience whatsoever. The issue was slavery. 4 million black people held in bondage in the South. Lincoln pledged to stop it from spreading. On slavery's extension, he said we must hold firm as with a chain of steel.

00:05:43:00

HORACE GREELEY:

Never till now. Has there been a time when the slaveholders have not dictated the choice of a president. The battle is over. The victory won. Hannibal Hamlin is elected vice president and Abraham Lincoln, president of the United States.

00:06:01:00

DAVID HERBERT DONALD:

Few people knew what kind of a president they had elected in 1860, in the South. Lincoln was almost completely unknown and was simply characterized as a black Republican who was going to emancipate the slaves. But even in the North, not many people knew much about Lincoln. He was so obscure that one of his campaign biographers referred to him throughout as Abraham Lincoln. He had very little record and not much experience. He was known simply through the Lincoln-Douglas debates, the Cooper Union



Address, and a few other speeches. He was unknown and nobody knew what they had bought.

00:06:41:00

NARRATOR:

All eyes were focused on Springfield, Illinois. To learn more about Lincoln the unknown. Springfield and Abraham Lincoln had practically grown up together. A muddy frontier town of 2000, and an insecure but ambitious young man from the backwoods. It had been easy to spot Lincoln as the rising young wonder 20 years earlier. The townspeople had watched him grow into one of the top attorneys in the West. The leader of his political party. An extraordinary use of words and not the least the tallest man around.

00:07:22:00

LINCOLN:

I am, in height, six feet four inches, nearly laying in flesh, weighing on an average 180 pounds. Dark complexion with coarse black hair and gray eyes. No other marks or brands recollected. My wife is as handsome as when she was a girl, and I am poor. Nobody then fell in love with her. I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughter. I have three sons, 117, one nine and one seven years of age.

00:08:00:00

NARRATOR:

Lincoln rarely spoke of a fourth son, Eddie, who had died a decade earlier. His youngest boy was Thomas, who had a head so big Lincoln called him tadpole.



Tan for short. Willie, the middle child, always had. One day he'd be a preacher. He was Lincoln's favorite. Lincoln's eldest son, Robert was strangely aloof, never managing to become close to his famous father. The mother was the well-educated, closed conscious Kentucky aristocrat Mary Todd.

00:08:34

MARY LINCOLN:

My mother died when I was very young. I was educated by Mademoiselle Montel, a French lady, and I came to Illinois in 1837. My husband placed great reliance on my knowledge of human nature, and I had an ambition to be Mrs. President.

00:08:55:00

NARRATOR:

His house was a two-story frame building with an outhouse in the back and a stable behind it. He kept his own horse, fed, and milked his own cow, sorting his own wood. He was both ordinary and extraordinary. To some, a great man in the making. To others, he was woefully unprepared for high office. And the mounting crisis that faced him. By February 1861, as Lincoln prepared to leave for Washington in the presidency, six states had already seceded, and southern newspapers called for secession. War talks now spread across the nation.

00:09:40:00

R.A. HUNT:



Lynchburg, Virginia. I have heard several persons in this place say that if you ever did take the president's chair, that they would go to Washington City expressly to kill you. Don't you take it. Resign. If you don't, you will be murdered.

00:10:02:00

NARRATOR:

In preparation for his departure, Lincoln gave his little dog Fido to a neighbor. He found a new home for his horse or bum. He packed up his library, sold his furniture and went around from house to house saying goodbye. Then at the tannery house where he spent his last day in Springfield, Lincoln roped up his own trunks and wrote on their labels Abe Lincoln. The white House, Washington, D.C. Accompanying Lincoln to Washington were two personal secretaries. The Bavarian born John G. Nicolay and 22-year-old John Milton Hay. Fellow lawyer Ward Hill Lemmon came on as his bodyguard for the long train journey east to the inauguration.

00:10:49:00

WARD HILL LAMON:

At precisely five minutes before a Mr. Lincoln emerged from a private room in the depot building and passed slowly to the car. The people falling back respectfully on either side and as many as possible, shaking his hands. He drew himself up to his full height, removed his hat, and stood for several seconds in silence.

00:11:15:00



ILLINOIS STATE JOURNAL:

Illinois State Journal. We have known Mr. Lincoln for many years. We have heard him speak upon 100 different occasions. But we never saw him so profoundly affected. Although it was raining fast when he began to speak. Every heart was lifted and every had bent forward to catch the last words of the departing chief.

00:11:38:00

LINCOLN:

My friends: No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this party, to this place and the kindness of these people. I owe everything here. I have lived a quarter of a century. And to pass from a young to an old man. Here. My children have been born. And one is buried. I now leave not knowing when or whether ever I may return. With a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington.

00:12:22:00

NARRATOR:

By the time Lincoln left for Washington, he had grown a full beard. A little girl named Grace Bedell had written him, his face was too thin. Why didn't he try growing his whiskers? Now the face of the presidential Lincoln had emerged.

00:12:41:00

JOHN NICOLAY:

It was the beginning of a memorable journey and a whole route from Springfield to Washington, and almost every station was gathered, a crowd of

people in the hope to catch a glimpse of the face of the president elect, or at least to see the flying train.

00:13:09:00

NARRATOR:

It was supposed to have been his grand entrance. The culmination of a 12-day inaugural journey across America. But the trip was spoiled by news that former Mississippi Senator Jefferson Davis had become president of what was called a new nation, the Confederate States of America where slavery would be forever legal.

00:13:34:00

LT. GENERAL WINIFIELD SCOTT:

There is serious danger of violence and assassination of Mr. Lincoln in its passage through Baltimore. All risks might be easily avoided by a change in the traveling arrangements which would bring his party through Baltimore. By night train.

00:13:53:00

LINCOLN:

A plan had been laid for my assassination. Some friend had given me this shop wall hat. I had never worn one in my life. I put on an old overcoat that I had with me and walked out of the house at the back door. Then I put on a soft hat without being recognized by strangers. For I was not the same man.

00:14:18:00



NARRATOR:

Detective Allan Pinkerton smuggled Lincoln into a sleeping berth and hit him, ensuring utter secrecy for the journey.

00:14:28:00

WARD HILL LAMON:

It is now an acknowledged fact that there never was a moment from the day he crossed the Maryland line that he was not in danger of death by violence.

00:14:43:00

NARRATOR:

Upstairs in suite number six of Willard's Hotel, Lincoln's headquarters. For the two weeks before inauguration, the president elect found an anonymous letter waiting on his bedside table. You are nothing but a god, dirty black [Unrecognized].

00:15:02:00

LT. GENERAL WINIFIELD SCOTT:

The inauguration of President Lincoln was perhaps the most critical and hazardous event with which I have ever been connected in the preceding two months. I had received more than 50 letters threatening assassination if I dared to protect the ceremony by military force.

00:15:26:00

GUSTAVE KOERNER:



All along the line of the procession, General Scott stationed riflemen at intervals on tops of houses. Thousands of young men had come for the sole purpose of protecting Mr. Lincoln against violence or assassination, or well-armed. There were strange rumors and a general feeling of uneasiness and anxiety pervaded.

00:15:56:00

NARRATOR:

No single speech of Lincoln's had ever received the painstaking attention this one had. Lincoln called it the all-important document. His certificate of moral character.

00:16:11:00

LINCOLN:

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressor. You have no oh registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect and defend it. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be an. Though passion may have strength, it must not break our bond of affection.

00:16:59:00

NARRATOR:

Just five weeks into Lincoln's presidency, the Union was swiftly severed when South Carolina troops attacked Fort Sumter.

00:17:07:00

DAVID HERBERT DONALD:

The Civil War started with the firing on Fort Sumter. Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor was in the hotbed of southern secession. It was a Union garrison there. Lincoln had the alternative of reinforcing that garrison or withdrawing it. He took neither choice. He decided to supply instead. When the Confederates learned of his intention, they ordered it attacked and the walking. Did Lincoln want to provoke a war there? I don't think so. Lincoln was willing to risk war rather than to see the symbol of national unity destroyed. He recognized that if war came, it was much better for the Confederates to fire the first shot. But he did not want war to come. And he took therefore the least offensive program possible, namely of resupplying, not reinforcing or withdrawing.

00:18:06:00

LINCOLN:

The last ray of hope for preserving the Union peaceably expired at the assault upon Fort Sumter. I have no desire to invade the South. You know, I am by birth a Southerner. But our country is now afflicted with civil war. And I shall, to the extent of my ability, repel force by force.

00:18:33:00

ALEXANDER STEPHENS:

Lincoln may bring his troops against us. We can call out a million people if need be. And when they are cut down, we can call another, and still another. Until the last man of the South finds a bloody grave.

00:18:54:00

NARRATOR:

The Civil War had begun.

00:19:09:00

NARRATOR:

In response to Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers in the city after northern city men rallied to enlist. With flags waving and bands playing. The New York seventh Regiment headed south, hoping to reach Washington in time to defend it. Lincoln's capital lay sorely exposed, depended only by a small number of ill-equipped citizen guards.

00:19:47:00

JOHN HAY:

The town is full tonight of feverish rumors about a meditated attack. Housekeepers here are beginning to dread famine. Flower has made a sudden spring to \$18 a barrel. Everybody seems filled with a vague distrust and recklessness.

00:20:06:00

JOHN NICOLAY:

After walking the floor alone in silent thought, the president stopped and gazed long and wistfully out of the window, and unconscious of other presence in a room at length broke out. Why don't they come? Why don't they come!

00:20:24:00

JOHN HAY:

This morning, the president said, I don't believe there is any north. The seventh Regiment is a myth.

00:20:35:00

NARRATOR:

Then that noon on April 25th, the long wait was over. After marching through the night, the seventh Regiment finally arrived in Washington amidst music streaming flags and cheers. Washington. The end of the band, his first festive mood in ages. The feeling everywhere was that the war would be over a number of months. At his headquarters in the white House. Lincoln was astonished by the sheer volume of work now awaiting him.

00:21:08:00

JOHN NICOLAY:

The president would sit down at his desk day after day, before a pile of documents, 6 or 8in high, and go at it like a labor sawing wood.

00:21:19:00

JOHN HAY:

A crowd of visitors began to arrive early in the morning and were put out grumbling by the servants at midnight.

00:21:25:00



NARRATOR:

Office seekers crowded this vestibule. Senators and congressmen lined up for private interviews. Generals reported the progress of the war. Instead of supporting him in his first difficult months, the seven men Lincoln had chosen for his cabinet quarreled and undermined each other. Most of them thought the president inadequate, naive and indecisive. It was constant infighting and second guessing. One friend warned Lincoln. They'll eat you up.

00:21:58:00

EDWARD BATES:

The president is an excellent man, and in the main wise. But he lacks will and purpose, and I greatly fear he has not the power to command.

00:22:09:00

WILLIAM SEWARD:

He joked with everybody on light and grave occasions. Often interrupted a cabinet counsel for just a half hour with the members before going to work.

00:22:19:00

NARRATOR:

He told rambling, humorous backwoods stories.

00:22:22:00

LINCOLN:

You've heard that they call me a rail splitter. Well, one day, while—

00:22:26:00

NARRATOR:

Those waiting to see Lincoln in the halls outside his office were often annoyed to hear the president's high-pitched laughter and the slapping of his knee.

00:22:33:00

LINCOLN:

There is the scar. They say I tell a great many stories. I reckon I do. Just think I'm such a sucker as me as president.

00:22:47:00

DAVID HERBERT DONALD:

Many people thought that Lincoln was not suited to be president. He was, in their mind, uncouth, uneducated, ill prepared. In a day when statesmen were supposed to be sober, serious people who objected to his storytelling and to his laughter in the white House. Others thought he did not have enough moral fervor. Abolitionist particularly said that he should attack slavery in the South more vigorously. But perhaps the leading cause of complaint was Lincoln's slowness. Lincoln did not like to take the lead. He did not like to be in advance of public opinion. Consequently, he waited until all the evidence was in. And this often gave the impression of indecisive news or being on both sides of the question.

00:23:39:00



NARRATOR:

Many wondered if Lincoln was up to the job before him. They asked, who was this strange, rough-hewn man from the backwoods of America?

00:23:58:00

LINCOLN:

It is a great piece of folly to attempt to make anything out of me or my early life. It can all be condensed to a single sentence. The short and simple annals of the poor. I can remember a life in Kentucky. The cabin. This stringed living.

00:24:23:00

DENNIS HANKS:

Abe was right out in the woods about as soon as his wain fishing in the creek. Setting traps for rabbits. Muskrats. Going on coon hunts with Tom and me and the dogs, following up bees and need trees and dropping corn for his pappy. Mighty interest in life for a boy.

00:24:45:00

LINCOLN:

My father removed from Kentucky to Indiana in my eighth year. This removal was partly on account of slavery. We reached our new home about the time the state came into the Union. It was wild with many wild animals still in the woods. In the autumn of 1818. My mother died in my 10th year.

00:25:18:00

DENNIS HANKS:



She knew she was going to die and called the children to her side and told them to be good and kind to their father, to one another, and to the world. Here in this rude house of the milk sickness, died one of the very best women in the whole race.

00:25:43:00

LINCOLN:

A year after mother died, father married Mrs. Sally Johnson, a widow with three children from her first marriage. She proved a good and kind mother.

00:25:58:00

DENNIS HANKS:

In the fall, we commenced to cut the trees, clear out the brush and underwood and forest for our new grand old log cabin. It was one story, 18, but 20ft. No passage, one window, no glass in it. The house was sufficiently high to make a kind of bedroom overhead aloft. This was approached by a kind of ladder made by boring holes in the logs. Peg over peg. We climbed aloft, the pegs creaking and screeching as we went. Here I am. Abe slept. I made his first pan out of a turkey buzzard feather. After he learned to write, he was scratching his name everywhere.

00:26:41:00

SARAH BUSH LINCOLN:

He ciphered on boards when he had no paper or no slate, and when the board would get to black, he would shave it off with a drawing knife and go on again.

00:26:51:00

LINCOLN:

The aggregate of all my schools did not amount to one year. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write and cipher to the rule of three.

00:27:05:00

DENNIS HANKS:

When Abe and I returned to the house from work, he would sit down in a chair, cork his legs up as high as his head, and read. He was a constant and voracious reader. I'm free to say that Abe was a mother's boy. I never could tell whether Abe loved his father very well or not. I don't think you did. I have seen his father knock him down.

00:27:38:00

LINCOLN:

At 21, I came to Illinois and passed the first year in Macon County. I was a hired laborer at \$12 a month. mauling rails. In March 1831, I commenced the building of a flatboat on the San Juan. Then I got to New Salem, where I remained as a sort of clerk in a store. Then came the Blackhawk War, and I was elected a captain who volunteered. A success, which gave me more pleasure than any I've had since. I ran for the legislature the same year, 1832, and was beaten. The only time I've been beaten by the people. I was now without means and out of business.

00:28:41:00

NARRATOR:

In May of 1833, Lincoln was appointed postmaster of New Salem to augment his salary. He taught himself the art of surveying and helped record the boundaries and property lines of Sangamon County. Living in this small house cooking his own meals. The gawky, funny, friendly yet moody young man campaigned again for the state legislature, and this time won by the highest bill of any candidate. Excited and hopeful. Lincoln now decided to train himself through reading to be something no one in his family had ever dreamed of becoming a lawyer.

00:29:26:00

LINCOLN:

Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. So, I read New Salem in good earnest. Then I removed to Springfield to practice.

00:29:38:00

NARRATOR:

28-year-old Lincoln had moved to Springfield in 1837. He soon had a group of close friends.

00:29:46:00

JOSHUA SPEED:

After he made his home with me on every winter's night at my store by a big wood fire, 8 or 10 choice spirits assembled. They came there because they were sure to find Lincoln.

00:30:00:00

NARRATOR:

Male friendships came easily to him, but it was different with women.

00:30:05:00

LINCOLN:

I am as lonesome here as I ever was anywhere in my life. I have been spoken to by one woman since I've been here and should not have been by her. If she could have avoided it.

00:30:19:00

NARRATOR:

Lincoln's earliest love, Ann Rutledge, had died at the age of 21. Two years later, a woman named Mary Owens rejected Lincoln's proposal of marriage, complaining that he was defective when it came to a woman's happiness. By 1839, Lincoln had become an occasional guest at the Ninian Edwards home, center of the Springfield social scene. There he met a vivacious visitor from Kentucky, 21-year-old Mary Todd.

00:30:47:00

ELIZABETH T. EDWARDS:

Mary was quick, lively, gay, and frivolous. She loved glitter, pomp and power and was an extremely ambitious woman. Mr. Lincoln was a cold man, had no affection, was not social. Mr. Edwards and myself told Mary and Lincoln that

their natures, mind, education and raising was so different they could not live happy as husband and wife had better never think of the subject again.

00:31:20:00

NARRATOR:

Despite the objections of Mary's relatives. Sometime in the fall of 1840, Lincoln and Mary decided they would marry. But on New Year's Day 1841, Lincoln lost his. Not afraid to take on the responsibility of marriage, he broke the engagement. The 31-year-old lawyer was thrown into a massive depression.

00:31:41:00

BILLY HERNDON:

Did you know that Mr. Lincoln was as crazy as a loon? Did you know that his special friends had to remove all razors, knives, and pistols from his room? That he might not commit suicide.

00:31:52:00

ELIZABETH T. EDWARDS:

He went crazy in my opinion, because he doubted his capacity to please and support a wife. In his lunacy, he declared he hated her.

00:32:01:00

NARRATOR:

His depression would not allow Lingard to move from his bed or eat or work.

00:32:07:00

LINCOLN:

I must regain my confidence in my own ability to keep my resolve when they are made. In that ability, I once prided myself as the chief gem of my character and gem I lost. I have not regained it, and until I do, I cannot trust myself in any matter of much importance.

00:32:29:00

NARRATOR:

In the 19th century, physicians called depression, melancholia. And Lincoln suffered from it. Sometimes he was severely debilitated because of it. Depression left him feeling tired, blue, low, but he seemed in public to function pretty well. Lincoln coped with depression by telling stories, by taking outdoor exercise, and by mingling with other people.

00:32:57:00

NARRATOR:

By the summer of 1842, Lincoln's nerves finally returned, and he and Murray worked out a reconciliation.

00:33:05:00

ELIZABETH T. EDWARDS:

Mary came down one morning and announced she and Mr. Lincoln would be married that night. And I can tell you I was angry. I said, Mary Todd, even a free Negro would give her family time to bake a ginger cake.

00:33:20:00

NINIAN EDWARDS:

Mary was my ward, and if she was going to be married, it must be from my house.

00:33:31:00

NARRATOR:

The evening was dark and rainy. But the warm glow from the whale oil lamps lit the Edwards parlor. And illuminated the faces of the bride, the groom and the 30 guests.

00:33:54:00

PARSON DRESSER:

With this ring I thee wed, and with all my worldly.

00:33:58:00

NARRATOR:

Parson Dresser, married the couple.

00:34:00:00

PARSON DRESSER:

For as much as Abraham and Mary have consented—

00:34:01:00

NARRATOR:

The ceremony was held in front of the Edwards fireplace.



00:34:05:00

PARSON DRESSER:

And have witnessed the saying Before God, in this company I pronounce that they are man and wife together.

00:34:11:00

NARRATOR:

As heavy rain beat against the windows; the odds seem stacked against them. But Lincoln's doubts were over now.

00:34:23:00

LINCOLN:

Nothing new here except my Mary. Which to me is a matter of profound wonder.

00:34:36:00

NARRATOR:

Over the course of the next 11 years. Living in their house on Eighth Street, Mary and Lincoln built a good life. Two sons, a law profession, and a burgeoning second career in politics, which included a term in Washington as congressman. Then, during one terrible winter back home, the second son, three-and-a-half-year-old Eddie, came down with tuberculosis after a 52-day decline. The boy died. The loss nearly crushed Mary. Throwing her into fits of frenzy and numbness. Eat, marry, for we must live like Lincoln. But nothing worked. Finally, by giving away all of his clothes to a little neighbor boy, Mary

began to recover. Part of her cure may have been the. She had conceived a new child, William Wallace Lincoln Willie, for short.

00:35:46:00

LINCOLN:

Oh Almighty God, who are the strong tower of defense unto thy servants against the face of their enemies. Remember us not over as a prey unto them. Continue thy mercies towards us. All the world may know that thou art our mighty deliverer. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

00:36:15:00

NARRATOR:

As the Battle of Bull Run raged, Lincoln sat tensely in the telegraph office of the War Department, receiving dispatches every 15 minutes. It was the first major land battle of the war and much wrought upon this outcome. By morning, Lincoln knew that General Irvin McDowell's Union troops had been murdered by the better trained Confederates of General Beauregard.

00:36:50:00

EDWIN STANTON:

The capture of Washington seems now to be inevitable. While Lincoln, Scott and the cabinet are disputing who is to blame, the city is unguarded and the enemy at hand.

00:37:03:00

HENRY J. RAYMOND:



If the rebel forces had known the extent of their success, the capital would easily have fallen into their hands. The result of this battle took the whole country by surprise. It revealed to the president, for the first time, the prospect of a long and bloody war. It was now deemed necessary to place a younger commander at the head of the army.

00:37:28:00

LT. GENERAL WINIFIELD SCOTT:

I have new infirmities. Dropsy and vertigo. I must have surgery and medicine. Repose of mind and body. It is with deep regret that I withdraw myself in these momentous times from the orders of a president who has treated me with distinguished kindness and courtesy.

00:37:56:00

NARRATOR:

The hallmark of Winfield Scott was his loyalty to his president. It would be a different matter with his young successor, George B McClellan.

00:38:07:00

GEORGE B. MCCLELLAN:

I am becoming daily more disgusted with this administration. Perfectly sick of it. I have one strong point. I do not care one iota for my present position.

00:38:20:00

JOHN HAY:



I wish here to record what I consider a portent of evil to come. The president, Governor Seward and I went over to McClellan's house. After we had waited an hour, McClellan came in and went upstairs, passing the room where the President and Secretary of State were seated. They waited about half an hour and sent once more a servant to tell the general they were there. And the answer came that the general had gone to bed. I merely record this unparalleled insolence without comment.

00:38:55:00

NARRATOR:

In the second half of 1861, Lincoln experienced severe problems inside his own administration. There was serious corruption in the War Department under Simon Cameron. There was chaos in the West under the scheming General Fremont. There was mounting criticism, even from Chief Justice Roger Brooke, Taney, that the president was encouraging illegal arrests of suspected southern sympathizers. Lincoln was being called an out and out dictator.

00:39:24:00

DAVID HERBERT DONALD:

Lincoln's opponents called him a dictator. He assumed more powers than any other American president ever had. He suspended the writ of habeas corpus. He ordered the arrest of those who were critical of his administration. He suppressed hostile newspapers. He did not think of himself as a dictator. He was acting in a grave crisis when it was necessary to take emergency measures. He likened his actions to those of a physician who encounters a

man who has swallowed poison inadvertently. He needs to be given a strong emetic to make him throw up. But to give him that medicine does not give him a taste for it in the future. So Lincoln thought of the United States.

00:40:11:00

LINCOLN:

I am president of one part of this divided country, at least. But look at me with a fire in my front and rear, having to contend with the jealousies of the military commanders. My position is anything but a bed of roses.

00:40:30:00

MARY LINCOLN:

I consider myself fortunate. If at 11:00 I find myself in my room and my tired and weary husband is there to receive me to chat over the occurrences of the day.

00:40:43:00

NARRATOR:

Feeling useless and alone, Mary turned for relief to a whirlwind of spending on clothes and jewelry.

00:40:49:00

MARY LINCOLN:

I must dress in costly materials. The people scrutinize every article that I wear. The very fact of having grown up in the West subjects me to searching



observation to keep up appearances. I must have money more than Mr. Lincoln can spare for me.

00:41:09:00

NARRATOR:

Mary's New York shopping sprees became notorious as you squandered money at the splendid Emporiums. There was also the one real task that etiquette would allow a president's wife. The refurbishing of the white House. In eight short months she had overspent an allotment meant to last four years.

00:41:38:00

MARY LINCOLN:

I often laugh and tell Mr. Lincoln that I am determined my next husband shall be rich. Mr. Lincoln is too honest to make a penny outside of his salary. Consequently, I have no alternative but to run in debt. If he knew the extent, the knowledge would drive him wild.

00:41:59:00

NARRATOR:

Mary tried to hide the extravagances from the president until it was no longer possible.

00:42:04:00

BENJAMIN FRENCH:



I have called Mr. President on a matter about which I have no official concern. A Mr. Carroll has presented a bill of some \$7,000 over the appropriation for furnishing this House. And before I can pay it, it must have your approval.

00:42:20:00

LINCOLN:

It was all wrong to spend \$0.01 at such a time. The house was furnished well enough. Better than anyone we ever lived in. It can never have my approval. I'll pay it out of my own pocket first. It was stink in the nostrils of the American people to have it said the president of the United States had approved a bill overrunning an appropriation of \$20,000 for flub dubs for this damned old house when the soldiers cannot have blankets.

00:42:58:00

FRANK CROSBY:

The autumn months passed away, but there was no fighting. Mainly reviews. The winter months came. General McClellan's Grand Army, being now thoroughly organized and disciplined, went not to fight, but into winter quarters. And the people were ever patient and waited for the spring tide.

00:43:29:00

EDWIN STANTON:

We have had no war. We have not even been playing war. We should be sweeping treason out with fire and sword. McClellan has got to fight or run away.

00:43:45:00

JOHN HAY:

During the first year of the administration, the house was made lively by the games and pranks of Mr. Lincoln's two younger children. William and Thomas.

00:43:54:00

NARRATOR:

Indulged and without discipline, William thought of the wine house as the special domain. They used it with abandon. They drove goats to its stately east room, set up refreshment stands, ordered the servants about, broke the furniture, and in general took full advantage of Lincoln's desire to let them run free.

00:44:15:00

JOHN HAY:

Tad was a merry, warm blooded, kindly little boy. Perfectly lawless. He ran continually in and out of his father's cabinet, interrupting his gravest labors and conversations.

00:44:26:00

LINCOLN:

Let him run. There's time enough yet for him to learn his letters and get pokey.

00:44:34:00



ELIZABETH KECKLEY:

Willie and his father were intimate, often seen hand in hand. His mother doted on him. When I would go in her room. Almost always, I found blue eyed Willie there, reading from an open book, or curled up in a chair with pencil and paper in hand.

00:44:53:00

MARY LINCOLN:

Willie. Darling boy. Was always the idolized child of the household. So gentle, so meek. We were having so much bliss.

00:45:06:00

NARRATOR:

Suddenly in early February, the bliss ended. Willie had come down with a dangerously high fever.

00:45:16:00

ELIZABETH KECKLEY:

He was very sick, and I was summoned to his bedside. Always delegate. He could not resist the strong inroads of disease. The days dragged wearily by, and he grew weaker and more shadow-like.

00:45:33:00

NARRATOR:

The probable cause of Willie's illness was in the white House water piped in directly from the sewage infested Potomac River. Willie had developed



typhoid fever, often fatal in the young. It was an age when half of all deaths in the United States were children. Everyone who experienced losing a child. I knew someone who had. In far too many families. Photographs of the lost children were among their most intimate possessions. I trust never to witness such suffering ever again. Mary had said after helping her friend through her child's death from typhoid in 1860. But here it was, attacking her own beloved Willie.

00:46:27:00

MARY LINCOLN:

All that human skill could do was done for our boy. I fully believe the severe illness he passed through was but a warning to us that one so pure was not to remain long here.

00:46:44:00

ELIZABETH KECKLEY:

I was worn out from watching and was not in the room when Willie died. But was immediately sent for. I assisted in washing him and laid him on the bed. When Mr. Lincoln came in. He came to the bed and lifted the cover from the face of his child. Gazed at it long and earnestly. I never saw a man so bowed down with grief.

00:47:14:00

JOHN NICOLAY:



I was lying half asleep on the sofa in my office when his entrance roused me. Well, Nicolay said, here, my boy's gone. He's actually gone and, bursting into tears, turned and went into his own office.

00:47:34:00

NARRATOR:

Lincoln was devastated. Twice he had his son disinterred so he could gaze upon his face. And each Thursday, he shot himself away in the boy's bedroom to mourn. But slowly Lincoln came to terms with Willie's death. He simply refused. Finally, to become trapped in his grief.

00:47:56:00

LINCOLN:

I believe it is the inalienable right of man to be happy or miserable in his own decision. And I, for one, make the choice of the former.

00:48:16:00

NARRATOR:

With four of Mary's Kentucky half-brothers fighting for the Confederate cause. The First Lady was accused by many of being a rebel sympathizer. And yet, as the Battle of Shiloh raged in western Tennessee, Mary Lincoln showed her fierce loyalty to the Union.

00:48:36:00

MARY LINCOLN:



I have two brothers in the rebel army in that battle. They would kill my husband if they could and destroy our government. But dearest of all things to us. And I hope they are either dead or taken prisoner.

00:48:53:00

NARRATOR:

When word arrived, and her brother Samuel had been killed at Shiloh. Mary was heard to say, it serves him right.

00:49:02:00

MARY LINCOLN:

He made his choice long ago. He decided against my husband, and I see no reason why I should mourn his death.

00:49:16:00

NARRATOR:

Determined to become an effective commander. Lincoln threw himself into the running of the war. Made daily trips to the military camp surrounding Washington. Meeting the soldiers. Sharing the generals' concerns. Lincoln vigorously backed the building of a fleet of heavily armed warships called ironclads, low in the water, carrying a revolving gun. The monitor was Lincoln's surprise weapon. Lincoln decided in May to actually take to the field as Commander in Chief. You spent a week directing an attack on Norfolk, Virginia. In general, George McClellan continued to procrastinate. Lincoln had finally heard enough.

00:50:03:00

LINCOLN:

General McClellan. Either attack Richmond or give up the job.

00:50:10:00

NARRATOR:

He was now finally in full charge of the war. Even Lincoln's iron-willed Secretary of War, Edward Stanton, soon found he was no match for the president.

00:50:22:00

EDWIN STANTON:

Mr. President, your order cannot be executed.

00:50:26:00

LINCOLN:

Mr. Secretary, I reckon you will have to execute the order.

00:50:30:00

EDWIN STANTON:

Mr. President, I cannot do it. The order is an improper one, and I cannot execute it.

00:50:36:00

LINCOLN:

Mr. Secretary, it will have to be done.

00:50:40:00

DAVID HERBERT DONALD:

Lincoln, with very little experience, started by expecting to depend on expert advice. The Sumter crisis, where he turned for advice to his cabinet advisers, all of whom were leading Republican politicians with more national experience than he had told him, that he had to rely on his own opinions. In the following year, the delays caused by George B McClellan and Dan C Buell in leading their armies led him to distrust military expertise. By late 1862, Lincoln had come to realize that a president must himself make policy decisions and then see that the experts carry them out.

00:51:23:00

MARY LINCOLN:

When we first went to Washington, many persons thought that Mr. Lincoln was weak, but he rose grandly with the circumstances, and men soon learned that he was above them all.

00:51:37:00

LINCOLN:

I shall not leave any card and play. I expect to maintain this contest until successful, till I die, or I'm conquered, or my term expires, or Congress, or the country for the sake.

END TC: 00:54:10:00