

**Doris Kearns
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Author, Team of Rivals

Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln

When I embarked on this study of Abraham Lincoln ten years ago I knew only that I wanted to learn about Lincoln and to study the Civil War, which meant I had to have a leap of faith that I would somehow come up with a fresh way of telling a story that has been told so many times before. I thought for a while that I might focus on Abe and Mary as I had done with Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, but I soon realized that Mary Lincoln couldn't carry the public side of the story as Eleanor did on the home front in World War II. Actually, the more I read the more I realized that in many ways Lincoln was spending more time with his Cabinet colleagues as they waited in the telegraph office—often sleeping there at night—for news from the battle front, as they went together to visit the soldiers, as they relaxed at night. In some ways he was more married to them than he was to Mary during this period of time.

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So, I started reading about these Cabinet colleagues, all of whom were larger than life characters—Seward, the governor and senator of New York; Chase, governor and senator of Ohio; Bates, an elder statesman from Missouri, and Stanton, a great lawyer from Ohio. I discovered to my great delight that, unlike Lincoln, they had all kept diaries and they had written literally thousands of personal letters to their wives and their children during this period of time. Indeed, in the Seward family alone there were 5,000 letters between the children and the father and the mother. Meanwhile, Chase kept a diary from the time he was 20 years old until days before he died; Bates kept a charming diary over three decades.

These letters allowed me to really move back into the 19th century, which I was frightened to do at the beginning because all my previous work had been on the 20th century. 1945 seemed recent to me, and that meant there were dozens of people still alive who had known the Roosevelts. When I did the Kennedy book, dozens of people knew them. And of course, with Lyndon Johnson, I had the great privilege of having spent hundreds of hours with him—that aging lion of a man, defeated in the end by the war in Vietnam, and yet the greatest storyteller I have ever encountered in public life. I listened to him for hours as he told me these colorful, wonderful anecdotal stories.

There was a problem with these stories, I later discovered, which is that half of

them weren't true, but they were great nonetheless. So I think that part of the attraction that he had for me was that I loved listening to his tall tales, but I also worried that part of it was that I was, then, a young woman and he had somewhat of a minor-league womanizing reputation. I was constantly chattering to him about boyfriends even when I didn't have them. Everything was working perfectly until one day he said he wanted to discuss our relationship, which sounded very ominous, especially when he took me nearby to the lake, conveniently called "Lake Lyndon Johnson," and there was wine and cheese and a red-checked table cloth—all the romantic trappings. He started out, "Doris, more than any other woman I have ever known," and my heart sank thinking what was coming next, then he said, "You remind me of my mother." It was pretty embarrassing, given what was going on in my mind, but I must say I realize now what I didn't realize when I was 25 years old, what an extraordinary privilege it was to have had that relationship with him, for in the vulnerable state that he found himself in in those last years of his life he opened up to me in ways he never would have had I known him at the height of his power, revealing his worries, his fears, and particularly his concern about how history would remember him. I'd like to believe that understanding of the inner man behind the public figure is what I've tried to bring to every one of my books since then.

So even though in this book there will be no conversations with Abe Lincoln by the lake, the immense treasure trove of handwritten letters and diary

entries more than made up for the personal contact. Indeed, I think for a historian there's nothing better than to look at a handwritten entry filled with emotions and loves and losses to be able to recreate an earlier world.

I've been asked what surprised me



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the most about the Lincoln that emerged from these letters and diaries and I think my answer would be his vibrant personality, his charm, and his remarkable sense of humor. You know, the pictures we see of him are so stiff—his eyes so sad, that unfortunate beard that I wish he had never grown, and we've all been made aware of his melancholy temperament. It's so stamped in our minds that I was thrilled to find that, far from being chronically depressed, he was the one who time and again would sustain the spirits of his colleagues in the worst moments of the war with his gift for storytelling, his genial good nature, his warmth, his kindness and his affability.

That gift for storytelling was really revealed when he was a young lawyer in Illinois. All the lawyers would travel around together on the circuit for two months in the spring and two months in the fall with the judge, the bailiff, and the sheriff—it was really a traveling road

gang, and they would all stay in the same boarding house. When anyone in the village knew that Lincoln was in town they would come from miles around to listen to him tell stories. He would stand with his back to the fire and tell one winding tale after another, way past midnight until the early hours of the morning. The stories are not quite what you might expect from our great marble monument in Washington. One of his favorite stories had to do with the Revolutionary War hero, Ethan Allen. Lincoln told the story that after the Revolutionary War Mr. Allen went to Britain and the British people were still upset about losing the war so they decided to embarrass him by putting a picture of General George Washington in the outhouse where he would have to confront it. He goes in the outhouse and he comes out and instead of looking mad he's

smiling, and so they said, "Well, didn't you see George Washington there?" "Yes," he said, "I think it's the most appropriate place for him." "What do you mean?" they said. "Well," he said, "there's nothing to make an Englishman shit faster than the sight of General George Washington."

So, once I heard that I had a very different image of old Abe Lincoln, but his stories were not merely amusing. They often had a moral, like Aesop's fables, the ones that he had loved as a child. They often presented practical wisdom in the form of a humorous tale or they were told to defuse tensions, to bring people together or to make a point that he could not make in any other way. But I think what moved me the most about Lincoln's life story was the depth and the nature of his ambition. It was never simply for office or power, but rather to accomplish something that would stand the test of time.

Very early on I believe he was aware that he had unusual talents, and he was haunted by the fear that he might not get the opportunity to exercise those talents. He was burning with a desire to learn, and yet he was only able to attend school, he later figured, for what amounted to one full year of formal schooling because he was needed to work on the farm for his father. His father loaned him out to other farmers to repay debts that the family had, and yet as we all know, having learned it as a child, he scoured the countryside for books. When he found a copy of the *King James Bible* or Aesop's fables or later Shakespeare's plays, it was said that his eyes sparkled, he could not sleep, he could not eat. Emily Dickenson, the great poet, once said there is no frigate like a book to take us lands away. Even though he never went to Europe he traveled with Shakespeare's kings to England, with Byron to Spain and Portugal. I believe that literature allowed him to transcend his surroundings.

There were so many losses in that early life. He was haunted also by death. His mother died when he was ten, his father left Abe and his 12-year-old sister to go back to Kentucky to bring back a new wife, left them in a region that Lincoln later said was frightening, with the whine of great panthers. When the father returned, he found the children so ragged they were living like wild animals. His beloved sister died in childbirth, his first love, Ann Rutledge, died at 22. He wanted to believe in an afterlife, but he was never sure that it was really there, so he seemed to adopt an old Greek notion that if a person accomplished great deeds his name would live on. Lincoln once said if he could leave the world a better place for his having lived in it, his story *would* be told after he died.

That worthy ambition became his lodestar that carried him through his depression when he was in his early 30s when three things combined—he'd bro-

ken his engagement to Mary Todd, not certain that he was ready to be married, his great friend, Joshua Speed, was leaving Illinois to go back to Kentucky, and his political career was on a downward slide. He wrote a letter to a friend saying, "I'm now the most miserable man alive." His friends worried that he was suicidal, and took razors and knives from

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his room and his great friend, Speed, came to his side and said, "Lincoln, you must rally or you will die." He said, "I would just as soon die, but I've done nothing yet to make anyone remember that I have lived."

That belief carried him through his troubled single term in Congress when he lost popularity by questioning the rationale—this may sound familiar—for the Mexican-American War, arguing correctly, that it was instigated by the president for his own purposes rather than the stated reasons that were given. But at the time the Mexican-American War was very popular; we got a lot of land from it. So his stance was used against him, it carried him through his two failed Senate races and to the race for the presidency in 1860 when he was clearly considered the least likely of the four candidates, who were Chase, Bates, and Seward, to win. Indeed, once I realized that these men who later became his colleagues in the Cabinet were not only his rivals for the presidency but, as was said, they all thought they should have been

president instead of him—they were governors, senators, college graduates—then I knew I finally had the story I wanted to tell.

But I suspect the additional impulse to focus on the colleagues surrounding Lincoln derived from the pleasure I had in living with the larger-than-life colleagues who surrounded Roosevelt in World War II, many actually living with him in the White House, making the White House the most exclusive residential hotel one could ever imagine. Churchill coming and spending weeks at a time in a bedroom diagonally across from Roosevelt, staying up so late at night as they smoked and drank that Eleanor finally came in and said, "Isn't it time for you two boys to go to bed?" Harry Hopkins, his foreign policy advisor, sleeping over for one night early in the war, and never leaving until the war came to an end; Missy Lehman, who loved him, and was his secretary from the time she was 18, living with the family in the White House; a beautiful princess from Norway, Princess Martha, in exile during the war coming to America and living with the family on the weekends; and Lorena Hickok, a former reporter who loved Eleanor, having a bedroom next to Eleanor. I was so intrigued by the thought of all these people gathered in their bathrobes at night as they stood in the corridor that surrounded the bedroom suite and wishing that when I was up there with Lyndon Johnson I thought of asking, "Where did Franklin sleep? Where was Eleanor? Where was Hopkins?" But, of course, I wasn't thinking that way at 25.

I happened to mention this on a radio program in Washington and it happened that Hilary Clinton was listening, so she promptly called me up at the radio station and invited me to sleep overnight in the White House. She said we could then wander the corridors together and figure out where everyone had slept 50 years earlier. So, two weeks later she fol-

lowed up with an invitation to a state dinner after which, between midnight and 2:00 a.m. President and Mrs. Clinton, my husband and I, with my map in hand, went through every room and figured out, yes, Chelsea is sleeping where Harry Hopkins once slept. Bill Clinton is where FDR was and we were sleeping in Winston Churchill's bedroom, which meant I couldn't sleep at all. I was certain that he was sitting in the corner drinking his brandy and smoking his ever-present cigar.

In fact, that bedroom was my favorite story of World War II. When Churchill came there after Pearl Harbor he and Roosevelt were said to sign a document that put the allied nations against the axis powers, but the allied nations were calling themselves the "associated nations" and no one liked the words. So early that morning Roosevelt awakened with a whole new idea of calling themselves the United Nations and was so excited he had himself wheeled into Churchill's bedroom to tell him the news. It so happened that Churchill was just coming out of the bathtub and had absolutely nothing on. Roosevelt said, "I'm so sorry. I'll come back in a few moments." Churchill, ever able to speak spontaneously in a very formal voice said, "Oh, no. Please stay. The prime minister of Great Britain has nothing to hide from the president of the United States." Can you imagine? He's dripping from the tub, he wasn't skinny so his stomach is sticking out and he can say something like that. So as soon as the president and Mrs. Clinton left I couldn't wait to go in the bathtub and then I truly felt I was in the presence of the greatness of the past.

Focusing on Lincoln's colleagues came naturally to me and it provided a story of intrigue, of jealousy, drama, treachery and surprising friendships as each of these men wrestled, not only with Lincoln but also with each other, since they all represented different aspects of different parties – radicals, conserva-

tives, liberals, old Whigs, old Democrats, old Republicans – but in the end, though, they fought incredibly during that period of time. They all performed their jobs with great skill and helped to steer the country successfully through the war.

I think of all the men in the Cabinet the one that intrigued me the most was Seward. He reminded me of Churchill in many ways: a man of huge appetite, he loved his brandy, his snuff, his Havana cigars. In the 1850s he had legendary dinner parties at his house with 17 courses, so much wine and drink served that Southerners would end up hugging the Northerners, purple with the mellow of the wine of the grape. He was the clear frontrunner. In fact, he had carried the Republican banner during the '50s so much so that 10,000 people came to his house in Auburn the day that the ballot for president was going to be announced from Chicago. When the news came that it was Lincoln, it was an irrecoverable disappointment to him. When Lincoln appointed him Secretary of State he accepted thinking he would be prime minister and that Lincoln would be a figurehead, but he soon came to see that Lincoln was not like anyone he'd ever known. The two men not only became great partners and great allies but incredibly close friends. Lincoln loved nothing more than going over to Seward's house in Lafayette Park and talking of things besides the war. They traded stories, they went to the theatre together, they both loved the theatre, they went more than a hundred times during Lincoln's presidency. And guests would pop in to Seward's house, giving that convivial atmosphere that Lincoln had once enjoyed on the circuit.

And now, almost opposite to Seward, was Chase—the Secretary of the Treasury. He thought that drinking, smoking, theatre and novels were sinful. He spent his evenings writing his introspective diary, practicing jokes that he could never deliver with ease—he could

never tell a story without spoiling it—and had a relentless drive for the presidency. He'd achieved so much. He had been the Attorney General for Negroes in the 1830s and '40s, meaning that he defended runaway slaves; he was the founder of the Republican Party, governor, senator, secretary of the treasury, but his life was never happy without reaching the presidency. That driving ambition, I believe, filled an emotional void in his life caused by his tragic personal life. Death just cuts across all his family lives. His first wife, whom he loved passionately, died at 22 in childbirth and his daughter, who survived, died at five years. His second wife then died at 25 years old, his third wife in her thirties, and he never married again.

Chase focused all his love then on his surviving daughter from his second marriage, Kate. He sent her to New York at seven years old to an expensive boarding school for ten years to learn language, classics, history, to prepare her to be the first lady of the land and his surrogate wife. She blossomed into a beautiful, brilliant young woman, and was considered the most fascinating woman of her age. Mary Todd Lincoln hated her. She became, in many ways, her father's campaign manager and political partner, but in many ways she sacrificed her own happiness for her father. She could have married anyone; she married a multi-millionaire in order to further her father's position, a much older man who ended up as an alcoholic and abusing her, and she ended up dying in poverty.

Nor did Chase ever reach his goal of the presidency—although not for lack of trying. Even as Chase remained in Lincoln's Cabinet he secretly maneuvered to wrest the Republican nomination in 1864 away from his chief. He used the vast treasury patronage to build a political machine. He tore Lincoln down whenever he could, all to no avail. Lincoln knew everything Chase was doing and easily outmaneuvered him.

Then, incredibly, after Lincoln's second term was won a vacancy arose on the Supreme Court for the post of Chief Justice. Lincoln's friends all had their own candidates in mind, the men who had been loyal to him. He stunned them by announcing he was appointing Chase to this post. "Don't you know what he's been doing to you?" "I know meaner things that he's said about me than any of you know, but he stood by his country at a time of trial. He was a good secretary of the treasury and more importantly he would be the best justice to protect the rights of the emancipated slaves. He'd been a very honored abolitionist. I would despise myself if I let personal difference get in the way of fitness for the job." Even though, personally, he said, "I'd rather swallow a chair than appoint him, but he's the man I want in that position."

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Then, in direct contrast to Chase, was Bates. Early on a very ambitious young politician, a member of the convention that adopted the Missouri state constitution, he was in the state legislature and Congress. But he fell so deeply in love with Julia Coalter, his wife, that he couldn't bear being away from her as a political career would have demanded. Indeed, on his way to Washington he wrote her—she'd given birth to their first child—saying that he felt horrible he wasn't there. He couldn't keep his spirits up, he was so alone at night he didn't

enjoy eating or sleeping, thinking “What am I doing going to Washington?” So eventually his dreams of political success were displaced by his love of his family. He turned down requests to remain in office, to take Cabinet posts, he just wanted to be, as he said, “a very domestic man,” which indeed he was since he had 17 children. So they must have been together at least a certain amount of time. He only agreed to stand for the presidency in 1860 when the country was falling apart and his friends who were conservative thought he was the only one, being born in Virginia, living in a border state, who might hold it together. When Lincoln wanted to appoint him Attorney General, at first he thought Lincoln was an okay man, not a very good administrator. By the end of Lincoln’s presidency he thought he was as near a perfect man as any one he had ever met.

But the most remarkable transformation in relationship took place between Stanton and Lincoln. They had met in 1855 when both were lawyers and fell together on the same case, Stanton then a nationally known lawyer, Lincoln known only in Illinois. The case was supposed to be tried in Illinois, so Stanton and his partner—it was a very important case—took Lincoln on as counsel, thinking he might know some of the judges. But then it was transferred to Ohio, which was Stanton’s home, and they no longer needed Lincoln, but forgot to tell him. Lincoln worked all summer on his brief, he was so excited to meet these nationally-known lawyers. He went to Cincinnati with his brief in hand, met Stanton on the street and said, let’s go to the courthouse together. Stanton took one look at Lincoln with his disheveled hair, his trousers up too high, and he said, “We must get away from this long-armed ape. He will hurt our case.” He turned his back on Lincoln, never opened the brief, and never asked him to join him at meals. Lincoln left Cincinnati so humiliated he never even wanted to return to the city. And yet, six years later

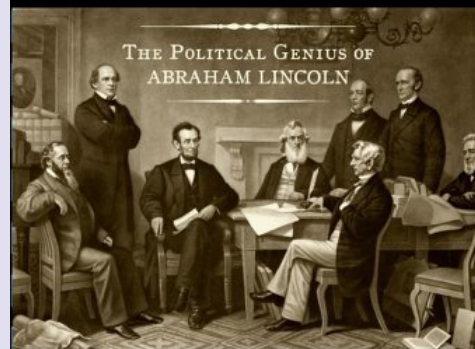
everybody came to him after Lincoln’s first secretary of war had failed and said, Stanton is the man for the job. Yes, he’s irascible and hard-driving, yet he’s brilliant—he will be your man. Lincoln somehow was able to put that bitterness behind, and the two became great working partners. Stanton eventually came to love Lincoln more than anyone outside of his family.

So, what were the qualities that drew these men to Lincoln and allowed him to master them all in the end? I believe the key to his political genius rested on an extraordinary array of emotional strengths that are rarely found in political life. He had what we would call today a first-rate emotional intelligence, which allowed him to put past grudges behind, to keep from wasting precious energy on personal contention, and to treat people, even those who were against him, with kindness and sensitivity. His most remarkable quality in some ways was his profound empathy, which allowed him to place himself in the shoes of people in all walks of life.

As a young man he gave a speech to a temperance group of advocates advising them—and this is so relevant again today—to refrain from denouncing drinkers in thundering tones. Denunciation, he said, will only lead to denunciation. It is the nature of man when told he is the source of all evil and misery in the world to retreat within himself. Better to reach and penetrate his heart, to reason.

That same empathy, of course, was seen in dazzling form in his second inaugural when he reached out to the South just as the North was on the verge of winning the war, suggesting that the sin of slavery was shared by both sides, both read the same Bible, both prayed to the

TEAM OF RIVALS



DORIS KEARNS
GOODWIN

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE

same God, both invoked His aid against the other. “Let us judge not that we be not judged” the prayers of both could not be answered. And then, of course, those great words that ended it: “with malice towards none and charity toward all, let us bind up the nation’s wounds.”

Unlike any politician I’ve known, he was quick to concede error, ever ready to learn from his mistakes. “I was wrong, you were right,” he flatly told Grant at one point. Words that we haven’t heard in recent years.

When he was angry with someone he would write a hot letter, put it aside until he had cooled down, at which point he no longer needed to send it. In his files, found decades later, there were a number of letters to his generals which he was worried would cause them great pain, so in the end they simply appeared in his files, never sent, never signed.

Now to be sure there were times when he lost his temper. The story is told of an army colonel who came to the

soldiers' home where Lincoln went in the summers to relax; the colonel's wife had been killed in a steamboat accident and he needed to get her body back and he wanted Lincoln's help. Lincoln said, "Isn't there any place I can relax? Why do you think I can help you with this?" The soldier went away disheartened. The next morning Lincoln knocked on the soldier's door at his hotel and said "I was a brute last night. I will help you find your wife's body."

So rare among politicians, time and again he shouldered responsibility for the failures of his subordinates and shared credit for success. After every battle that was lost, he left the White House to visit the army at the front, riding slowly through their lines to boost their spirits, visiting the wounded at the hospital, telling stories that would then be retold a hundred times more.

As president he felt responsible to stay in touch with the people on an almost daily basis. The White House then was much more truly the people's house than it has been in recent years. Job seekers could just roam in, knock on his door and ask for a job. The receptions were open to backwoodsmen and diplomats alike. His aides, dismayed, said, you don't have time to talk to these ordinary people. He said, "I must continue to have a vivid reminder of the popular assemblage from which I have come," all of which allowed him, I think, to intuit the mood of the country. I think one of the problems with our second-term presidents is that they lose that touch with the country. The White House is so insulated, it's so much a cocoon now and the people who work for the president now no longer have an ordinary life.

Even in Johnson's time if he liked a certain ballpoint pen, truck loads of the pens would be brought in. Whims were satisfied—if he wanted to diet, huge numbers of cottage cheese containers would come in. When he got bored with

the diet they'd be shipped out and pecan pie would come in. This is not ordinary life. But Lincoln kept in touch with the people, allowing him to know that public opinion mattered. He said that in a country like ours, as a democracy, you have to know where the people are and then you have to educate and shape that opinion in order to move forward.

So, in the end I believe Lincoln's story shows that in the hands of a truly great politician the qualities you normally associate with decency and morality—things like honesty, sensitivity, compassion and empathy—really can become great political resources as well.

After living with this man for ten years I must say it was hard to bring his life to an end. It was especially hard to recount these last weeks when on the one hand he'd been happier and more serene than he ever had before, knowing that the war was coming to a successful conclusion, knowing that the Thirteenth Amendment ending slavery had passed the Congress and was on its way to the states, knowing that the Union had been preserved and yet, of course, I knew that he only had a few days more to live.

That last afternoon of his life he invited Mary Lincoln to take a leisurely carriage ride with him. Theirs had been a complex marriage. When they first met, however, I'm convinced they were incredibly well suited. She was so well educated, so smart, highest marks in school, loved poetry as did he, loved politics which was not usual for a woman at that time, a great conversationalist, and outgoing.

She tells the story of their first meeting. She was surrounded by beaux at her sister's mansion on the hill in Springfield and he came up to her and he said, "Mary, I want to dance with you in the very worst way" and she later laughingly said, "He certainly did."

But the White House years took a terrible toll on her. There was no footing she could find when she got to the White House. The Southerners thought she was a traitor being married to Lincoln; the Northerners worried that she was a traitor because she had four stepbrothers in the Confederate Army; the eastern establishment thought she was a westerner, awkward and crude. And then when their ten-year old son, Willie, died in February 1862, she was forever altered. There were four children in the family. One child had died at three; she had an older son, Robert, who was at Harvard, there were two little guys ten and eight years old, and Willie was the little Lincoln. He wrote poetry even at ten, was sensitive, and protected his younger brother, Tad, who had a speech defect, which made him ununderstandable except inside the family. When Willie died she took to her bed and couldn't even deal with Tad anymore because he reminded her so of Willie. So Lincoln had to become both mother and father for that younger son, Tad. And yet on that last day of Lincoln's life he told her they must both now try to look forward to life again after the misery of the war and Willie's death. They talked of their early days in Springfield, their wonderful plans to travel after the presidency; he wanted to go to California actually, go over the Rocky Mountains, she wanted to go to Europe. That made the events of that night even sadder to imagine.

I don't think I had fully absorbed until I got into this that John Wilkes Booth had intended not only to kill Lincoln that night but that he had two conspirators. The second was to kill Andrew Johnson, but fortunately for Johnson he got drunk and never carried out the job, chickening out, but the third one targeted Seward and left a bloody massacre in Seward's home. He came to Seward's door, the house was full of people, which makes this whole thing unimaginable; he was pretending to bring medicine to Seward who had bro-

ken his jaw in a serious carriage accident a week earlier. He got to the top of the stairs and Seward's son stopped him. He said his father was sleeping and he would bring the medicine in. The assassin fired the pistol at his son's head but it misfired and he brought the blunt edge of the revolver on his head with such force that it cracked his skull leaving his brain exposed and rendering him unconscious. He then ran into the bedroom with a large Bowie knife, slashed Seward's other son and a soldier who was working as a nurse at the time for Seward. He got to Seward who was in bed, and plunged the knife in Seward's face with such force that his cheek was slashed off; he ran off after slashing two more household members. Seward, too, fell unconscious having lost so much blood, but miraculously, after many, many months, he eventually recovered.

Meanwhile, John Wilkes Booth entered the back of the presidential box at Ford's Theatre and put the bullet in the back of Lincoln's head. The doctors said he should have died immediately, but his life force was so great that he lasted until 7:22 a.m. the following morning when Stanton said the words that have echoed through the generations: "Now he belongs to the ages." So the dream of his to be remembered, to have his story told after he died, that had empowered him through all the failures in his life, had indeed been realized.

But surely Lincoln could never have imagined how far his good name would eventually travel. I was so thrilled to find an old interview in the *New York World* in 1908, which allowed me to end the book on a note other than the assassination. The interview was with the great Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy. In this interview, Tolstoy told of the journey he had made to a remote area of the Caucasus where he was a guest of a tribal chief who was living far away from civilized life and had little knowledge of the world. The chief gathered his family and

neighbors around and asked Tolstoy to tell stories about the great men of history. So Tolstoy said he entertained the crowd for hours telling of Alexander, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon, but when he was winding to a close the chief stood and said, "But you have not told us a syllable about the greatest ruler of the world. We want to know about that man who spoke with a voice of thunder, who laughed like the sunrise. His name was Lincoln and he lived in a country, which is called America, so far away that if a young man should journey to reach it he would be an old man when he arrived. Tell us of that man. Tell us of Lincoln." Tolstoy said he looked at them, he saw their faces all aglow and he realized that these rude barbarians had heard of the name and deeds of Abraham Lincoln, which had already become a legend.

After Tolstoy thought about that night, he asked, "Why was Lincoln so great that he overshadowed other national heroes?" He was not really a great general like Napoleon or Washington, not such a skillful statesman as Gladstone or Frederick the Great, but his supremacy expressed itself, Tolstoy concluded, all together in his peculiar moral power and the greatness of his character. "We are still too near his greatness," Tolstoy said in 1908, "but after a few centuries more, our posterity will find him considerably bigger than we do. His name will be cherished for as long as people live."

Now, for most of us the hope to have our story told after we die is realized not through marble monuments but through our family and our friends, our children and their children in turn. Which brings me, in conclusion, to where my love of history began—with my father teaching me how to keep score while listening to baseball games so that I could record for him the history of that afternoon's Brooklyn Dodger game. When the recounting of history, even though just a game that

took place that afternoon, allows you to spend two hours every night with your father it makes you think there's something magic about history. Although my father died when I was still in my twenties before my sons were born, I have passed his memory as well as my love of baseball to each of my boys. Indeed, even now when I sit at Fenway Park—once the Dodgers left me I left them and became an irrational Red Sox fan—when I sit at Fenway Park with my sons I can close my eyes and imagine myself a young girl once more sitting with my father at Ebbets Field with the players of my youth on the grassy fields below—Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, Duke Snider and Pee Wee Reese—I must say there is magic in these moments. When I open my eyes and I see my sons in the place where my father once sat I feel an invisible loyalty and love linking my sons to the grandfather whose face they never had a chance to see, but whose heart and soul they have come to know through all the stories I have told. Which is why I shall always be grateful for my love of history, which has led me to a lifetime looking back into the past, allowing me to believe that the past remains alive within every single one of us, that the private people we have loved and lost in our families and the public figures we have respected in our history, as Abraham Lincoln wanted to believe, really can live on, so long as we pledge to tell and to retell the stories of their lives.

I'm honored to be one of those storytellers tonight and I thank you so much for listening.