



## *PATRIOTIC RECOLLECTIONS*



### Selected Quotes of Abraham Lincoln <sup>(a)</sup>

February 12, 1809 is the birth date of one of the greatest, if not the greatest, President of the United States, ABRAHAM LINCOLN. It is only fitting that we honor him with some of his words. Happy Birthday Mr. President.

*January 27, 1838*

At what point shall we expect the approach of danger? By what means shall we fortify against it? Shall we expect some transatlantic military giant to step the ocean and crush us at a blow? Never! All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth in their military chests; with a Bonaparte for a commander, could not be force take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in the trial of a thousand years. At what point then is the approach of danger to be expected? I answer, if it ever reach us, it must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad. If destruction be our lot, we ourselves must be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide.

*June 16, 1858*

A House divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the union to be dissolved-I do not expect the house to fall-but I do expect that it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other.

*August 1, 1858*

As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is not democracy.

*March 4, 1861*

In your hands, my dissatisfied countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without yourselves being the aggressors. You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect and defend" it.

**I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot's grave, to every living heart and hearth-stone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.**

*August 22, 1862*

**My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. I have here stated that my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.**

*November 9, 1863*

**Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who gave their lives that this nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hollow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far beyond our meager power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion, that we here highly resolved that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation, under God, shall have anew birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.**

*November 10, 1864*

**It has long been a grave question whether any government, not too strong for the liberties of its people, can be strong enough to maintain its own existence in great emergencies. On this point the present rebellion brought our republic to a severe test; and a presidential election occurring in regular course during the rebellion added not a little to the strain. If loyal people, united, were put to the utmost of their strength by the rebellion, must they not fail when divided, and partially paralyzed, by a political war among themselves?**

**But the election was a necessity.**

**We cannot have a free government without elections; and if rebellion could force us to forego, or postpone a national election, it might fairly claim to have already conquered and ruined us.**

*November 21, 1864*

**To Mrs. Bixby regarding the death of her sons.**

**Dear Madam,**

**I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts, that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle**

**I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the**

**grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.**

**I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.**

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**(a) From Billy's Book Bag (<http://www.carrothers.com/billyboy/musings.htm>), *Echoes From Our Past* 2001.**

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