

Study and Get Ready

We all admire individuals who have a life's dream or ambition, and then see it realized. How does that happen? Well, this is Presidents' Day (not President's Day, since it doesn't belong to a president, but honors presidents), and one of them gives us an answer to that question.

Abraham Lincoln, our 16th president, came from humble beginnings. The son of a Kentucky frontiersman, Lincoln had to struggle for a living and for learning. He was born on February 12, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky, which, he said, "was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods." Lincoln made extraordinary efforts to attain knowledge while working on a farm, splitting rails for fences, and keeping store at New Salem, Illinois. But he had a big dream. Here is one of the stories about his life:

"I meant to take good care of your book, Mr. Crawford," said the boy, "but I've damaged it a good deal without intending to, and now I want to make it right with you. What shall I do to make it good?"

"Why, what happened to it, Abe?" asked the rich farmer, as he took the copy of Weems' *Life of Washington*, which he had lent young Lincoln, and looked at the stained leaves and warped binding. "It looks as if it had been out through all last night's storm. How came you to forget, and leave it to soak?"

"It was this way, Mr. Crawford," replied Abe. "I sat up late to read it, and when I went to bed, I put it away carefully in my bookcase, as I call it, a little opening between two logs in the wall of our cabin. I dreamed about General Washington all night. When I woke up, I took it out to read a page or two before I did the chores, and you can't imagine how I felt when I found it in this shape. It seems that the mud-daubing had got out of the weather side of that crack, and the rain must have dripped on it three or four hours before I took it out. I'm sorry, Mr. Crawford, and want to fix it up with you, if you can tell me how, for I have not got money to pay for it."

"Well," said Mr. Crawford, "come and shuck corn three days, and the book is yours." Had Mr. Crawford told young Abraham Lincoln that he had fallen heir to a fortune, the boy could hardly have felt more elated. Shuck corn only three days, and earn the book that told all about his greatest hero!

"I don't intend to shuck corn, split rails and the like always," he told Mrs. Crawford, after he had read the volume. "I'm going to fit myself for a profession."

"Why, what do you want to be, now?" asked Mrs. Crawford in surprise. "I'll be president!" said Abe with a smile. "You'd make a pretty president with all your

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tricks and jokes, now, wouldn't you?" said the farmer's wife.

"Oh, I'll study and get ready," replied the boy, "and then maybe the chance will come."

History tells us the rest of the story.

What is your dream? Don't expect it to be plopped into your lap. To reach it will require that you prepare and work for it – study and get ready.

--Beecher Hunter