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**AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES**

**MS-53: Moses J. Gries Papers, 1850-1934 (bulk 1890-1930).**

Series D: Sermons and Addresses, 1893-1917, undated.

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4	7	13

“Abraham Lincoln,” 1904 February 7.

For more information on this collection, please see the finding aid on the  
American Jewish Archives website.

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Feb. 7th, '04.

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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I shall speak of the lives of great Americans - great Americans who were born in February. February is the month of Americanism. The Fourth of July, Decoration and Thanksgiving days are our national holy days. They have been given over to noise and confusion and merry-making and games and sports. They have lost their patriotism. February distinguished by the birthdays of Washington and of Lincoln is the patriotic month of the year.

Lincoln was born of humblest parentage in a home as poor and as rude as the home of any one present here. He had no schooling. He was not favored with the advantage of an education. Not one of us but had more advantages and more opportunities. In the true sense however, he proved himself a thoroughly educated man. His life-story - born in a rude cottage to die honored president of a mighty people - is the most impressive lesson which Democracy can teach. His life preaches the dignity of labor, of honest labor.

Lincoln possessed the insight of genius - to perceive the movement of mankind toward liberty. Brave and honest were the words: "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half-slave and half free." Lincoln's answer to Greeley, declaring that he would save the Union - with or without slavery - reveals the character of the man. His honest statement of great issues should be a lesson to our political leaders and teachers. He stirred the conscience of the nation. He appealed to the morality of a great people. He stated honestly the moral issues at stake.

The emancipation proclamation ranks next to the Declaration of Independence as an historic document in American history. About four millions of slaves were freed. Lincoln's word and Lincoln's action gave mighty impetus to the cause of human freedom throughout the world. Emancipation is still needed. Alexander the Second of Russia emancipated the Serfs, but the present Czar has yet to give freedom to the four mil-

lion Jews who suffer and die in Russian slavery. Freedom of opportunity, freedom to life, freedom to toil, freedom to develop body and mind and soul.

We, ourselves must be emancipators; we must fight in the cause of human freedom. to bring freedom and life to all who are in bondage.

Emancipation has come for the slave, but justice is not yet to the negro. There is ante-negro prejudice - North as well as South. We have given freedom to the slaves, let us give opportunity to the Negro, to develop to the best that is possible for him. Let us hold America true to her noblest traditions. Forever must she be land of freedom and continue home of justice.

Lincoln had faith in the people. He trusted the nation. Said he - "With public sentiment - nothing can fail; without public sentiment - nothing can succeed." His words and his practice should teach a useful lesson to those statesmen and leaders of our generation who even whilst they pretend to speak his name with love and reverence - disregard the will of the people. Curtis says of Lincoln - "He is one who united Washington's integrity to the democratic faith of Jefferson, whose loyal heart beats true to the heart of the people."

Lincoln revealed a deep faith in God and an over-ruling Providence. He may not have been a good Christian, orthodox he surely was not, but he was deeply religious; he had faith in God, in righteousness and in justice. Lincoln was strong of mind, strong of heart, strong intellectually and strong morally. ~~and strong of heart, strong in intellect, and strong in Washington and Lincoln~~ He belongs to the truly great of all History. Washington and Lincoln are the two greatest sons of America, but Lincoln more than Washington is the product of American independence and American freedom, end of American institutions. True is the thought of Woodrow Willson - Lincoln .....was the supreme American of our history.

We read again the beautiful lines of Lowell's commemoration ode -

"For him her old-world mulls aside she threw,  
And choosing sweet clay from the breast  
Of the unexhausted west,  
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,  
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.

.....

These all are gone, and, standing like a tower,  
Our children shall behold his fame,  
The kindly earnest, brave, fore-seeing man,  
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,  
new birth of our new soil, the first American."