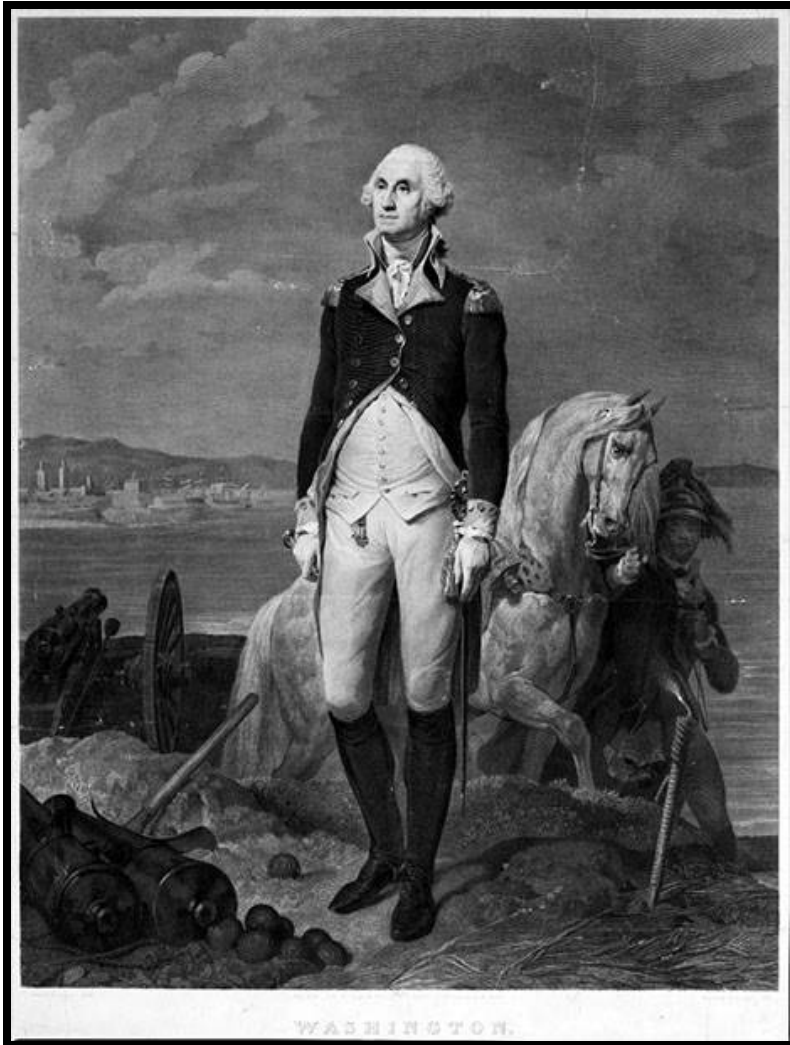
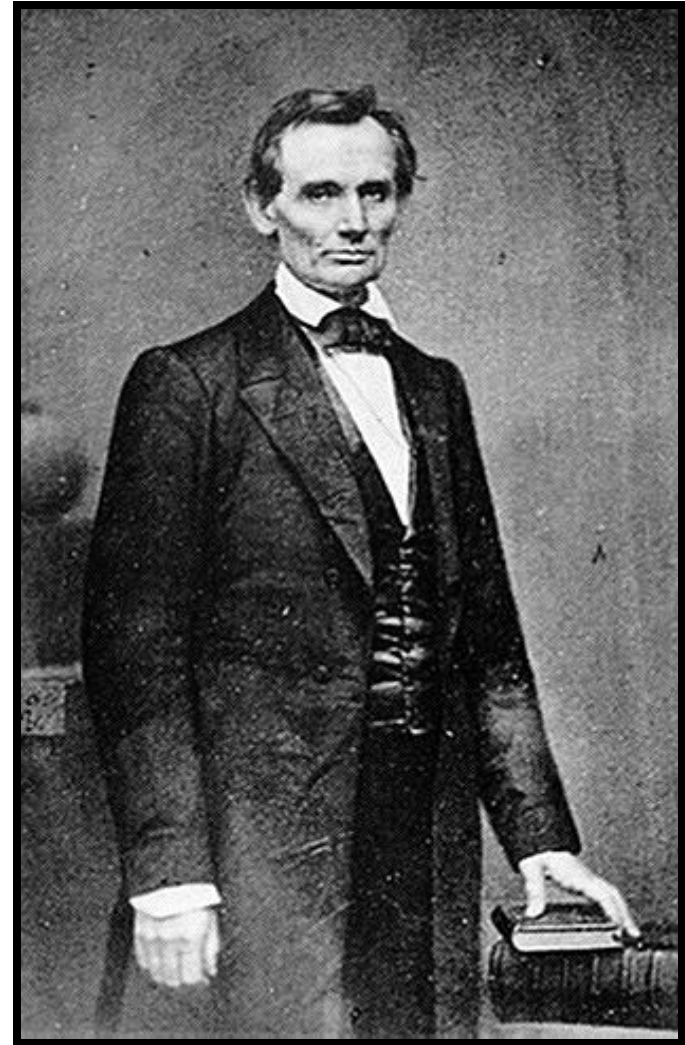


Lincoln's Heroes and his own Self-Confidence



http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/nation/jb_nation_washingt_1_e.html



<http://www.historyplace.com/lincoln/lincpix/linc-2.jpg>

Lincoln's Heroes and his own Self-Confidence

Born in 1809, Abraham Lincoln was a young man as the “founding fathers” of the United States were becoming old men. Several of them were already dead; Benjamin Franklin had died in 1790, George Washington in 1799. Incredibly, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died on the same day, July 4th, 1824. Lincoln was well aware of, and greatly admired, the heroes of the American Revolutionary War and their struggle for independence.

Nicknamed the “father of our country,” George Washington was Lincoln’s personal favorite. As a young boy, living in Indiana, Lincoln borrowed a copy of Mason Locke Weems’ biography, *The Life of Washington*. Originally published in 1800, Weems probably invented the well-known story of little George cutting down the cherry tree. Factual or not, young Abraham Lincoln read that book many times. Lincoln kept the book and referred to it from time to time.

Just before his first inauguration as president, Lincoln mentioned the book and compared Washington’s task of securing our independence from Britain to his task of protecting the Union from dissolution. Lincoln believed

that winning the Civil War and preserving the country was as important as winning the American Revolution.

By all accounts, Lincoln was a melancholy, sometimes depressed, person. But Lincoln possessed a significant degree of self-confidence. Consider the many hardships that shaped his life. His mother died at an early age; his fiancée died before they were to be married. He grew up in the frontier “wilderness” of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois. He received relatively little formal education. Tragically, only one of his three children with Mary Todd grew to adult age. As president he presided over a country torn asunder by civil war.

Yet, through it all, Lincoln had an abundant faith in the “Divine Being” (God) and in his own ability to succeed. He used humor and told stories to persuade people to think as he thought. He studied law and became a successful lawyer. He was elected to the Illinois legislature. He helped organize the Republican Party and was elected president of the United States.