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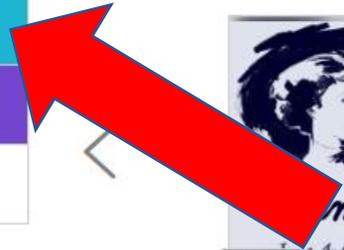
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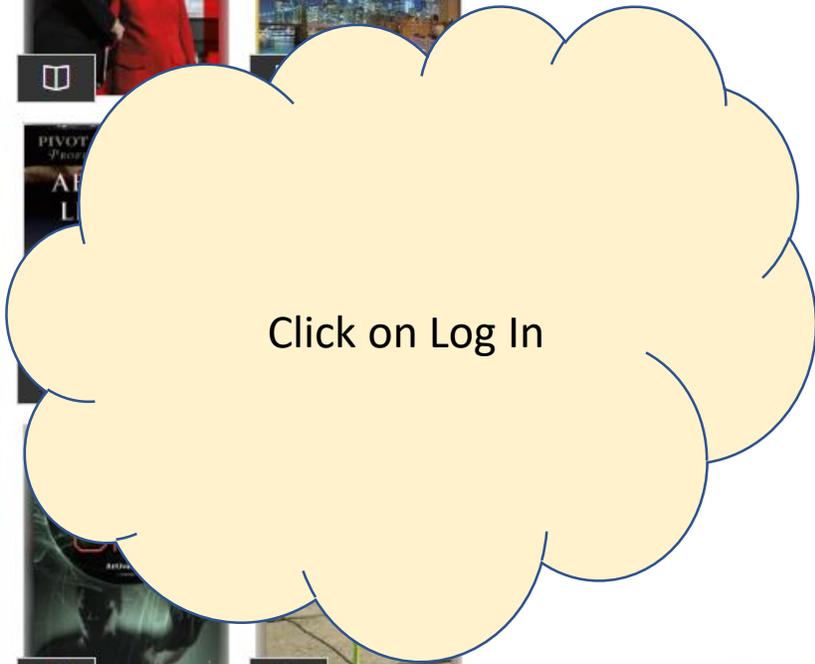
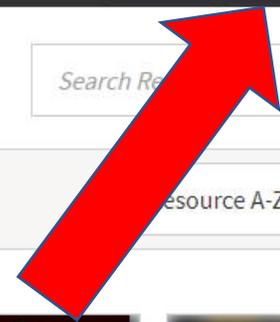
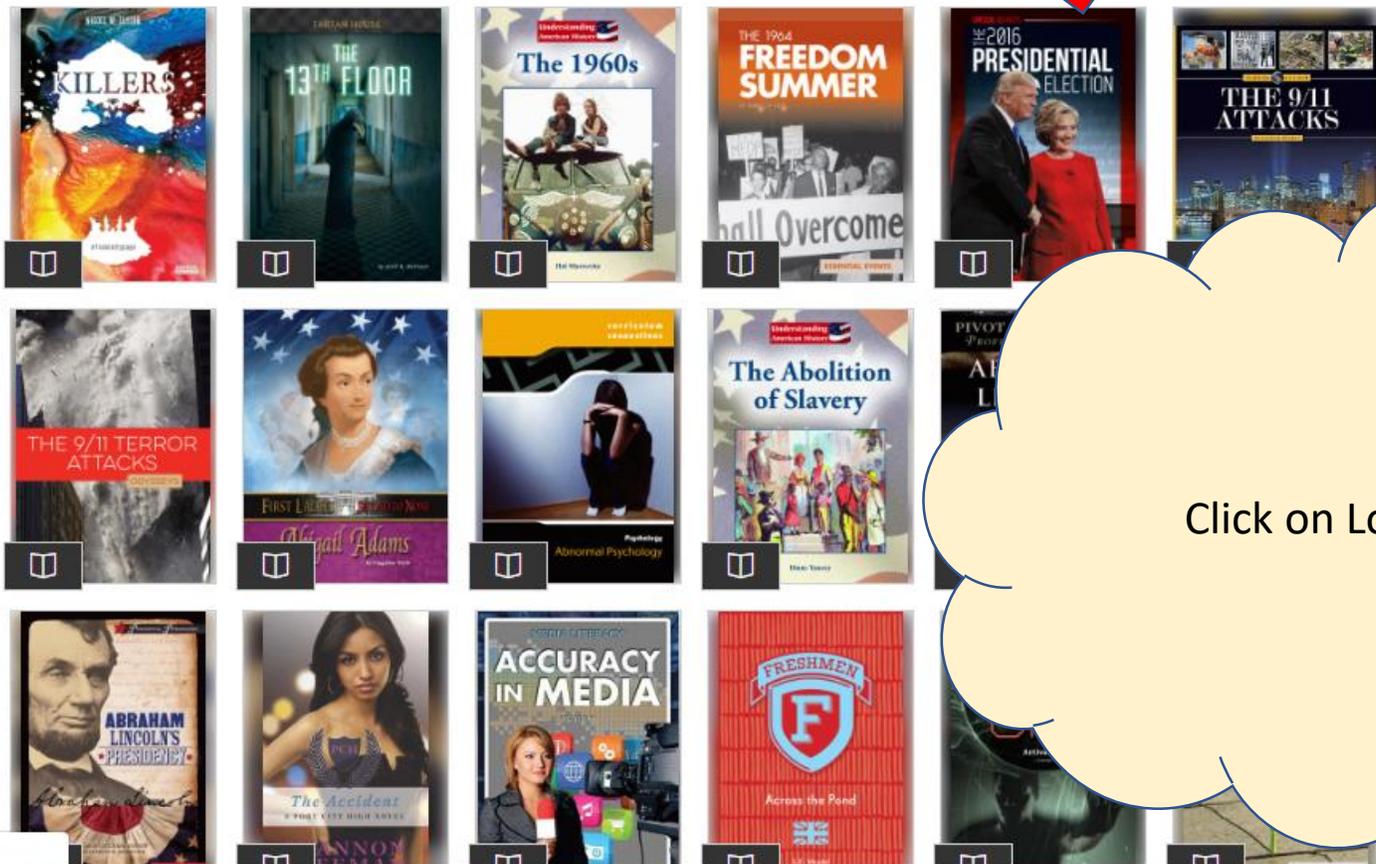
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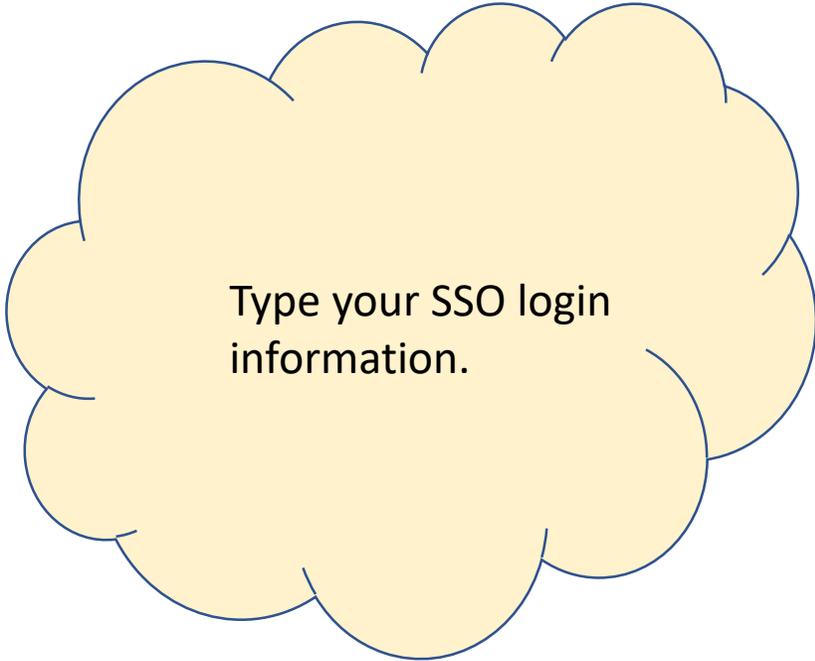
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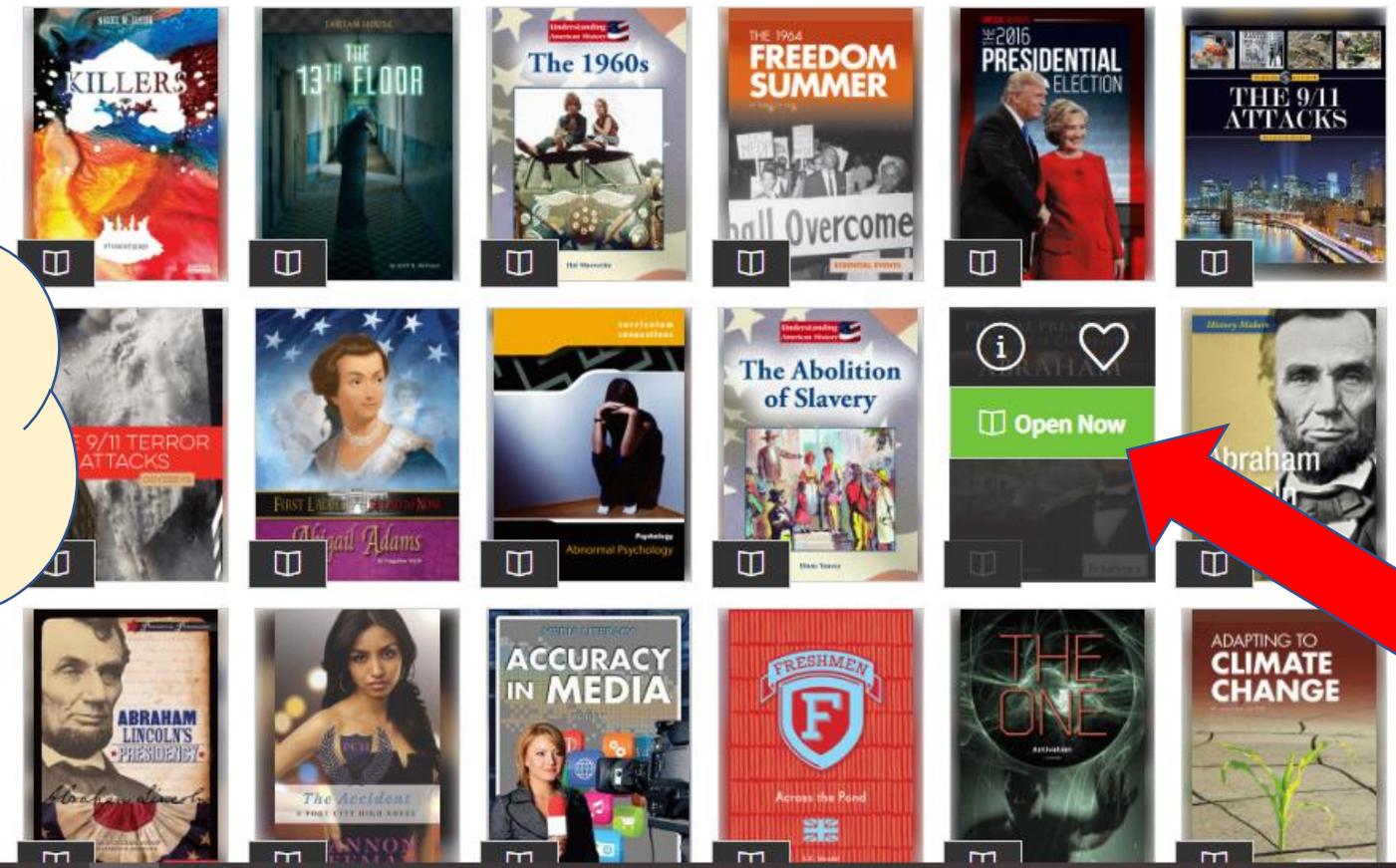
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Abraham Lincoln

When he was 15 years old, Abe was so tall and strong that he often worked as a hired hand on other farms. Usually, while he plowed or split fence rails, he kept a borrowed book tucked in his shirt to read while he lunched or rested.

BOATMAN AND L

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After supper Abe often walked down the road to Gentryville and spent time at Gentry's general store. His humorous stories, sometimes told in dialect, made him popular there. He loved to imitate travelers and local characters and would throw back his head with a booming laugh. In his own speech he pronounced words as he had learned them on the Kentucky frontier, such as "cheer" for "cheer" and "git" for "get."

Between farm chores Abe helped to run a ferry across the river in Kentucky. When he was 18, he built his own scow and rowed passengers over the shallows to steamboats.

Always he kept teaching himself new things. He became interested in reading a book on the laws of Indiana, he studied it long into the night. He strode miles to the nearest court where lawyers try cases. He even crossed into Kentucky to listen in court. Every visit taught him more about the ways of lawyers and furnished him with new stories. Throughout his later life as a lawyer, politician, and statesman, he skillfully drew on this rich fund of stories to make a legal point or to win audiences.



A young Abraham Lincoln ferrying passengers across a river. Collection/Archive Photos/Getty Images. Kean

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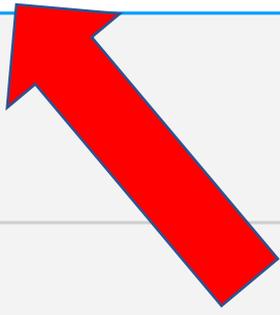
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BOATMAN AND LAW "LISTENER" After supper Abe often walked down the road to Gentryville and spent time at Gentry's general store. His humorous stories, sometimes told in dialect, made him popular there. He loved to imitate travelers and local characters and would throw back his head with a booming laugh. In his own speech he pronounced words as he had learned them on the Kentucky frontier, such as "cheer" for "chair" and "git" for "get."

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the New Salem days.

A young Abraham Lincoln ferrying passengers across the Ohio river at one of his first jobs. Kean Collection/Archive Photos/Getty Images

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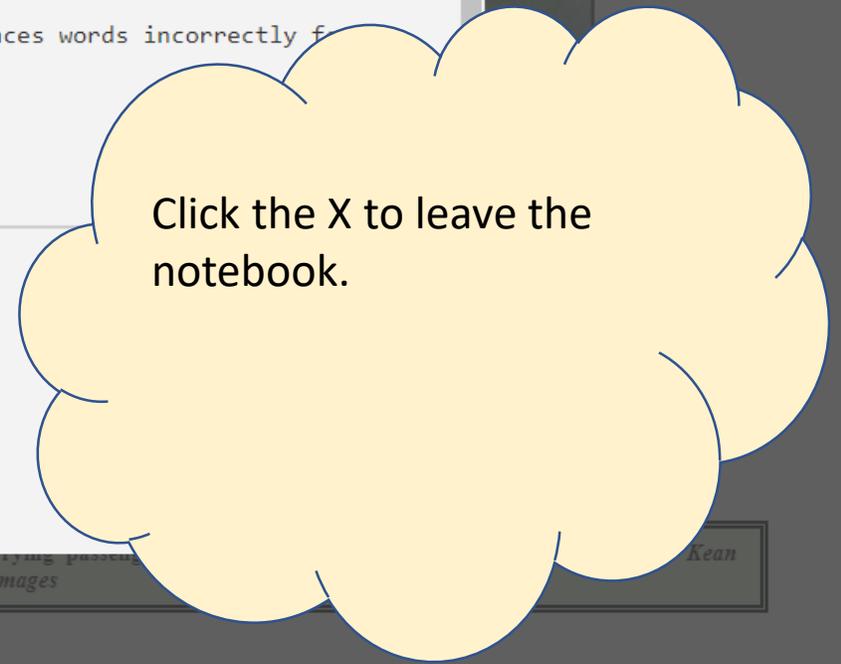
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Tales sprang up fast about Lincoln in the New Salem days.



Abraham Lincoln



In the autumn of 1833 Lincoln gladly took an appointment as deputy county surveyor. To learn the work, he plunged into books on surveying and mathematics. By studying all day, and sometimes all night, he learned surveying in six weeks. As he rode about the county, laying out roads and towns, he lived with different families and made new friends.

STATE LEGISLATURE

In 1834 Lincoln's old friends in New Salem and his new friends throughout Sangamon County elected him to the Illinois General Assembly. They reelected him in 1836, 1838, and 1840. Before his first term began in November 1834, he borrowed \$200 to pay the most pressing of his debts and to buy a suit for his new work.

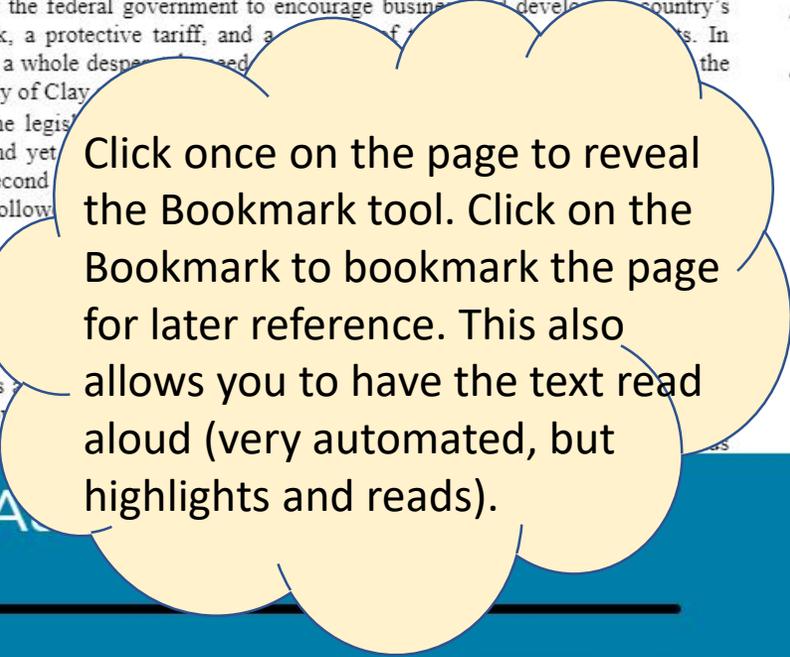
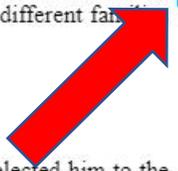
When Lincoln entered politics, Andrew Jackson was president. Lincoln shared the sympathies that Jackson and his supporters had for the common people. He disagreed, though, with the Jacksonian view that the government should not be involved in economic enterprise. "The legitimate object of government," he was later to say, "is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot do so well, for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities."

Among the prominent politicians of the time, Lincoln most admired Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. Clay and Webster supported using the powers of the federal government to encourage business and develop the country's resources by means of a national bank, a protective tariff, and a system of internal improvements. In Lincoln's view, Illinois and the West as a whole desperately needed such aid. At the start, he associated himself with the party of Clay.

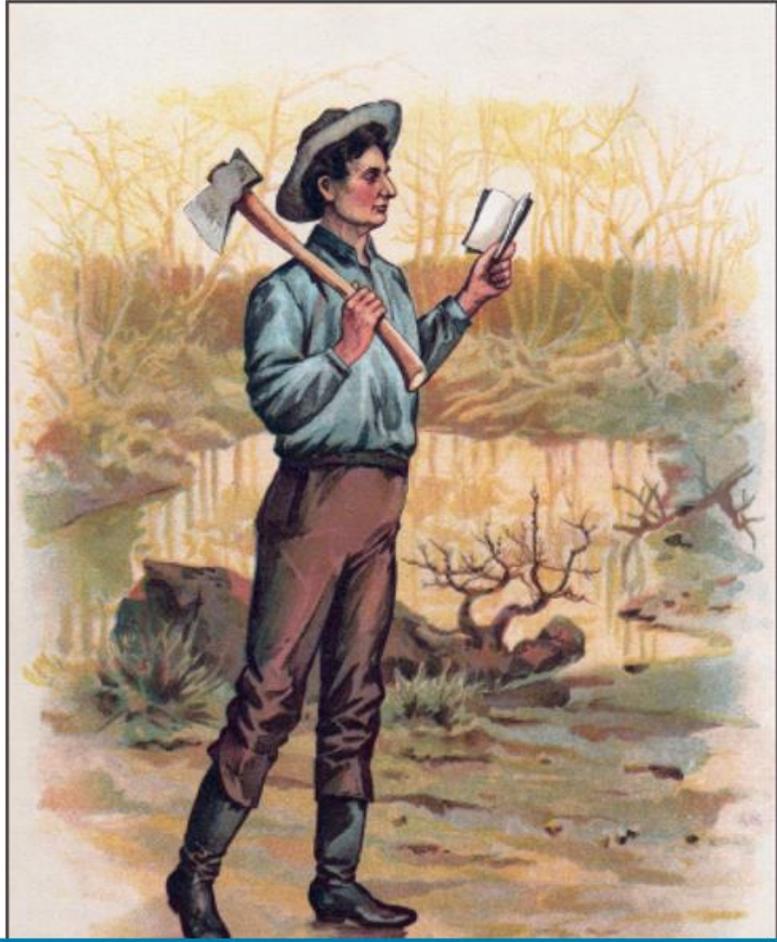
Lincoln soon became popular in the legislature. He was called "a man of the people" and "a favorite." By the time he started his second term in the Illinois legislature, he was "the favorite of the people." A fellow Whig declared: "We follow him as a leader, but independent."

As a legislator Lincoln devoted himself to the improvement of the country's canals. Whigs and Democrats joined in his efforts.

Lincoln also showed that, though he was a Whig, he was not a slaveholder. He was the first to propose to abolish, or end, the practice. In 1837 he introduced resolutions for the abolition of slavery in the Southern states. He was the only one to vote for the resolutions. Together with a fellow legislator he introduced resolutions for the abolition of both injustice and bad policy. The prot...



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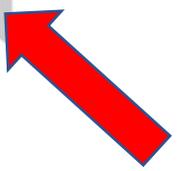
Among the prominent politicians of the time, Lincoln most admired Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. Clay and Webster supported using the powers of the federal government to encourage business and development of the country's resources by means of a national bank, a protective tariff, and a system of internal improvements. In Lincoln's view, Illinois and the West as a whole desperately needed such aid. At the start, he associated himself with the party of Clay.

Lincoln soon became popular in the legislature. He was called "a poor fellow, but a good one," "an ungraceful . . . almost uncouth . . . and yet a favorite." By the time he started his second term in 1838, he had become a leading member. In Illinois, a fellow Whig declared: "We follow Lincoln, but independent."

As a legislator Lincoln devoted himself to the improvement of the state's canals. Whigs and Democrats joined in his efforts.

Lincoln also showed that, though a Whig, he was not afraid to stand up to the practice of slavery. In 1837 he defended slavery in the Southern states. He voted for the resolutions. Together with a fellow legislator he proposed resolutions both injustice and bad policy." The prot

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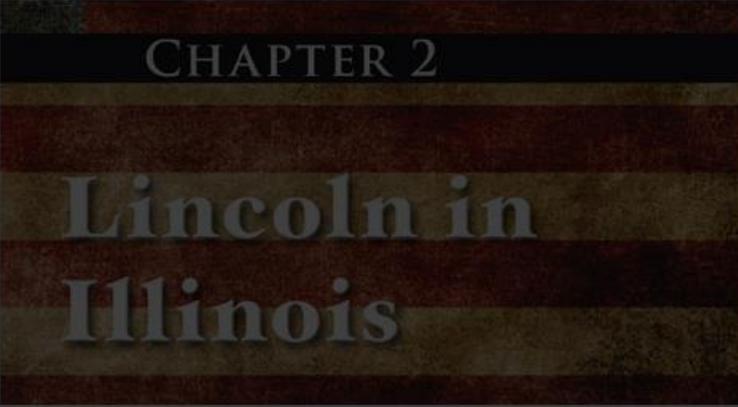
Abraham Lincoln



...vs Abraham Lincoln (at left, in blue pants) watching a slave
...stman House/Archive Photos/Getty Images

...ee something of the larger world. James Gentry, the owner of the
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...auction of slaves. At that time slavery was lawful in the United
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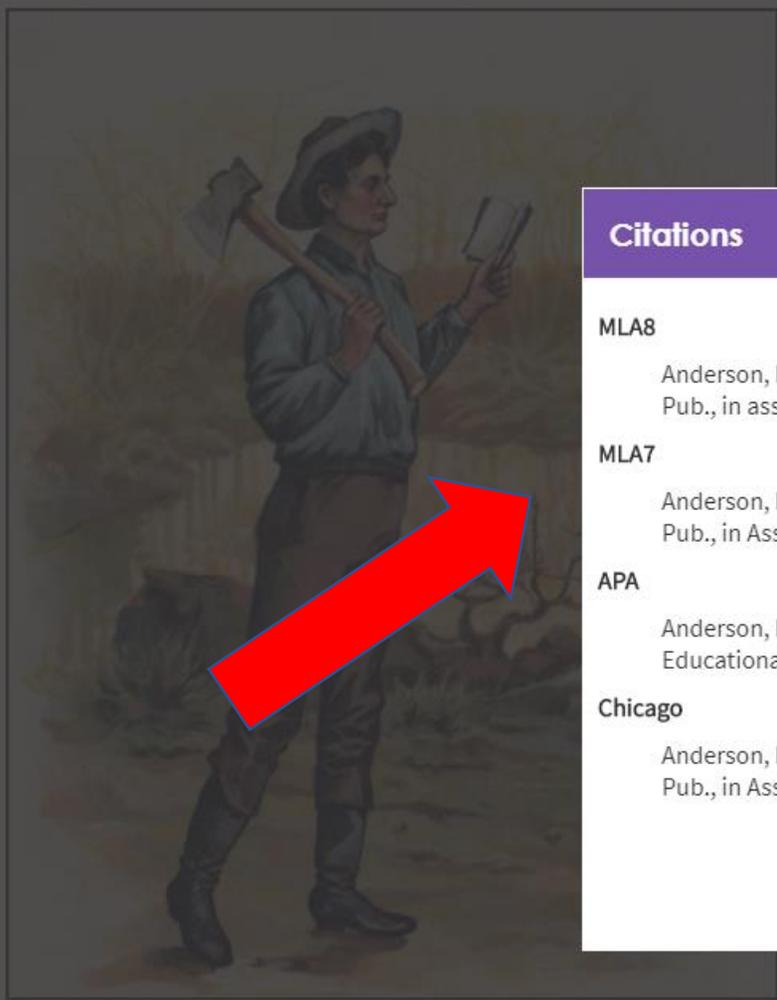
Back from New Orleans, Lincoln clerked part-time at Gentry's store and helped his father get ready to move to Illinois. The Indiana farm had not been a success. Through the winter the men built wagons and chests and made yokes and harnesses. In March 1830 the family started their 200-mile (320-kilometer) trek. They settled on the Sangamon River, some 10 miles (16 kilometers) from the city of Springfield.

At the age of 21 Lincoln was about to begin life in a new place. He was a young man, but muscular and physically powerful. He was especially good with an ax. He helped to clear and fence his father's land. He helped to clear and fence his father's neighbors' land. His feats with an ax on the Illinois prairie earned him the nickname "rail-splitter."

Click on the any of the options to explore what each provides.



Abraham Lincoln



The ever-studious Abe Lincoln, axe in one hand and book in another, c. 1835. Stock Montage/Archive Photos/Getty Images

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STATE LEGISLATURE

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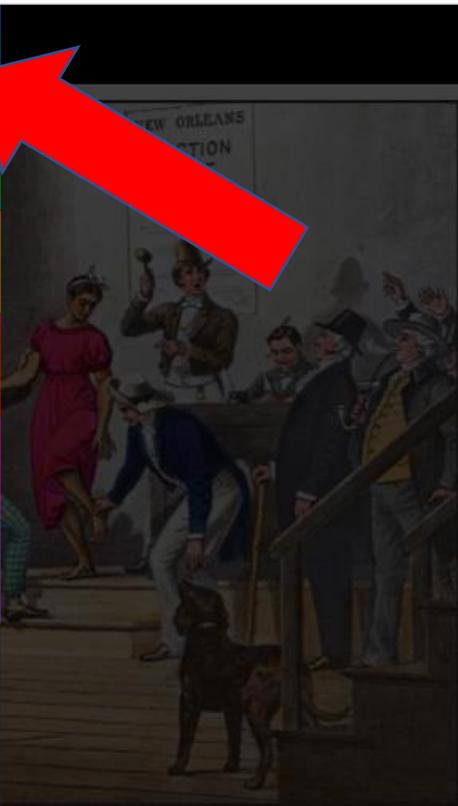
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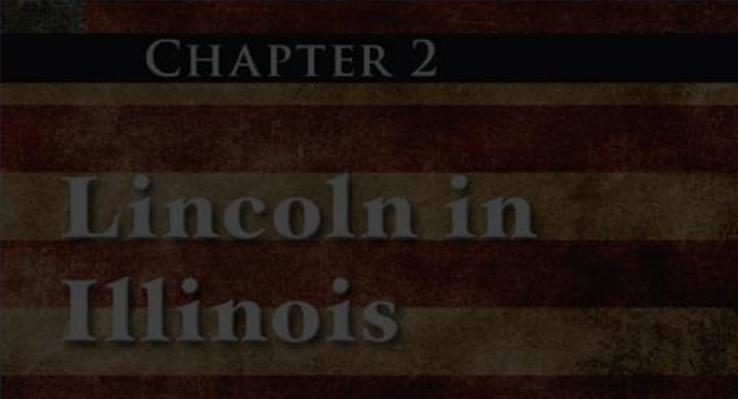


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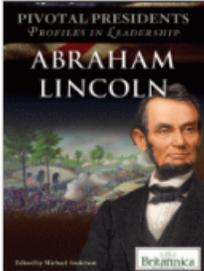
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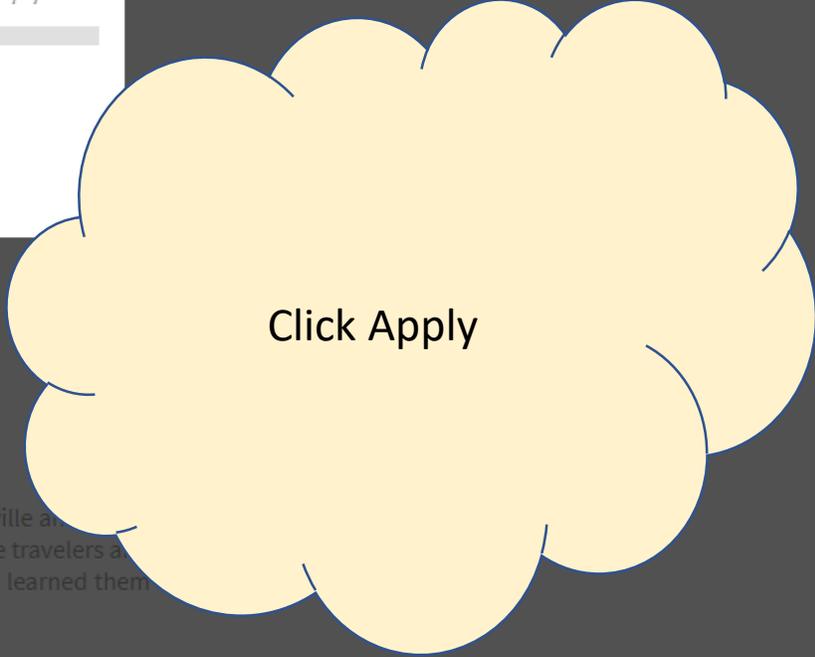
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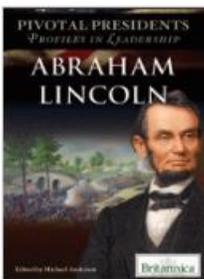
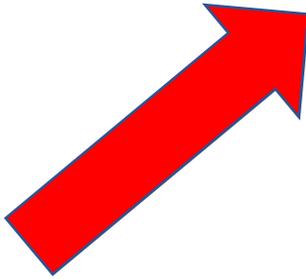
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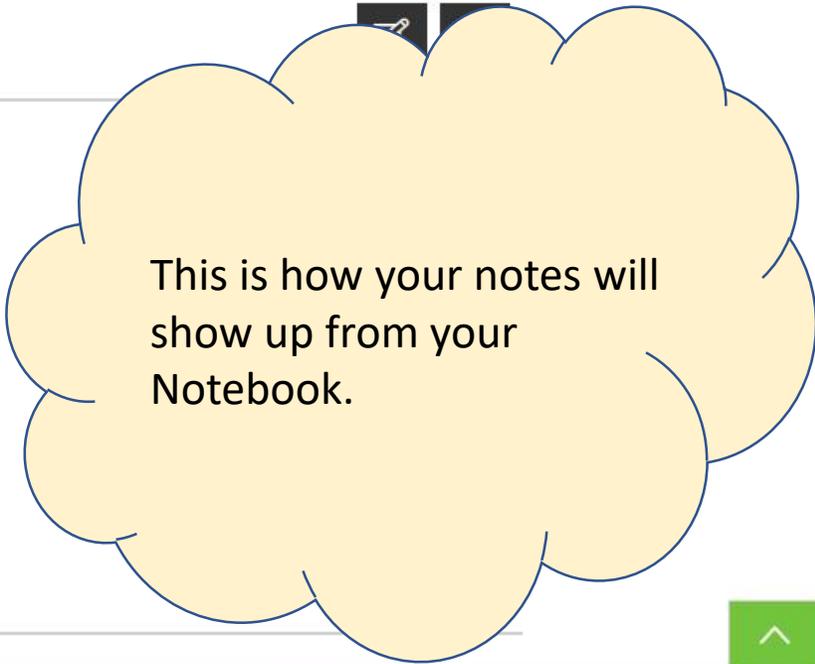
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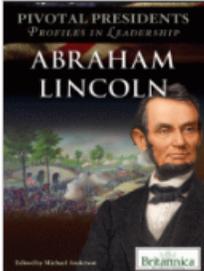
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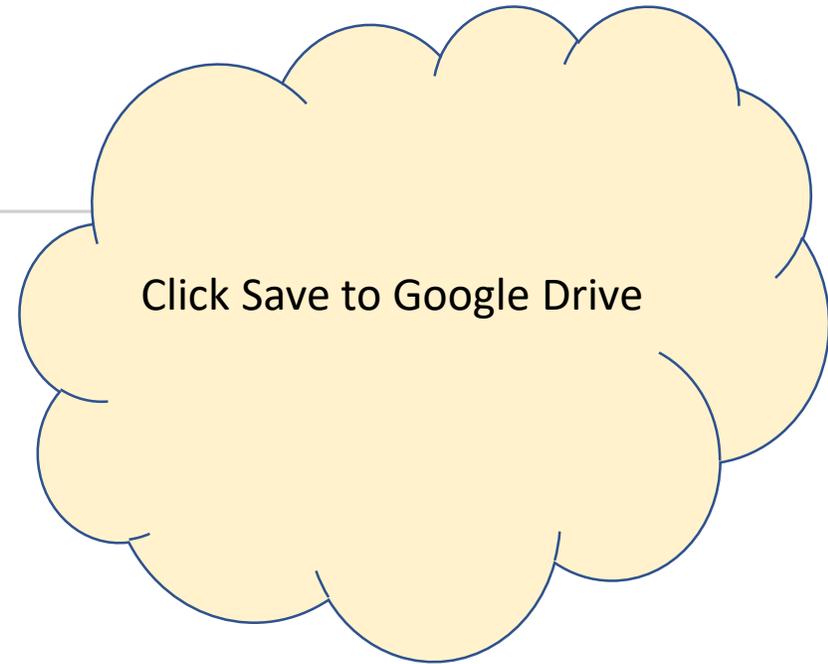
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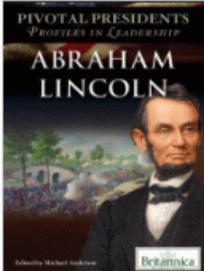
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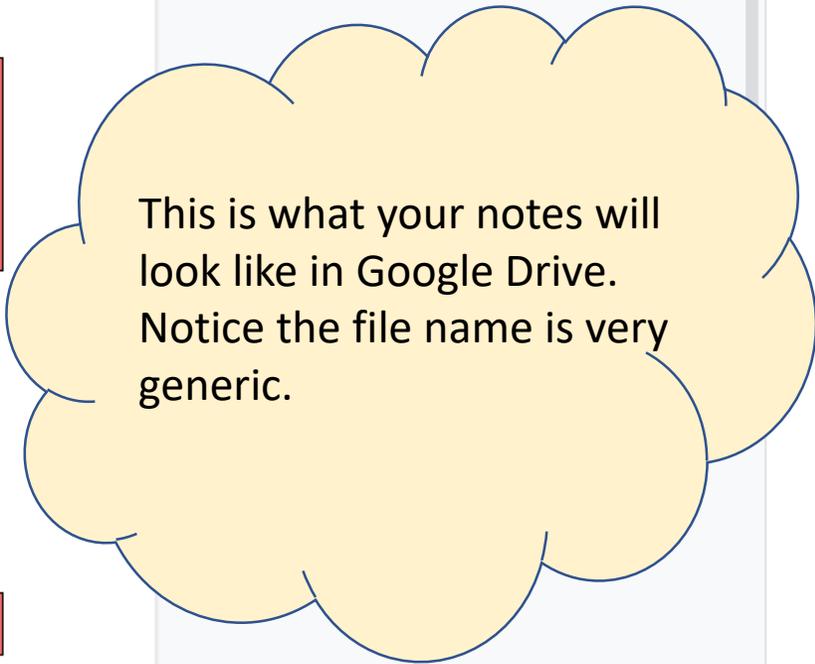
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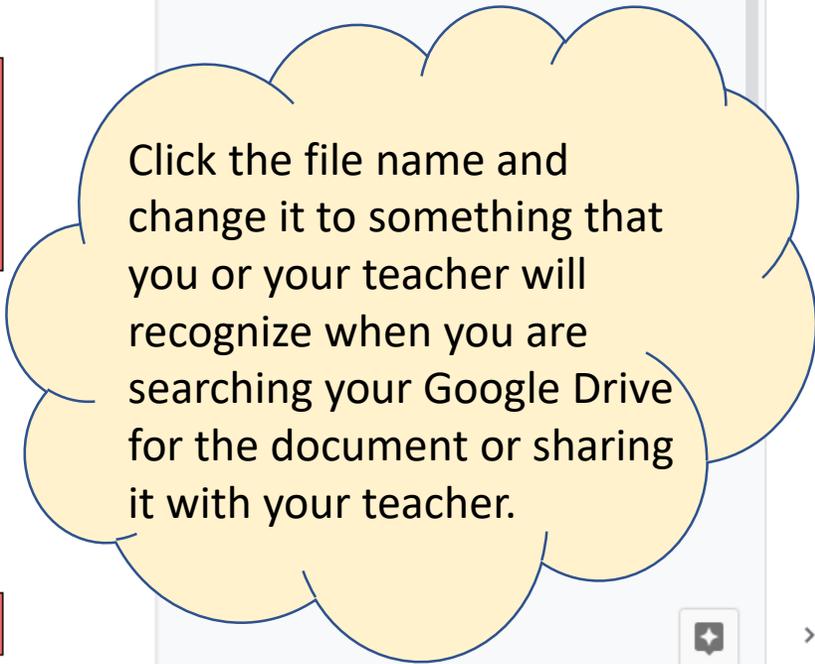
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Tales sprang up fast about Lincoln in the New Salem days.



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