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Global Commitment to Children: November 20, 1989

On November 20, 1989, the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a landmark international treaty aimed at protecting the rights and well-being of children worldwide. The convention sets out fundamental rights, including access to education, healthcare, protection from exploitation, and the right to express opinions. It emphasizes the principle of the best interests of the child in all decisions affecting them. Widely ratified by countries around the world, the CRC has become a cornerstone of child welfare, shaping policies, legislation, and global awareness to ensure that every child grows up safe, healthy, and empowered.

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FRIDAY
20 November 2026
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#AN INSPIRATION

The Indonesian Print That Was Once Reserved for Kings

The Parang pattern, a powerful diagonal design traditionally associated with Javanese royalty, was governed by strict social conventions



There was a time when wearing a particular textile pattern in parts of Indonesia could have brought serious punishment. A beautiful print that today might simply be admired for its intricate design once carried a powerful social meaning: it was associated with royalty and high status.

The story begins with batik, the celebrated Indonesian textile tradition in which wax-resist techniques are used to create intricate patterns on fabric. By the eighteenth century, certain batik designs had become closely associated with the Javanese royal courts.

In Java, particular patterns were considered forbidden motifs for ordinary people. Among the best-known was the Parang pattern, a powerful diagonal design traditionally associated with Javanese royalty. Its use was governed by strict social conventions, and certain court batik patterns could not simply be worn by anyone.

These restrictions reflected the importance of clothing in Javanese court culture. A textile was not merely something to wear, it could communicate a person's rank, identity and relationship to the royal court.

Centuries later, this remarkable textile tradition caught the attention of one of India's greatest cultural figures. In 1927, Rabindranath Tagore travelled to Southeast Asia, including Java and Bali, as part of his cultural journey through the region. He encountered the sophisticated artistic traditions of the islands and became deeply interested in their textiles, crafts and visual culture.

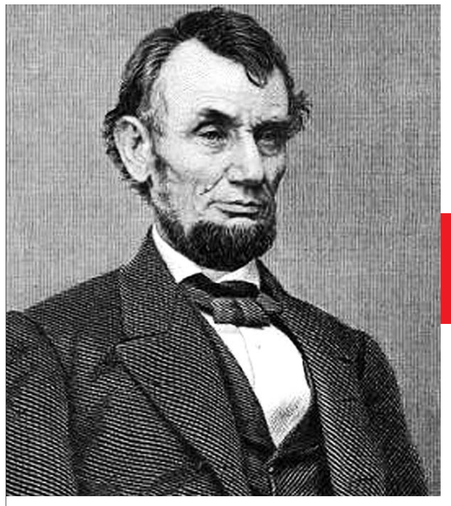
Tagore's fascination with Southeast Asian art did not remain in Java. He brought ideas and artistic influences back to Santiniketan in Bengal, where his educational experiment sought to create an environment in which Indian art could interact with cultures from around the world.

At Santiniketan, these influences became part of a broader movement to revive handicrafts and encourage students and artists to look beyond conventional European academic art.

Among the important figures associated with this artistic environment was Pratima Devi, an accomplished artist and cultural organiser. She played an important role in developing artistic and craft activities at Santiniketan and worked with women and artisans connected with the institution.

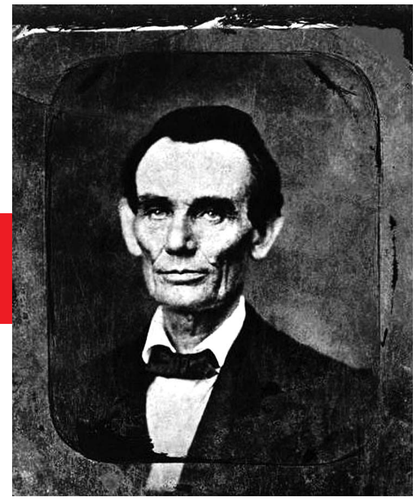
The connection between Java and Bengal is therefore more than a story about a beautiful pattern. It represents the kind of cultural exchange Tagore encouraged. A textile tradition that had developed within the courts of Java could travel across the sea, inspire an Indian artist and educator, and find a new life within the experimental artistic world of Santiniketan. What had once been a symbol of royal privilege could thus become a source of artistic inspiration far beyond the palace walls.





He Was A Wrestler, A Tavern Keeper, An Inventor

And Faced Personal Tragedies



In an extraordinary coincidence, Lincoln's son Robert Todd Lincoln was once rescued from a railway accident by Edwin Booth, a famous stage actor. Robert reportedly fell into the narrow space between a crowded railway platform and a moving train in Jersey City, New Jersey. Edwin grabbed him by the collar and pulled him to safety. Edwin was the elder brother of John Wilkes Booth, who later assassinated President Lincoln. The incident established an unexpected connection between the two families before tragedy brought their names together in American history.

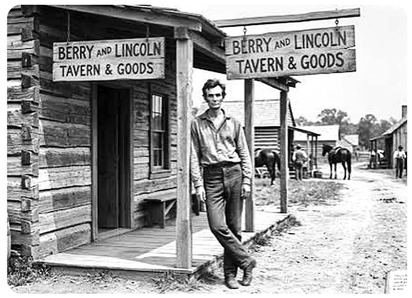
Verna Mohon

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th president of the United States, is remembered for leading the country through the Civil War and helping abolish slavery. However, beyond his political achievements, Lincoln had a remarkable life filled with unusual experiences. He was a skilled wrestler, a licensed tavern keeper, an inventor who held a patent, and a man who endured profound personal tragedies. Here are seven fascinating facts about one of America's most celebrated leaders.

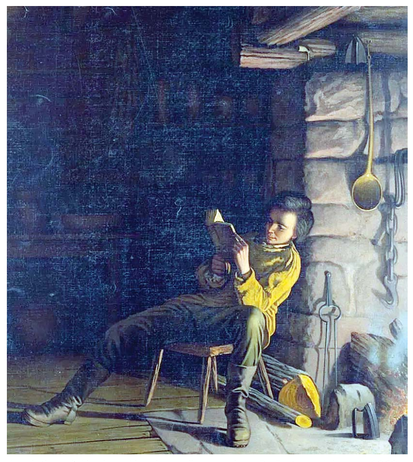
In the 19th century, it was important for an American politician to demonstrate bravery and vitality, and that naturally applied to Abraham Lincoln.

Political campaign mentions of Lincoln as a capable wrestler first seem to have surfaced during the 1858 debates, that were part of the campaign for a U.S. Senate seat in Illinois.

Surprisingly, it was Lincoln's perennial opponent, Stephen Douglas, who brought it up. Douglas, at the first Lincoln-Douglas Debate in Ottawa, Illinois on August 21, 1858, referred to Lincoln's longstanding reputation as a wrestler in what the New York Times called an "amusing passage."



In the moderately sized city of Stillwater in Payne County, Oklahoma stands the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. Enshrined within those hallowed halls are America's greatest wrestlers, from collegiate athletes to Olympic champions. But there is one man who was granted a spot within the Hall for his grappling tactics within the ring, and earned him an "Outstanding American" honor. Though, his gangly stature became a point of insult for his political rivals and contemporaries, with one man once telling Lincoln that he did not possess the "features the ladies would call handsome," the future president as a young man was, surprisingly, built from stone. Lincoln may have been a thin, wiry young man standing at 6 feet, 4 inches and 180 lbs., but years of working manual labour as both a farmer in the Kentucky backwoods as well as a rail splitter helped forge a naturally strong specimen of a man who towered over any and all who stood beside him.



A painting of Abraham Lincoln reading as a boy. By Eastman Johnson, 1868.

1. He Was a Formidable Wrestler

Long before entering politics, Lincoln earned a reputation for his wrestling skills in Illinois. Standing 6 feet 4 inches tall, he possessed an imposing physique and was considered a formidable competitor in the rough-and-tumble wrestling style popular on the American frontier. Although claims that he competed in approximately 300 matches and lost only once are difficult to verify, his reputation as a wrestler became legendary. Lincoln was later inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in its Outstanding American category, recognising his place in American wrestling history.

In 1831, Lincoln faced Jack Armstrong, the leader of a rough local gang in New Salem, Illinois. When Armstrong attempted an illegal trip, Lincoln reportedly lifted him by the throat and slammed him to the ground, earning the immediate respect of the entire town.

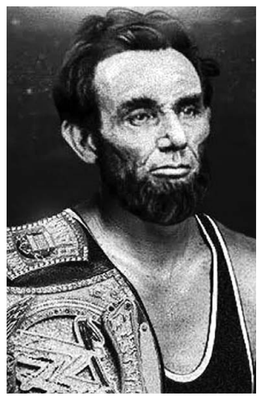
2. He Was a Licensed Tavern Keeper

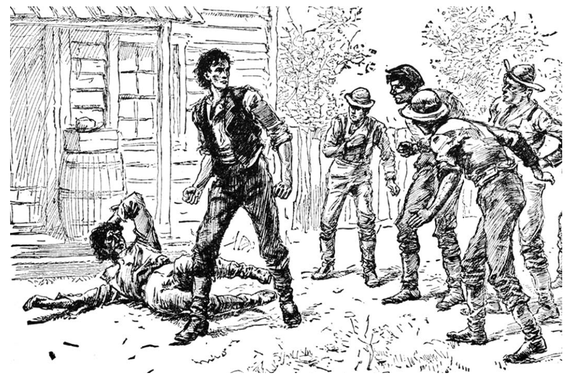
In 1833, Lincoln and his business partner, William F. Berry, operated a general store in New Salem, Illinois. They subsequently obtained a tavern licence, allowing them to sell alcoholic beverages, including whiskey and brandy. The business struggled financially and eventually became one of Lincoln's early commercial failures. His experience is often described as that of America's only president to hold a bartender's licence, although he was more precisely a licensed tavern keeper. The episode reveals how Lincoln experimented with business before establishing himself as a lawyer and politician.

3. He Was an Inventor With an Official Patent

Lincoln possessed a fascination with mechanical devices and how things worked. In 1849, he received US Patent No. 6,469 for an invention designed to help boats navigate shallow waters and pass over sandbars. The mechanism used adjustable buoyant chambers or bellows to lift vessels over underwater obstructions. Inspired by difficulties encountered during river travel, Lincoln hoped his invention would improve navigation. Although the device never achieved widespread use, he remains the only US president known to have received a patent for an invention.

#ABRAHAM LINCOLN

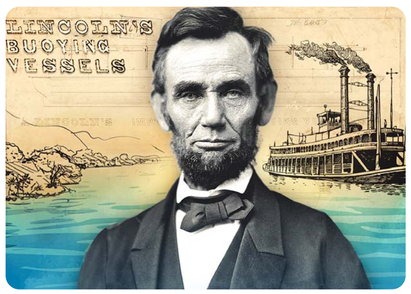




Late 19th century illustration of Lincoln's wrestling match with Armstrong.

4. The Secret Service Was Established on the Day of His Assassination

On April 14, 1865, Lincoln signed legislation establishing the United States Secret Service under the Treasury Department. Its original purpose was to combat widespread counterfeiting of American currency, not to protect the president. That evening, Lincoln attended a performance at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC, where he was shot by John Wilkes Booth. Lincoln died the following morning. The coincidence remains striking, although presidential protection became part of the Secret Service's responsibilities only later.



5. An 11-Year-Old Girl Inspired His Famous Beard

Lincoln was clean-shaven for much of his life. During his 1860 presidential campaign, an 11-year-old girl named Grace Bedell wrote to him suggesting that he grow a beard because his face appeared thin. She believed facial hair might improve his appearance and help him win more votes. Lincoln replied to her letter, and eventually, grew a beard. During his journey to Washington for his inauguration in 1861, his train stopped in Westfield, New York, where he reportedly met Grace. His beard subsequently became one of his most recognisable features.

6. His Son Was Rescued by the Brother of His Assassin

In an extraordinary coincidence, Lincoln's son Robert Todd Lincoln was once rescued from a railway accident by Edwin Booth, a famous stage actor. Robert reportedly fell into the narrow space between a crowded railway platform and a moving train in Jersey City, New Jersey. Edwin grabbed him by the collar and pulled him to safety. Edwin was the elder brother of John Wilkes Booth, who later assassinated President Lincoln. The incident established an unexpected connection between the two families before tragedy brought their names together in American history.



Tad died at age 18 in 1871, six years after his father's assassination. Another haunting account concerns a dream Lincoln reportedly shared with his associate Ward Hill Lamon. He described entering the White House's East Room and seeing a coffin surrounded by mourners. When he asked who had died, a soldier reportedly answered that the president had been killed by an assassin. The account was recorded by Lamon and cannot be independently established as a prediction. Nevertheless, its resemblance to Lincoln's assassination on April 14, 1865 has made it a lasting historical anecdote.

There is something funny when we read or write about famous historical figures like Abraham Lincoln. For the most part, we think we know about a figure because we have been indoctrinated about the "greatest hits" of these figures. We all know about the stoic Lincoln who unified the Union during the Civil War, freed the slaves, and was assassinated, but we should never think we know everything about someone.

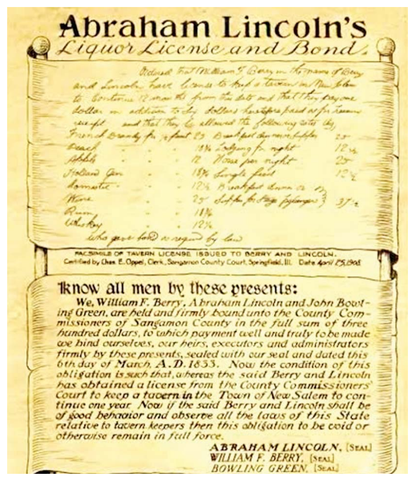
Lincoln's legacy extends far beyond these remarkable stories. His leadership during the Civil War, preservation of the Union and role in ending slavery remain his greatest achievements. Yet, his life as an athlete, businessman, inventor and emotionally complex individual reveals the many dimensions of a leader whose influence continues to shape American history.

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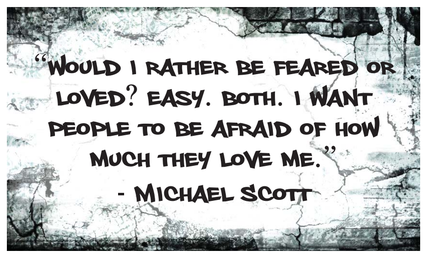
7. He Struggled With Melancholy and Reportedly Dreamed of His Death

Behind Lincoln's humour and storytelling lay periods of deep sadness. Biographers have described his struggles with melancholy, compounded by the deaths of family members, including his mother, sister and two young sons. He often relied on humour, literature and storytelling to cope with emotional distress. Lincoln's mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, died of "milk sickness" when he was just nine years old. Ten years later, his beloved older sister, Sarah, died during childbirth, leaving Lincoln deeply isolated in his youth.

In 1835, Ann Rutledge, a young woman in New Salem to whom Lincoln was deeply attached, died of typhoid fever at age 22. Her death plunged Lincoln into a severe depression, so intense that friends feared for his life. Lincoln and his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, had four sons, but only one, Robert, survived to adulthood. Eddie died just before his fourth birthday in 1850, likely from tuberculosis. Willie died in the White House at age 11 in 1862 from typhoid fever, devastating both parents in the middle of the Civil War.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott



ZITS

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

