



## ACTIVITY 59

# THE FRIEND DOWN INSIDE OF ME

Biographical Sketches of Abraham Lincoln

58-1

Eighty-Eight to One

It was September 1863. Missouri was a powder keg ready to blow at any time. It was one of three slave states to remain in the Union, but it was deeply divided and extremists on both sides of the slavery question were pushing their cause.

On one hand, thousands of soldiers returning from defeated Confederate armies were pouring into the state and forming themselves into bands of guerrillas. They raided villages and towns, stole money and horses, burned houses and bridges, and hung Union men.

Governor Gamble had pronounced Lincoln's call for troops as unconstitutional and many complained to Lincoln that his "pro-slavery" government was paralyzing the Federal Government's prosecution of the war.

On the other hand, in July of that year a conservative convention passed an emancipation ordinance to eliminate slavery, an ordinance sure to fire the passions of both opponents and friends. Their activity was such that Governor Gamble complained to Lincoln that the radicals were openly and loudly threatening to overthrow his government.

In between, the one man holding the opposing sides together was General Schofield, a 32-year old physics professor turned warrior. Schofield was firm in dealing with both sides even handedly. He considered it his job to prevent civil-war from breaking out within the state. The antislavery forces were furious with him for not taking their side.

On September 1, an Emancipation convention was held by antislavery factions in Jefferson City. The convention authorized a delegation of seventy men, one from each county of the state, to travel to Washington to present their demands to President Lincoln. The first and foremost of these demands was for General Schofield to be relieved of his command and replaced with General Butler, whom they believed to be more sympathetic to their cause.

At train stops on the way the committee was met by brass bands and antislavery delegations. Upon arriving in Washington, they were joined by a Committee of Eighteen from Kansas who had been sent with the same mission. The delegation spent the next two days in preparing their address to the President.



At 9 AM on September 30, the 88 delegates presented themselves at the White House. The great doors were opened and after they entered, the doors were closed and locked. At their request, there were to be no reporters or guests. The meeting was to be between them and the President only.

Prior to the meeting, Lincoln had confided to John Hay, his assistant that if they could show him that Schofield had done anything wrong he would have to remove Schofield. But he seriously doubted that was the case. He rather believed they were against Schofield because he would not take their side. He said, "I think I understand the matter perfectly and I cannot do anything

contrary to my convictions, to please these men, earnest and powerful as they may be.”

Now, he was face to face with them. One against 88. Lincoln later described them to Hay as follows, “They are nearer to me than the other side, in thought and sentiment, though bitterly hostile [to me] personally. They are utterly lawless—the onhandiest devils in the world to deal with—but, after all, their faces are set Zionwards.”

The delegation presented their demands in as pressing terms as they could. Enos Clark, one of the delegates, recorded Lincoln’s response.

“You gentlemen,” Lincoln said among other things, “must bear in mind that in performing the duties of the office I hold I must represent no one section, but I must act for all sections of the Union in trying to maintain the supremacy of the Government. . . . I so desire to conduct the affairs of this administration that if, at the end, when I come to lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside of me.”

### Hindsight Questions

- What was the delegation trying to get Lincoln to do?

### Insight Questions

- Who was the friend down inside of Lincoln?
- Why were people unable to persuade Lincoln to go contrary to his conscience?

### Foresight Questions

- Why was Lincoln determined to keep this friend?
- What happens to people when they act contrary to their conscience?

**Discussion Opportunity:** Polk was ruling the choices of many Missourians, and indeed people throughout both the North and South. Polk was working his confusion by clouding people’s view of the issues. By getting people to take extreme positions on both sides he set the stage for Polk to step in and make them enemies. Polk convinced many that if they didn’t get their way, the only solution was violence. EPT agents had a great strangle hold on the state and nation. But, Lincoln was a leader who possessed strong C skills. A superb Communicator, Lincoln had also developed the skills of Criticism and Control to a very high level. His daring in sorting out difficult issues and ability to work with people in a balanced, fair manner made him a highly effective leader. But, nothing gave him greater strength than his unwillingness to offend his own conscience. Character Traits: PR duty, right, ownership; SR self-understanding, self-denial, self-reliance, RO caring, fairness, citizenship; T honesty

## 56-2 I Never Use Any Man’s Money But My Own

At the age of 24, Abraham Lincoln was postmaster of the little frontier village of New Salem, Illinois. For this he received an annual salary of \$55.70. The post office was closed in 1836, but it was several years before the Postal service sent an agent from Washington to settle the accounts with the ex-postmaster. By this time he was a struggling lawyer who was not doing well financially.

After examining the books, the agent informed Lincoln a total of \$17 was due to the government from receipts of the post office. Lincoln stood up and walked to an old trunk, took out a yellow cotton cloth tied with string and set it on the table. He untied the cloth and spread the money on the table—exactly \$17 dollars. When the agent expressed surprise, Lincoln answered, “I never use any man’s money but my own.”