

Thomas Jefferson

Thomas Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence and America's third President, was a man of wide-ranging interests and many talents. He was a statesman, a politician, an architect, a philosopher, and an inventor.

But he also possessed some jarring contradictions. In the Declaration of Independence, for example, he wrote, "... all men are created equal," but he himself was a slave owner. He wrote that God had endowed men with the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," yet he was a skeptic, who questioned the existence of God.

Jefferson campaigned for frugality in government but paid \$15 million, a huge sum at the time, for the Louisiana Purchase.

His critics accused him of squandering the money on a worthless expanse of wilderness. But it turned out to be a wise investment that more than doubled the area of the United States.

Abraham Lincoln

Few American Presidents are remembered more for their humility and depth of human feeling than Abraham Lincoln. His sympathy for the suffering of others may be traced to his own personal tragedies.

In 1818, when he was only a boy, his mother died of milk sickness.

Without a woman to keep the household functioning, Lincoln and his family lived in virtual squalor. As President, Lincoln, endured other personal hardships.

His wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, suffered from severe emotional problems.

Though she was known to be a gracious hostess, her servants feared her many unexpected tantrums. She was also prone to angry quarrels with the wives of the members of Lincoln's Cabinet.

The worst misfortune Lincoln had to bear, however, was the death of his 11-year-old son, Willie, in 1862. Perhaps it was Lincoln's own sufferings that deepened his sympathy for others in distress.

William Randolph Hearst

In the 1890's Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst were the two great kings of mass-circulation newspapers.

Unlike Pulitzer, Hearst came from an affluent family.

In 1887 he took over the San Francisco Examiner from his father, and in 1895 he bought a nearly bankrupt New York newspaper, the Morning Journal. Using a combination of photographs, attention-getting headlines, brightly colored comic strips, militaristic editorials, and sensational stories, Hearst quickly raised the Journal's circulation to an incredible 1.5 million copies a day.

At first Hearst's newspapers attacked the huge monopolies then controlling much of American industry, and championed the rights of workers. Hearst, himself, ran for public office, serving two terms in Congress. But he failed to win the presidential nomination in 1904.

Frustrated and embittered by subsequent political failures, he withdrew to San Simeon on the coast of California, where he had built an enormous private castle for himself.

