

## Presidents' Day Poetry

### Our Presidents

By Winifred Sackville Stoner, Jr.

George Washington, Adams and Jefferson three  
First rulers of Uncle Sam's land of the free:  
Then Madison, Monroe and Adams again  
All clever and upright and good honest men;  
The Jackson, Van Buren and Harrison first,  
Tyler and Polk whose terms were so cursed  
By war with the Mexicans who lost in the fray - Then  
Taylor and Fillmore and Pierce held their sway.  
Buchanan and Lincoln, Johnson and Grant, Then  
Hayes, martyred Garfield, despiser of cant,  
Arthur and Cleveland, Harrison (Ben) McKinley  
the martyr, beloved by all men; Then most  
energetic and strenuous Teddy  
And plump William Taft for a second term ready  
When Wilson was placed in this nation's great chair  
And promised to always rule wisely and fair.



# Washington's Birthday

By Margaret E. Sangster



'Tis splendid to have a record  
So white and free from stain  
That, held to the light, it shows no blot,  
Though tested and tried amain;  
That age to age forever  
Repeats its story of love,

And your birthday lives in a nation's  
heart, All other days above.

And this is Washington's glory,  
A steadfast soul and true,  
Who stood for his country's honor  
When his country's days were few.  
And now when its days are many,  
And its flag of stars is flung  
To the breeze in radiant glory,  
His name is on every tongue.

Yes, it's splendid to live so bravely,  
To be so great and strong,  
That your memory is ever a tocsin  
To rally the foes of wrong;  
To live so proudly and purely,  
That your people pause in their way,  
And year by year, with banner and drum,  
Keep the thought of your natal day.

## **George Washington**

By Winifred Marshall

The flags fly, the bands play,

Give him the honor due

To one who served his country well,

A leader brave and true

First in defense and first in peace;

In our hearts, as of yore

He holds first place, George Washington,

Our hero, evermore.



## **Abraham Lincoln**

By James Russell Lowell

Life may be given in many ways,

And loyalty to Truth be sealed

As bravely in the closet as the field,

So bountiful is Fate;

But then to stand beside her,

When craven churls deride her,

To front a lie in arms and not to yield,  
This shows, methinks, God's plan  
And measure of a stalwart man,  
Limbed like the old heroic breeds,  
Who stands self-poised on manhood's solid  
earth, Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,  
Fed from within with all the strength he needs.

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief,  
Whom late the Nation he had led,  
With ashes on her head,  
Wept with the passion of an angry grief:  
Forgive me, if from present things I turn  
To speak what in my heart will beat and burn,  
And hang my wreath on his world-honored urn.

Nature, they say, doth dote,  
And cannot make a man  
Save on some worn-out plan,  
Repeating us by rote:  
For him her Old-World moulds aside she threw,  
And, choosing sweet clay from the breast  
Of the unexhausted West,  
With stuff untainted shaped a hero new,  
Wise, steadfast in the strength of God, and true.  
How beautiful to see  
Once more a shepherd of mankind indeed,  
Who loved his charge, but never loved to lead;



One whose meek flock the people joyed to  
be, Not lured by any cheat of birth,

But by his clear-grained human worth,  
And brave old wisdom of sincerity!

They knew that outward grace is  
dust; They could not choose but trust

In that sure-footed mind's unfaltering  
skill, And supple-tempered will

That bent like perfect steel to spring again and thrust.

His was no lonely mountain-peak of mind,  
Thrusting to thin air o'er our cloudy bars,

A sea-mark now, now lost in vapors blind;

Broad prairie rather, genial, level-lined,

Fruitful and friendly for all human kind,

Yet also nigh to heaven and loved of loftiest stars.

Nothing of Europe here,

Or, then, of Europe fronting mornward  
still, Ere any names of Serf and Peer

Could Nature's equal scheme  
deface And thwart her genial will;

Here was a type of the true elder race,

And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.

I praise him not; it were too late;

And some innate weakness there must  
be In him who condescends to victory

Such as the Present gives, and cannot  
wait, Safe in himself as in a fate.

So always firmly he:

He knew to bide his time,  
And can his fame abide,  
Still patient in his simple faith sublime,  
Till the wise years decide.  
Great captains, with their guns and drums,  
Disturb our judgment for the hour,  
But at last silence comes;  
These all are gone, and, standing like a  
tower, Our children shall behold his fame,  
The kindly-earnest, brave, foreseeing man,  
Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame,  
New birth of our new soil, the first American.