



*Sayings of Woodbridge N. Ferris*. Edited by Caryl B. Ferguson and Rich Santer. 1983; reprinted 2003.

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### **Abraham Lincoln**

“If I had my way, there would be in every community a life-sized statue of Abraham Lincoln.” *Newton, p. 264. Speech to Oakman Boulevard Improvement Association, October 20, 1920.*

“I have gain consolation from the study of Abraham Lincoln and Grover Cleveland.” *Autobiography, p. 150.*

“I am an idealist. I hate to see the Abraham Lincoln type smothered.” *Wade, p.67. Senate Campaign Speech, 1922.*

### **Alcohol**

“Even my boyhood observations taught me that there was no particular benefit to be derived from the use of intoxicating liquor. Its use, as I saw it, was fraught with danger. With me, this was not a mere Sunday School sentiment, my attitude grew out of my actual observations.” *Newton, p. 359. Prohibition Speech in U.S. Senate, May 4, 1926.*

“Total abstinence injures no man; furthermore, it secures safety and sanity.” *Autobiography, p. 154*

“I found that a very considerable number of my close relatives have gone to the graveyard by the urgent request of John Barleycorn.” *Autobiography, p. 153*

### **Capital/Labor Relations**

“In this trial through which you have passed, you have not solved the great problem of capital and labor, but the day is coming when that problem will be solved. Capital cannot afford to organize on the basis that labor is the enemy. Labor cannot afford to organize on the basis that capital is it enemy.” *Newton, p.242. Speech on Michigan Copper Strike, 1914.*

“Cooperation is needed between the working men and industry.” *Newton, p.280. Memorial Day Speech, 1927. Ionia, Michigan.*

“I appeal to those of wealth and industry to have their employees share in dividends.”  
*Newton, p.280. Memorial Day Speech, 1927. Ionia, Michigan.*

“Sooner or later the genius of a man will formulate a mediation law whereby intelligent public opinion will contribute to the settlement of industrial disputes.” *Wade, p.34. Detroit Free Press. October, 1914.*

“In a democracy it is absolutely necessary that capital be loyal to labor and that labor be loyal to capital.” *Wade, p.34. Detroit Free Press. October, 1914.*

“This problem of capital and labor is not going to be solved in the old way. We have to cooperate. Labor and capital are knit closer together than ever were the Siamese twins. One is of little value, in my judgment, without the other. They must work together and cooperate together on the basis of simple justice.” *Autobiography, p.339.*

### **Education/Teaching**

“Every child has the civil right, if not divine right, to enter our public schools with as good eyes, as good ears, a good teeth, as clean throat, as good a body as modern science can give him.” *Newton, p.324. Speech as Governor to 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 1917.*

“In America, our slogan ought to be “Education for all of the people all of the time.” Notwithstanding the frequent failure of the schools to educate, I offer as a collateral slogan: “Schools for all of the people of the time.” *Newton, p. 193. Undelivered Speech for the Senate. Circa 1928*

“When I use the term education, I do not use it as an equivalent of schooling. The two terms “education” and “schooling” are not synonymous...Schooling at its best in the United States frequently has a tendency to make the acquisition of knowledge its chief objective. Education has to do with the enrichment of life.” *Newton, p. 191. Undelivered Speech for the Senate. Circa 1928.*

“I have come here to help you, boys and girls, if you let me...” *Newton, p.41. From Speech to First Pupils. November 15, 1869.*

“My plea in Michigan—and it will be my plea to the last breath I draw, and the last word I speak—is education for all children, all men, and all women of Michigan, all the people in all our states all the time.” *Wade, p. 86. “Spirit of the Times” Speech to Michigan Pioneer Historical Society. May 25, 1916. Lansing*

“If I were to organize an educational system, I would make of its center health, h-e-a-l-t-h, health.” *Wade, p.131. Speech to New York Teachers Institute, 1916.*

“I must make my vigorous protest against the superficial education work of today. Colleges, universities, normal schools, high schools, are all guilty.” *Autobiography, p. 100.*

“Schools must deal with fundamentals, must build a foundation and furnish a plan for a possible human structure of beauty, strength and service.” *Autobiography, p. 100.*

“Many people entertain a very old superstition which grows out of the notion...that education is a preparation for this or that vocation. Consequently, present school laws are undemocratic. Free schools are open for a class—for those five to 21 years of age. This is all wrong. American public schools should be open for all people all of the time.” *Autobiography, p. 169.*

“Permit and encourage a student who has the ability to do four years of scheduled work in three years.” *Autobiography, p. 101.*

“...Use education for sane living, not simply as a means of making money, not as a means of escaping work.” *Autobiography, p.157.*

“Education is life. It involves growth, development and training.” *Autobiography, p. 169.*

“I did not pursue medicine anticipating that I would practice it. I hoped to make use of my medical knowledge in my chosen work, teaching. I made no mistake in this plan.” *Autobiography, p. 115-116.*

“[In the 1890’s] the maximum attendance occurred in the summer session when we enrolled six or seven hundred students.” *Autobiography, p. 142.*

“School should be conducted for 12 months in the year with two distinct groups of instructors. I know what you will say: taxes, taxes, taxes. Don’t say it to me.” *Newton, p.261. Speech to Oakman Boulevard Improvement Association. October 20, 1920.*

“In discussing school management, there are certain things I am going to assume: a teacher, a building properly situated, proper equipment, proper conditions of heating, lighting, sanitation, water system. Without these essentials, you cannot have an efficient school.” *Newton, p. 172.*

“Far better to let down the bar [to admission] and admit every candidate on condition that he will do his work successfully.” *Autobiography, p. 101.*

“Ascertain what the candidate can do, rather than what he has done.” *Autobiography, p. 101.*

“Correlate all the work of your school to the work of the community in which you live.” *Autobiography, p.173*

“When a human being ceases to do constructive thinking, ceases to find new and better ways of living, he is as dead as any corpse in a cemetery.” *Newton, p. 193. Undelivered Speech to the Senate. Circa 1928.*

“Learning isn’t necessarily confined to youth. When you think that your education is finished, don’t hang around any longer: take chloroform and make a permanent departure.” *Newton, p.285. Detroit Open Forum. March 1, 1926.*

“I deplore the menace of college and university degrees..” *Autobiography, p. 170.*

“The overtowering demand in the practical world is for men who know a few things thoroughly well, who can do constructive thinking and who have initiative.” *Newton, p. 52.*

“Today I emphasize in my English classes the tremendous importance of “knowing a little Latin and less Greek.” *Autobiography, p. 98, 1923*

“All teachers must be readers. At least one great book should be read every week. First book: wit and humor; second book: inspiration; third book: scholarship; and fourth book: pedagogy.” *Newton, p.175.*

“It is your place as a teacher to feed mental hunger.” *Newton, p. 171a.*

“I love teaching and yet there are times I get thoroughly disheartened. But I recover from my dumps and go on my way rejoicing.” *Autobiography Preface, p.42.*

“It is up to you teachers to take your boys and girls and so develop their finer instincts that they will grow up to be better men and women. Be sure you first know, “What makes the wheels go round.” *Autobiography, p.230.*

“The world will always stand back for the man that can do things, even if he has hayseed in his hair.” *Crimson & Gold, 1908.*

“Fundamental books—“Theory and Art of Teaching” by David Perkins Page; P.S. Fowler’s three books on human science; and “Constitution of Man” by George Combe.” *Autobiography, p. 165.*

“Millions of dollars for stadiums, millions of dollars for athletics. Do I fight athletics? No. Not athletics for the student body. We are paying far too extravagantly for educational substitutes, winning football games without winning games legitimately in the field of intelligence.” *Wade, p. 66. Speech to Executive Club of Chicago. October 7, 1927.*

## **Equality**

“There is no virtue in poverty: there is no virtue in monetary riches.” *Newton, p.232.*

“Remember, to be a teacher is to be no higher than a first rate stenographer.” *Newton, p. 227. Commencement Address, 1906.*

“...And so far as I have any influence or power, I hope to teach that God Almighty must have had some wise object in creating different races, with innate differences, and yet intending us all to partake of the richest countries of the earth and live together in peace and joy for the righteous ends of life.” *Newton, p. 243.*

“I want to remind you women of you power. You could elect the President...or the Governor. It is up to you to work along with the men.” *Newton, p.262. Memorial Day Speech.*

“I am a radical advocate for the larger freedom of the women. I would not see her shut out from a single occupation.” *Newton, p. 227. Commencement Address, 1906.*

### **Home Life**

“I hate to hear...parents call the children “kids.” *Newton, p. 227.*

The American home is imperiled...the youth of today are doing the best they can with the fathers and mothers they have, as it is they who train them.” *Newton, p.280. Memorial Day Address, 1927. Ionia Michigan.*

“The school can’t do everything. There are some of the elemental teachings that must come from the home life of the child.” *Newton, p.286. Detroit Open Forum. March 1, 1926.*

“Self-reliance, self-sacrifice, obedience, sobriety, and truth are old fashioned virtues that should be taught at home.” *Newton, p. 286. Detroit Open Forum. March 1, 1926.*

“The parents today give their youth an auto, lots of jazz, and a bottle of the hip; and if they don’t go straight to hell, it is not their fault as they have done the best they could.” *Newton, p. 281. Memorial Day Address, 1927. Ionia, Michigan.*

“Because the father is a merchant, it is no reason why the son should be one; likewise with preachers, doctors and all other business men. When young people know what they want to be, let them bring out the best that’s in them. I believe that God has a life work for every one of us. We should employ all effort to make the most of our possibilities.” *Autobiography, p.227.*

“Give the American youth the chance you had in the home and don’t leave it all to the schools. There is no teacher who can take the place of a mother.” *Newton, p.281. Memorial Day Address, 1927. Ionia, Michigan.*

“Obedience is lacking today. It surely is not the father or mother, but the boy or girl. We need to give youth some definite work to do, the panacea for all ills of the human race.” *Newton, p.262. Memorial Day Speech.*

“Without family loyalty no home is secure.” *Autobiography*, p. 155.

“The most important lesson I learned from father is embodied in “Finish whatever good thing you begin.” *Autobiography*, p. 61.

“At the age of 10, I was required to read the newspaper while both father and mother listened. Father insisted that in reading aloud, I articulate clearly and enunciate distinctly.” *Autobiography*, p. 62.

“On investigation, I find that the majority of students, even college graduates, are not readers. The American home is largely responsible for this condition.” *Autobiography*, p. 144.

### **Individual Responsibility**

“We need more self-reliance and self-sacrifice.” *Newton*, p.281. *Memorial Day Address*, 1927. *Ionia, Michigan*.

“Let us, in whatever way we are best qualified, serve our own community and thus fulfill the highest democracy.” *Newton*, p.264. *Speech to the Oakman Boulevard Improvement Association*. October 20, 1920.

“I do not wonder that men sometimes get utterly, discouraged in trying to be decent. After all, I suppose the real satisfaction comes to the individual. Of course, I am obliged to live with myself, and of course, I like good company. In order to have good company, I must behave myself.” *Autobiography Preface*, p.38.

“Will you tell me what like of human effort is free from objectionable features? Take my own business, for example: all my life I have been obliged to do a thousand and one things that I have positively loathed, and you might just as well make up your mind first as last that if you accomplish anything you will have the disagreeable to contend with.” *Autobiography Preface*. p. 42.

“Whose fault is it that we have objectionable motion pictures? Isn't it because we who go to see them do not have our proper instincts trained? It means an awful waste of human emotion when the objectionable pictures are patronized. I believe that the exploitation of our activities in the movies can be developed to do some good in the educational field, and the movies will eventually become a power instead of a menace.” *Autobiography*, p.230.

“I've always entertained the notion that the majority of mankind sleeps 24 hours a day. Awaken students to a realization of what it means to live, and they will have little difficulty in performance.” *Autobiography*, p. 144.

“In the Ferris Institute, tardiness is an insult.” *Newton*, p. 173.

“...I have never, from the age of four, been tardy at school, as a pupil or instructor. This habit has caused me, in the aggregate, an immense loss of time...I am not disposed to comment on its value.” *Autobiography*, p. 149.

“At morning exercises, every possible effort is put forth to awaken the students to a realization of the possibilities.” *Autobiography*, p. 144.

### **Law/Justice**

“It is highly probable that the present open violation of the law has some relation to the disintegration of the American home.” *Newton*, p.286. *Speech on “Newberryism” Detroit, Circa 1922.*

“In my institution there is an effort made to respect the law.” *Newton*, p. 345. *Speech, Detroit, Circa 1922.*

“The child that is permitted to habitually break the laws of home will break municipal state and national laws.” *Autobiography*, p. 155.

“Laws should be adapted to the needs of those governed.” *Autobiography*, p. 154.

“The truth of the matter is “property and more property” is the slogan of the day. Money rules the politics of Illinois, money rules the politics of nearly every state in the Union, money rules the home, the church, the school, and every other organization.” *Autobiography Preface*, p. 39.

“I believe that the initiative in attempting to secure justice should come from capital. Justice is what you want, isn't it? If you represent labor that is what you want; if you represent capital, justice is what you want. Stop fooling so much with charity; stop fooling so much with advantage. Get down to the simple principle of human justice.” *Autobiography*, p.338.

### **Lectures**

“To make the world better”...was the real beginning of my lecture work...delivered more than a thousand times.” *Autobiography*, p. 176.

“I make very little use of funny stories [but I make] large use of my personal experiences and reading. My humor is spontaneous, never studied. My addresses are delivered with tremendous enthusiasm and force.” *Autobiography*, p. 176.

### **Natural Resources**

“The city is one of society's permanent institutions. Nevertheless, a full orb'd human being cannot be evolved without free access to mother earth, her oceans, bays, lakes, rivers and brooks, without the companionship of the birds of the forest and the beasts of

the fields, without having a daily vision of the sun, moon and stars in the firmament.” *Autobiography, p. 158.*

“When people hear the still small voice of the great out-of-doors, human words are not needed.” *Crimson & Gold, 1908.*

“Reforestation of the non-agricultural lands and protecting growing timber from fire constitutes a part of the great work of this [public domain] mission.” *Newton, p.319. Speech as Governor to 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 1917.*

“One of the most important problems that can confront any state legislature is the problem of conservation of natural resources.” *Newton, p.319. Speech as Governor to 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 1917.*

“My hobby of getting in communication with nature is a joy forever.” *Autobiography, p. 157-158.*

“Based on my present knowledge of human nature, I plead for an outdoor life. All life is more or less artificial but city life is artificial to the extreme.” *Autobiography, p. 157-158.*

“There are some corporations and individuals who are interested in the sale of Michigan lands solely for profit and who choose to conduct their operations with utter disregard of business ethics and ordinary decency.” *Newton, p.320. Speech as Governor to 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 1917.*

“A scientific soil survey means a greater and better Michigan.” *Newton, p.322. Speech as Governor to 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 1917.*

“The inexcusable waste of natural resources that has gone on for years needs only to be mentioned in order that the present generation may have full realization of its duty.” *Newton, p.319. Speech as Governor to 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 1917.*

### **Philosophy**

“When we have a science of human nature based on anthropology, we shall have more efficient homes, schools, governments and a more efficient world.” *Autobiography, p. 157.*

“My intellectual and philosophical curiosity is boundless. I shall never cease growing. I am ever searching for truth. I feel confident that this is the noblest attitude a human being can take.” *Autobiography, p. 164.*

“So long as philosophers and scientists are honest, they cannot be expected to agree in all of their views. It is not desirable that they should.” *Autobiography, p. 161.*

“I make no attempt to solve all the problems that any one day presents.” *Autobiography*, p. 164.

“No man can see very far into the future. Day by day his perspective changes.” *Autobiography*, p. 51.

“After you have lived 50 or more years, you will discover that there is no human organization in the world that does not contain a sucker, a bullhead or a catfish. The only thing under God’s heaven that any manager can do is to make the best of the situation.” *Autobiography*, p. 40.

“I know that labor is fundamental, and I know that the creator of this world arranges so that labor should constitute an important factor in the life of every wholesome man and woman.” *Autobiography*, p.338.

“You will meet mediocre men as long as there are men to meet, and some of them will be coining more money than you are coining.” *Autobiography Preface*, p. 42.

“... We cannot secure perfect justice outside of heaven, and there will be some people very uncomfortable if it is insisted on there. We do not anticipate that. We shall probably always have an opportunity, however, as long as we may live to make mistakes. If we do not, some of us won’t be able to identify ourselves.” *Autobiography*, p. 339.

“The majority of God’s children must ever be hewers of wood and carriers of water. When this condition ceases, our civilization is doomed to destruction.” *Autobiography*, p. 151.

## **Politics**

“I do not care whether it is Michigan or Tennessee, if it is overwhelmingly dominated by one political party continuously, good government is in danger.” *Newton*, p. 333.

“I enjoyed being Governor of Michigan much more than I have the Senatorship.” *Newton*, p.290. *Ypsilanti, Michigan. July 27, 1927.*

“There is no place on earth like the United States Senate for the study of human nature and to no small extent brute nature.” *Autobiography Preface*, p. 38.

“The conduct of the Senate does not tend (sic) toward advancement of good government in this country. I do not see how a body of men can descend so low.” *Newton*, p. 290.

“I would rather command my own self-respect than to be President of the United States without it.” *Autobiography Preface*, p. 40.

## **Religion**

“I still believe that if the Christian church could be converted to Christianity, something worthwhile could be accomplished.” *Newton Preface, p.9.*

“I have the kindest feeling for every church that is actually advancing the Kingdom of God and the reign of world peace. I have all my life advocated the teachings of the Carpenter.” *Autobiography, p. 163.*

“I believe that the Sermon on the Mount is genuinely practical.” *Autobiography, Preface, p. 14.*

“To my mind religion, using the term in its generic sense, is fundamental in the life of civilized man.” *Autobiography, p. 159.*

### **Success**

“I attribute my success to the spirit of helpfulness inaugurated the first day and continued to the last day.” *Newton, p. 42.*

“I hope the few who read these pages will be baptized in the old faith that in social cooperation lies the possibility of self-realization.” *Autobiography, p. 52.*

“I say put humanity first and money second and even further down the line, if needed.” *Newton, p. 280.*

“The doctrine of hate and tyranny is the doctrine of destruction.” *Wade, p. 34. Detroit Free Press. October, 1914.*

“I am not an optimist, nor am I a pessimist. I am a meliorist.” *Autobiography, p. 150.*

“To this day, I have the fine art of listening. In the United States Senate, I never talk for the sake of talking, for the sake of getting in the limelight...this is an age of words and more words. I am emphatically in favor of fewer words and more action.” *Autobiography, p. 150.*

“Only recently I pleaded in Detroit for dental inspection, for it is my business to go around and wake up the Rip Van Winkles. I believe good teeth are related to all around education. Ninety percent of the boys and girls have defective teeth. Dental clinics are practicable in the country. You have money to fight hog cholera, why not for dental inspection? This is also true of the eyes, hearing and other sense. The doctors can do more, can place their mark upon their communities.” *Autobiography, p. 238.*

“The Michigan Historical Commission, organized in 1913, has been very successful in collecting and preserving important historical data...this history furnishes a foundation for enduring patriotism and better government.” *Newton, p. 329. Speech as Governor to 49<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 1917.*

“When any society losses faith in honesty, its disintegration is a certainty.”  
*Autobiography, p. 151.*

“I have no use for the platitude, “Honesty is the best policy.” Honesty is a fundamental virtue. It is basic in all of our human relations.” *Autobiography, p. 150.*

“In the world of matter, in the world of things, man has proved himself a giant. In the world of nature he has proved himself a pigmy. The demand of the hour is for human engineering, whereby the test of every enterprise shall be in the making of men instead of the exploitation of things.” *Wade, p. 38. Congressional Record. January 18, 1926.*

“This is the machine age. The machine tends to kill initiative which is a fundamental element in life.” *Autobiography, p. 151.*

“...Invention. It is the most practical thing in the world.” *Newton, p. 205. Undelivered Speech to the Senate. Circa 1928.*

“If at sixty or seventy or eighty you are ready to quit living- just quit playing. But if you want to be hale and hearty at eighty, play!” *Wade, p. 90. “Spirit of the Times.” Speech to Michigan Pioneer Historical Society. May 25, 1916 in Lansing.*

“Research [is] the mainspring of progress.” *Newton, p. 205. Undelivered Speech to the Senate. Circa 1928.*

“The highest work is that of social work because it gives joy to the worker and subsequently to someone else.” *Newton, p. 263. Speech to the Oakman Boulevard Improvement Association. October 20, 1920.*

“In childhood, speech is the all important art unless the art of thinking shall be given first consideration.” *Wade, p. 26.*

“We have discarded the very core of thrift. By that I mean the earning factor. If you expect youth to save money and wisely use it, said youth must earn the money.”  
*Autobiography, p. 152.*

“My habit of thrift gives me an enduring hatred for waste.” *Autobiography, p. 106.*

“I hope I possess the habit of telling the truth. This custom has given me untold trouble in the field of politics.” *Autobiography, p. 150.*

“Drudgery is work beyond one’s strength; work is re-creation, new creation.” *Wade, p. 89. “Spirit of the Times.” Speech to Michigan Pioneer Historical Society. May 25, 1916 in Lansing.*”

“I believe in the gospel of work...actually doing useful, serviceable work. Mind, I say work, not drudgery.” *Wade, p. 86. “Spirit of the Times.” Speech to Michigan Pioneer Historical Society. May 25, 1916 in Lansing.*

### **War/ Peace**

“Ordinary preparation for war means war.” *Wade, p. 40. Congressional Record. December 19-January 18, 1926.*

“Who causes war?...It is diplomats. They make war and cause international difficulty. There are 40 diplomats that should have been beheaded and there would have been no world war. It is too bad that a few men throw a great nation into war. I protest and object to it.” *Norton, p. 282. Memorial Day Speech, 1927. Ionia, Michigan.*

“I am aware that because I am unwilling to advocate turning the United States into a vast military camp, I am charged with being a “pacifist,” that I believe in “peace at any price.” This is a willful misrepresentation. I am simply advocating sanity.” *Newton, p. 277. Memorial Day Speech.*

“I hate war—it is a disease.” *Newton, p. 279. Memorial Day Speech, 1927. Ionia, Michigan.*

“I am not saying this to alarm you, but the world war was a pathetic disappointment...it revealed no progress for making the world safe for democracy. Other wars will follow.” *Newton, p. 279. Memorial Day Speech, 1927. Ionia, Michigan.*

“I would make the hideous wars so costly that nations wouldn’t want them.” *Newton, p. 282. Memorial Day Speech, 1927. Ionia, Michigan.*

“Patriotism of peace is greater than patriotism of war.” *Newton, p. 243.*

“Physical force is, under certain circumstances, quite as valuable as moral force. In other words, it is sometimes necessary to use physical force in order to exert moral force.” *Autobiography, p. 107.*

“Yes, if necessary use your fists in concretely expressing your love for your country and your country’s flag...I am for peace if I have to fight for it.” *Autobiography, p. 107.*

“No sane man asserts that the League of Nations, the World Court, or any other international organization is a panacea for perpetual peace. The causes of war exist and always will exist so long as the nations of the earth are not in absolute isolation. It is nations plan for the minimum of destruction, and forever try to avoid a world cataclysm.” *Wade, p. 38. Congressional Record. January 18, 1926.*

“If secret diplomacy can be forever banished, if the people can have an opportunity to express their wishes, there is not any question in my mind but what the nations of the earth can intermingle and can maintain a peaceful family.” *Wade, p. 41. Congressional Record. January 18, 1926.*

“Even with huge armies and navies, nations do not feel secure. So they form military alliances. Alliances lead to counteralliances culminating in the balance-of-power system, with continents divided into great armed camps. Under this regime occasions for war, as in 1914, will continue to arise. It is clearly evident that the nationalist, competitive system is a menace to world peace. It is imperative, therefore, that some way should be found to break the vicious circle—nationalism, imperialism, militarism, alliances, balance-of-power, crises, war.” *Wade, p. 39. Congressional Record. January 18, 1926.*

### **World View**

“The world is one big family. Time and distance have been annihilated. National isolation is a thing of the past.” *Wade, p. 39. Congressional Record. January 18, 1926.*