The Association News

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LINCOLN'S COOPER UNION SPEECH

By Frank L. Bidwell, East Hartford, Connecticut
President of Cedar Creek Chapter

On his fifty-first birthday Abraham Lincoln was putting what he thought were the finishing touches on what has since been known as his Cooper Union speech. But he did not then know that before he was to be well launched upon his carefully prepared address he was to throw away his notes and pour forth in words that came to him almost like an inspiration, one of the greatest speeches of his life, or of his generation. Also he did not then know he was to address one of the most distinguished audiences New York City had ever seen. He was not even sure how he would be received. The time was one of harsh judgments. Passions ran high, the air was full of threats and forebodings. A man of the hour was needed, but those who fell short of the need could expect no mercy.

Was Lincoln that man? The Eastern leaders felt that they should see Lincoln face to face and hear him speak before they finally made up their minds. For him his trip east was critical. The outcome was not certain, for Lincoln lacked some of the superficial qualities that Easterners prized. To men who put faith in immaculate linen, well-pressed clothes and polished manners he was not always at first sight prepossessing. He had to make the East forget those things and see the real man.

When Monday night, February 27, 1860, arrived Lincoln had reason to be nervous. He had never faced an audiance like this one. In the West he had made his reputation talking to farmers and townspeople. Now he could hardly look anywhere without seeing a distinguished and highly critical visage. No tricks of the oratorical trade could serve in that gathering. But Abraham Lincoln was no trickster, on the platform or off. He was a man in deadly earnest, forgetful of himself, mindful only of what he had to say. Noah Brooks, looking at the audience and at Lincoln, said to himself: "Old fellow, you won't do; it is all very well for the Wild West, but this will never go down in New York." Yet before the speech was half over Noah Brooks had changed his mind and at the end he exclaimed: "He is the greatest man since Saint Paul." And the celebrated poet, William Cullen Bryant, then editor of the "New York Evening Post," leaned forward in his seat and whispered to the "Post" reporter who was taking notes, "Tell our folks to run every line of this speech."

Lincoln knew his subject, he knew his own mind and he did not equivocate. He addressed himself not merely to the Cooper Union audience but to the perplexed and fearful millions of his countrymen. Even to-day after the lapse of over three score years his closing words still ring in our ears: "Let us have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it." Within a few days the speech was famous. Editions of daily papers carrying it were quickly sold out, and when it was published in pamplet form its circulation ran a close race with "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and the Daily Prayer Book.

If he had the prophetic gift, as he sometimes seemed to have, he must have felt that the wings of destiny were beating above his head in the succeeding months as he again walked the quiet streets of Springfield, Illinois. Whether he knew it or not, his road was clear at last. It ran, sometimes shining and sometimes steeped in unfathomable gloom, straight to the White House, to the Gettysburg speech and the second inaugural, to the preservation of the Union, the freeing of the slaves, and immortality. The die had been cast that night in Cooper Union.

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Robert George Ingersoll in his centennial oration at Peoria, Illinois, on July 4, 1876, said: The soldiers of 1776 did not march away with music and banners. They went in silence, looked at and gazed at by eyes filled with tears. What did the soldier leave when he went? He left his wife and children. Did he leave them in a beautiful home, surrounded by civilization in the repose of law, in the security of a great and powerful republic? No, he left his wife and children on the edge, on the fringe of the boundless forest, in which crouched and crept the red savage, who was at that time the ally of the still more savage Briton. He left his wife to defend herself, and he left the prattling babes to be defended by their mother and by nature. The mother made the living; she planted the corn and potatooes, and hoed them in the sun, raised the children, and in the darkness of night told them about their brave father and the "sacred cause." She told them that in a little while the war would be over and father would come back covered with honor and glory.

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Senator James Henry Hammond of South Carolina in a speech in Congress, March 4, 1858 said: "Cotton is indispensable. Should the South produce no cotton for three years England would topple headlong and carry the whole country with her, save the South. No, you dare not make war on cotton. No power on earth dares to make war upon it. Cotton is king."

ADAMS AND SEWALL

John Adams and Jonathan Sewall had long been personal friends. In the spring of 1774 they were in attendance at the Superior Court at Portland, Maine. Early one morning they took a walk up the great hill back of the city. Sewall remonstrated with Adams about going to attend the Continental Congress soon to convene at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Sewell said that England was determined on her system, her power was irrestible, and it would certainly be destructive to Adams and to all those who should persevere in opposition to her designs. In reply Adams said that the die was now cast, that he had passed the Rubicon, and swim or sink, live or die, survive or perish, with his country was his unalterable determination.

A year later Jonathan Sewall was an exile in England.

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Jere Haralson was born a slave April 1, 1846 in Muscogee County, Georgia, the property of John Walker. When Walker died in 1858 he was sold at the age of twelve upon the slave auction block in the city of Augusta, Georgia, to Jere Haralson of Selma, Alabama, for $800, and so remained a slave until emancipated in 1865. He took the name of his former owner and altho he received no education until after he was free he educated himself and in 1874 was elected Congressman from the First Congressional District of Alabama. After his one-term service in Congress he engaged in agricultural pursuits in Texas and later coal mining in Colorado. In 1916 he was killed by wild beasts in the mountains of Colorado.

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Detailed by General John Anthony Quitman, because he had led the advance company of the storming party at Chapultepec, Captain Benjamin Roberts of Iowa, raised the United States flag upon the national palace in the city of Mexico on Monday, September 14, 1847. The flag, the first strange banner which had ever waved over that palace since the conquest of Cortez, was saluted with enthusiasim by the whole American command.

WOMEN IN THE MAKING OF AMERICA

August 15, 1782 a large force of Wyandots and Shawnees led by the notorious American renegade, Simon Girty, surprised the stockaded settlement of Bryan's Station, Kentucky, where twelve families besides twenty-five men—scouts, hunters and surveyors—were temporarily making it their headquarters. Like most of the Kentucky settlements of that early time Bryan's Station depended for its water supply on a spring some distance from the stockade, the custom being for the women and girls to go to the spring early in the morning and carry in enough water to last thru the day.

The women were called together in one of the block houses and plainly informed that without water it would be hopeless to attempt a defense. Their decision was soon made. Mrs. Jemima Suggett Johnson, mother of five children, said: "I will go for water and my little five year old girl, Betsy, will go with me."

The back gate of the stockade was opened and twenty-eight women and girls, chatting and laughing and singing as tho they had not the faintest suspicion that their deadliest foes were hovering near, went out. It was a marvelous display of self control and resolute intrepidity. And thus with their hearts ever beating faster beneath their shabby linsey-woolsey dresses they regained the clearing, passed up the hill to the stockade gate, and thru the gate, their noble deed accomplished.

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On the centenary of his birth at Brandon, Vermont, on June 27, 1923 a monument to Stephen Arnold Douglas on Douglas Green in that village was unveiled by his grandson, Martin Francis Douglas. The monument was the gift of another native of Brandon, Vermont, Albert George Farr of Chicago, Illinois.

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Major John Andre's silver spur is at Washington's Headquarters, Newburg, New York, while his pocket book is in the rooms of the Connecticut Historical Society at Hartford, Connecticut.

FLANDERS FIELDS

Lieutenant Colonel John McCrea, soldier, physician and poet, died of double pneumonia in France, January 28, 1918. He had served in South Africa in 1899 in the Boer War and also with the Canadian forces in the World War. Not long before his death he wrote his celebrated poem.

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
  That mark our place, and in the sky
  The larks, still bravely singing fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Shot days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
  Loved and were loved, and now we lie
    In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe;
To you from failing hands we throw
  The torch be yours to hold it high.
  If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, tho poppies grow
    In Flanders fields.

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It was in 1856 that Rufus Choate wrote of the glittering generalities of the Declaration of Independence, and during the slavery agitation of the fifties political ideas were put forth which tended to destroy the doctrines of the Declaration of Independence.

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On the 13th of May 1781 Benedict Arnold, who was commanding an English force in Virginia, sent a communication to General Marie Jean Paul Lafayette, for an exchange of prisoners. Lafayette returned it without a word, refusing to hold any intercourse with the traitor.

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From 1906 to 1911, 81,000 people enrolled in the Lincoln Farm Association and contributed amounts from twenty-five cents to twenty-five dollars for the purchase of the Lincoln birthplace farm and cabin and the erection of a memorial there. The memorial was dedicated in 1916 and turned over to the national government in 1922.

April 17, 1861 Governor John Letcher of Virginia wired to the Mayor of Wheeling, Andrew Sweeney, ordering him to seize at once the custom house of that city, the post office, and all public buildings and documents in the name of the sovereign State of Virginia. Mayor Sweeney promptly replied: "I have seized upon the custom house, the post office and all public buildings and documents in the name of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, whose property they are."

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July 16, 1776 John Alson, a large importer and merchant of New York City, resigned his seat in the Continental Congress because the Declaration of Independence closed the door of reconciliation with the mother country.

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William Henry Gilbert, last of the six Union soldiers who guarded Abraham Lincoln's bier at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, as he lay in state in Independence Hall on Sunday, April 23, 1865, died at his home at Craley, Pennsylvania, on August 19, 1935, at the age of ninety-four.

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Hannah Ogden, the grandmother of the celebrated statesman, John Caldwell Calhoun, was murdered by an English soldier during the Revolutionary War in 1780 as she sat in her room at Connecticut Farms, New Jersey, where the family had taken refuge. Her husband was absent from home at the time being chaplain of Colonel Elias Dayton's Third Battalion of New Jersey troops.

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On the campus of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, Wisconsin, is a statue of Abraham Lincoln, a replica of Daniel Chester French's statue in the Lincoln Memorial at Washington, D. C. At the base of the statue are the closing words of the Cooper Union address of February 27, 1860: "Let us have faith that right makes might; and in that faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it.

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Not until forty-one days after the battle of Lexington did the news of the engagement reach England on May 30, 1775.

$22.50 was realized by the Wyoming Chapter for the General Bidwell Memorial Fund by a paid dinner at 50 cents apiece at the 1935 Reunion held at Nay Aug Park, Scranton, Pennsylvania, September 7, 1935, under the wonderful leadership of Mrs. James L. Noble, Lake Ariel, Pennsylvania, ably assisted by Mrs. Dorr N. Bidwell, Moosic, Pennsylvania, and Mrs. Andrew J. Hale, Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania. The paid dinner will be repeated at the 1936 Reunion and we hope the other Chapters will do likewise. There is no doubt a considerable amount of money for the cause could be raised in this way.

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During the Civil War when the State credit was exhausted and the treasury of the Commonwealth destitute, James Frederick Douglas Lanier of Madison, Indiana, lent the State of Indiana $1,000,000 without security and with considerable doubt as to its repayment.

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Two Southern justices of the United States Supreme Court, James Monroe Wayne, of Georgia, appointed by President Andrew Jackson in 1834, and John Catron, of Tennessee, appointed by President Andrew Jackson in 1837, were true to the Union during the Civil War. The Property of Judge Wayne was confiscated by the State of Georgia in 1861.

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No one has ever excelled Abraham Lincoln in the fine art of putting large ideas into a small compass of verbal expression. There is a volume of military science in his casual remark, upon being informed of the capture of some generals with their horses in Virginia, "I am sorry to lose the horses; I can make generals."

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The Association News is published periodically in the interest of The General Daniel Davidson Bidwell Memorial Association, which is striving to erect at Buffalo, New York, an equestrian statue of General Daniel Davidson Bidwell, killed in the battle of Cedar Creek, October 19, 1864. Address all communications to Eugenia Campbell Bidwell, 6858 Paxton Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.