

LINCOLN ABRAHAM

DISCOVERIES
AND
INVENTIONS

Abraham Lincoln

Discoveries and Inventions

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Discoveries and Inventions / A lecture by Abraham Lincoln delivered in 1860:

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Abraham Lincoln

Discoveries and Inventions /

A lecture by Abraham

Lincoln delivered in 1860

A PREFATORY NOTE

The Lecture – “Discoveries and Inventions” – by our greatest American, presents a phase of Lincoln’s activity about which little is generally known. It shows as clearly as any of his other writings how great was Lincoln’s knowledge of the progress of mankind, particularly as related in the Bible, and it reveals also his debt to that Book of Books for inspiration and illustration, as well as his masterly use of pure English, largely gained through that study.

In the fateful year of 1860, the year of his election to the presidency, Lincoln took up, in the pause of his affairs after the long debate with Douglas, the custom of lyceum lecturing, then in great vogue. This lecture on “Discoveries and Inventions” was delivered in towns near his home, Springfield, Illinois, and in Springfield itself on Washington’s birthday. Five days later Lincoln made his great speech at Cooper Union in New York.

The lecture is not included with any collection of Lincoln’s

addresses. It appeared in print for the first time in *Sunset Magazine* in 1909 – the centennial of Lincoln's birth.

The original manuscript, from which this edition, the first in book form, is made, was a cherished possession of the late Dr. Samuel Houston Melvin, of Oakland, California, formerly a resident of Springfield, Illinois, and a friend of Mr. Lincoln. Just prior to Dr. Melvin's death, in 1898, he made an affidavit setting forth the history of the manuscript; that statement is as follows:

MEMORANDUM OF

CERTAIN FACTS FOR INFORMATION OF

THOSE WHO FOLLOW AFTER

In the month of February, 1861, being at that time a resident of Springfield, Illinois, I called one evening at the residence of my friend, Dr. John Todd. The doctor was an uncle of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln. While there Mr. Lincoln came in, bringing with him a well-filled satchel, remarking as he set it down that it contained his literary bureau. Mr. Lincoln remained some fifteen or twenty minutes, conversing mainly about the details of his prospective trip to Washington the following week, and told us of the arrangements agreed

upon for the family to follow him a few days later. When about to leave he handed the grip above referred to to Mrs. Grimsley, the only daughter of Dr. Todd, who was then a widow but who subsequently became the wife of Rev. Dr. John H. Brown, a Presbyterian minister located in Springfield, remarking as he did so that he would leave the bureau in her charge; that if he ever returned to Springfield he would claim it, but if not she might make such disposition of its contents as she deemed proper. A tone of indescribable sadness was noted in the latter part of the sentence. Lincoln had shown me quite a number of letters a few days before, threatening his life, some predicting that he never would be inaugurated, and it was apparent to me that they were making an impression upon his mind, although he tried to laugh the matter off. About five years later the Nation was startled by the announcement of Lincoln's assassination. The corporation of Springfield selected twelve of its citizens to proceed at once to Washington and accompany the remains of the dead President back to his old home. I was one of that number, and shall never forget the indescribable sadness manifested by millions of mourners along the route of travel of the funeral cortège as it wended its way westward over two thousand miles. A few evenings after his body was laid to rest, I again called upon my neighbors, the family of Dr. Todd. Scenes and incidents connected with the assassination and funeral of the dead President were discussed, and the remark made by Lincoln on his last visit to the house was referred to as indicating a presentiment that he would not return alive. This recalled the fact of his

having left his so-called literary bureau, and his injunction as to its disposition. Mrs. Grimsley brought the grip from the place where it had been stored, and opened it with a view to examining its contents. Among them was found this manuscript, and attached to it by means of a piece of red tape was another of like character. They proved to be manuscripts of two lectures which he had prepared and delivered within a year prior to his election to the presidency – one at Jacksonville, Illinois, and a few days later at Decatur, Illinois; the other a little later at Cook's Hall, Springfield, Illinois, at which I was present. Mrs. Grimsley told me to select from the contents of the bureau any one of the manuscripts it contained; and supposing at that time that the two manuscripts belonged to the same lecture, I selected them. On subsequent examination I discovered that while they both treated upon the same subject (Inventions and Discoveries) they were separate lectures. Twenty-five years later I disposed of one of the manuscripts to Mr. Gunther

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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