LINCOLN DAY ADDRESS
of the
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In Chicago stands the Fountain of Time. It is a piece of moving marble. It symbolizes the march of mankind. It shows generations in motion. In this rugged piece of marble the sculptor caught the faces typical of every generation, eager and upturned as they march down the corridors of time.

There one can visualize the explorers who braved the waves to discover America.

There are the settlers, the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the Quakers and all others—who came to have a new civilisation in the wilderness.

There are the fighters—robust, daring and courageous men who stood at Bunker Hill, Valley Forge, Gettysburg, San Juan, the Argonne and elsewhere—who helped to establish the edifice of freedom and to maintain it.

There are the lawmakers, the statesmen, the diplomats, like Franklin, Jefferson, Marshall, Washington and others in that glorious band whose devotion to the philosophy of liberty made this a great country.

There are the builders, like the Whitneys, the McCormicks, the Goodyears, the Forde, whose ideas were fashioned into useful things and services for the enrichment of our country and its living standards.

There are the zealous apostles and missionaries, like the Tab Poland, the Benjamin Franklin, the Harriet Beecher Stowe and others, whose devotion to great ideals tempered the thinking and sparked the march of progress in their generations.

In the Fountain of Time one sees the continuing stream of America, and we are a part of that stream. It is not unlike the continuity in a family from grandfather to father to child. It identifies one with the ancestry of the nation and stimulates the hope of immortality. To be conscious that we are a part of this endless living stream of American tradition develops a rooted faith which is so indispensable to responsible citizenship and to a sense of individual responsibility in each generation.

In that march of the generations there are some who stand out above others. They are like trees in the forest who look out over the tops of their woodland fellows. One such stands out not only in his generation but in the whole march of mankind is that humble common man, Abraham Lincoln, whose birth anniversary we observe this month.

February is not only his birth month but it is the month of his departure from Springfield, Illinois to the Nation's Capitol to assume the guidance of a people who were torn by the furies and the volcanic passion of his time. How this common man, Lincoln, grows in grandeur and majesty as the years roll by.
He exemplified those common virtues and attributes which exalt him in the hearts of his fellow men.

How could he was at twenty-one years of age that sophistication and cleverness gained the ascendency he could say with such inviting candor that he did not know very much.

How modest he was at Gettysburg where he delivered that deathless challenge long ago. He was modest enough to say that the world would little note nor long remember what he said. And yet the world did remember.

How compassionate he was. He lived compassion. Over and over again he refused to sign the death warrants of deserters, choosing between military morale on the one hand and a new crop of widows on the other. Always the swelling common heart came to the fore.

How patient he was. In moments when his associates were so impatient for action which would have been arbitrary and unwarranted, he could so gently admonish them by urging that nothing be done in passion or ill temper.

How deep and consuming was his faith in the wisdom and fellowship of God. He did not hesitate to fall upon his knees before the bloody strife at Gettysburg to ask the Architect of the Universe for faith and spiritual sustenance.

How courageous he was in the cause of an ideal. Over and over he would say to his party associates that the probability of defeat should not deter them from asserting a cause which was just.

And what an example of political integrity he affords to those who come after. In a day and age when party platforms are so often disregarded, we must take note of his pledge in 1860 that as an examination of the platform adopted in Chicago he would have a care not to ignore or disregard it in any particular.

How tolerant he was. Under a burden which would have crushed a less resolute soul, the light of forgiveness and forbearance was graven on his face. He was as one transfigured in a dark and troubled hour.

This is Lincoln, the exalted common man, who haunts every hill and dale of the very land which he saved from its own passion.

Today and in the days to come, one thinks of him in terms of the expression which the Apostle Paul used in his letter to the Hebrews, where he speaks of the sacrifices of Abel to gain righteousness and then says, "Being dead, yet speaketh".

Lincoln being dead yet speaketh.

Even as others who tower in the whole tradition of mankind because of character and wisdom, so Lincoln towers to endure, to nourish, to warm and to inspire. Lincoln being dead speaketh not only to America but to all mankind.
He speaks of many things—of faith and firmness, of courage and compassion, of humility and hope.

In this perplexing day of darkness and light, of reason and foolishness, of hope and fear, he speaks particularly of two things.

The first of these happened ninety years ago this very month in Philadelphia. The journey from Springfield to the Nation's Capital took him through Indiana and Ohio, through New York and New Jersey, and brought him to Philadelphia on the anniversary of George Washington's birth.

On the morning of his departure from Illinois, it is said that the church ladies presented him with a banner upon which loving hands had embroidered a verse from the first chapter of Joshua. In this tumultuous season it is worth repeating. The Lord said to Joshua, "Have not I commanded thee. Be strong and of good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

That a ringing inspiration it was to a leader burdened with the gathering passions which were already upon the horizon of the land.

And in Philadelphia in that very hall there freedom's charter was signed and there for the first time thousands of his fellow countrymen looked upon his sad face, he said to them, "If this nation cannot be saved without giving up the principle of the Declaration of Independence, I was about to say I would rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender it."

There in that holy place while the air was thick with rumors of plots upon his life, he reasserted his fidelity to liberty. That a display of moral courage.

What was he saying? He said so simply that liberty was more than life. He was saying that the inheritance of liberty achieved by rugged men decades before was more than his life. It was the same great principle which he reaffirmed in the challenge which came ringing down the vestiges of time from Gettysburg.

In times like those that a commanding faith and undeviating devotion to liberty is needed.

Once more the lights of freedom go out one by one over the world. Tyranny again marches. In many places the wills of men have become weak and soft. If this blessed birthright shall be maintained for mankind, it will require the zeal and fidelity exemplified by Lincoln.

What do we see at home? There are spurious liberals who make a mockery of the word liberal because they have forgotten its true meaning.

Some politicians there are who would better it away for the sake of political advantage. Expediency and opportunism are not unknown in our own age.
There is confusion. And it is in times of moral confusion that government gains in power and the doctrine of freedom gets abundant lip service but is actually placed upon a limited basis.

The spirit of liberty is like body and soul. It must be exercised to remain vital.

This is a time to remember that while the right of liberty is self-evident the enjoyment of that right is not self-evident. If one needs testimony on this point, it can be found in generous measure from humble people in Poland and Hungary, in Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria, in Rumania and in the Soviet Union, where freedom has been destroyed.

The struggle never ceases. It must go on and on, and our generation must not be found wanting in this struggle if we shall deserve high place among those marching generations whom one can visualize in the Fountain of Time.

The second thing which appealed to me in this Lincoln selection is the composure which comes from faith.

He assumed the reins of government on the heels of an administration under the leadership of Buchanan, which for confusion, perplexity and lack of devotion to the ideal of freedom is not unlike the administration of today. From the cold and ineffable point of the history book comes the accusing language of how that administration refused to permit the strengthening of the forts at Charleston. There is written the story of rebellion and of the effort to overthrow the government between the election and inaugural of Lincoln.

There stands the resignation of a Secretary of State whose high character and idealism would not permit him to continue in office in the face of failure to strengthen the forts when the voices of secession were already loud in the land.

Passion and bitterness were growing daily. The provisions in Fort Sumpter would last for a very limited period.

To evacuate the garrison might be esteemed as a mark of weakness. To relieve it would surely precipitate desperate civil conflict. Here then was the first dark challenge to that which man had wrought in that same city of Philadelphia where Lincoln had stood only a few weeks before.

It was the issue and challenge of survival. Then, as now, people were speaking of the survival of this great and blessed land. There were some who toyed with appeasement. There were others who vacillated. There were still others who were lured by expediency.

It was then that Lincoln remembered that he had written to his old friend, Joshua Speed, nineteen years before and which he had quoted on other occasions.
It was the story of a leader of long ago whose people were in bondage. That leader was Moses.

As he prepared to take his people out of bondage there were those smitten with fear at the prospect of starvation in the wilderness. It was they who preferred the bondage of Pharaoh to the risk involved in achieving freedom. As Moses heard these fearful voices, he said, "Fear ye not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord which he will shew to you this day".

There, indeed, is a test in times of perplexity.

The best way to stand still for a moment and to see the way of salvation.

It is, of course, to be recommended for the body, for the soul, for the perspective and for reason.

What does one behold as he stands still to appraise that which is about us?

We behold venerated viles in time of peril. We behold secrecy and failure to acquaint our people with the real state of the nation both abroad and at home.

We behold confusion.

We behold those who, because of blind patriotism, would destroy the citadel from within.

We behold the subtle socialistic forces which would carry us down the road to disaster.

We behold a sense of fiscal irresponsibility.

We behold the collapse of conscience in high places.

We behold a record which began with the Yalta conference exactly six years ago this month, and which is marked by bungling and stupidity.

We behold a short interlude of peace which comes to an end as young men are called back to military service, a mountain of debt and taxes are piled up upon our people, our resources are exhausted, and the cold hand of control is laid upon our free economy once more.

We behold new foxholes for old.

We behold a cloud of fear and anxiety as our people speculate upon the survival of that free moral climate for which Lincoln was willing to give his life.

All this we behold in a great land as we stand still like the prophet of old and wait for the unfoldment of our salvation.

In such a season, it is well to catch the deathless challenge from Gettysburg. There, that same Lincoln, in simple phrases asked whether a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to equality can endure. Can it?
It can, if we, the beneficiaries of the sacrifices down through the life of this Republic, are willing to insure it.

First comes our undiluted will and devotion to that cause. How academic and obvious that would seem. But is it so obvious after all? What of those who are willing to surrender some portion of freedom for the sake of largesse from the government. That is the doctrine of limited freedom which is all too prevalent today.

That of those who for momentary advantage would compromise on principle by seating Red China in the United Nations, knowing as they must know that the very thing which Red China exemplifies is the source which would liquidate liberty and establish tyranny over all whom are touched thereby.

Either we want to maintain a climate of freedom in which discovery and progress are not forced and in which the whole truth can survive or we do not. Either we want to preserve a moral order in which the dignity and freedom of the individual is paramount, or we do not.

But having made that determination, the clear way for action is open. A sense of mission would dictate that freedom's one sure beachhead in this nation and this hemisphere must be made secure. What we do elsewhere in maintaining and extending the true frontiers of real freedom must be placed upon a quid pro quo basis if we are to save ourselves from exhaustion.

On the home front, the way to salvation is equally clear. Freedom has been wrecked in other places upon the rocks of loose fiscal policy. That could happen here. A government which calls upon people for austerity and sacrifice should be the first to practice those virtues. The scalpel must go deep into a swollen budget and the tax burden held to the level of legitimate, well-administered government needs. Controls must be applied with care and carry a time limit lest they harden into permanency and become a continuing limitation upon a free economy.

It is high time for a new conscience in government. Some recent disclosures in the Nation's Capital indicate that the old truism that public office is a public trust has taken on a twillight quality. But misadventures in high office destroy public faith in the very processes upon which the preservation must depend. A stout broom is needed.

Who can mistake the Socialist tinge to measures which have been proposed by this administration and which are still being proposed. Control is the essence of Socialism. It can be achieved by the steady expansion of government power in every field. When it has gone by enough, it simply means that the free economic decisions which are responsible for our progress and well-being
will be made by bureaucrats rather than by free people, and thus the essence of Socialism will have been brought about by way of the back door. There is but one remedy for this danger - and it is a real danger - and that is to roll back the Socialist march on every front.

There are still other forces which jeopardize liberty here at home and for which effective remedies must be provided.

There are the planners who would substitute their puny wisdom for the composite wisdom of millions of free people and make America over according to their own blueprints.

There are the moral and spiritual cripples who would destroy what we have and recast our free land in the image of some foreign land where freedom has completely failed.

There are the apostles of a smaller America—a bundle of clashing, group interests—each one determined to have it’s way, regardless of the common welfare of all. How long can freedom last in such a circumstance.

There are the defeatists who believe that liberty is already on the rocks and that the best course is to find a storm cellar and there defend what they may have accumulated.

Finally, there is that peculiar public apathy in a free land which by it’s very nature can jeopardize the continuing existence of freedom. Liberty’s greatest defensive weapon is the ballot in the hands of an informed electorate. But when it is unused, it breeds a condition which furnishes genuine encouragement to every group who would transform our free system into a controlled state. In the last half century, there has been a disconcerting rise in voter apathy. A half century ago, it is said that 85% of the qualified voters went to the polls notwithstanding the fact that it was far more difficult to get to a polling place then it is today. In recent years the number has dropped to 50% in round figures. In the light of this fact, one wonders what may happen to the Lincoln ideal of a government by the people as well as of and for the people.

It is high time to recall Lincoln’s advice that the political power in a state resides not in the voters but in the voters who vote.

People may often wonder why this theme of liberty is so often and so vigorously belabored in a land where we have been accustomed to take it for granted.

To the student of history that should not appear mysterious. America had a mission. That mission was liberty. When it is threatened or becomes insolvent here, the hope of the world goes with it.
It took a revolution under the captaincy of Washington to fully achieve it. It took a bloody war under the leadership of Lincoln to maintain it. In an hour when survival is on the tongues of men everywhere, it will take the devotion and fidelity and sacrifice of a Lincoln to continue it. It is the ancient landmark which our fathers have set. It is up to us whether it shall be removed or not.