

Mr. Lincoln's Finest Day

(First of series of four)

In our memory, the month of February has always been a month in which we Americans honor two great Presidents. But, this fact has not always been true.

A hundred years ago, this nation honored only one President in February. And, a hundred years ago, perhaps no man alive honored George Washington in his heart more than did Abraham Lincoln.

The fact that Mr. Lincoln did honor the memory of George Washington, and did revere the principles upon which this nation is founded; enabled Mr. Lincoln to pursue and to achieve the objectives for which we honor him today.

Also, the reverence Mr. Lincoln held in his heart for Washington, and the United States of America which George Washington helped to create, brought about "Mr. Lincoln's Finest Day."

To tell the story of Mr. Lincoln's Finest Day, let's go back to Feb. 11, 1861, the day that Mr. Lincoln leaves Springfield, Illinois, to go to Washington and to assume the Presidency of the United States.

FRIENDS PASS BY

It is seven thirty in the morning. We see Mr. Lincoln standing in the waiting room of the railway station. Friends are passing by, and taking Mr. Lincoln's hand in simple parting.

Mr. Lincoln's face is pale, and reflects the emotion he feels at this parting. He is almost unable to utter a single word as his friends pass by.

At eight o'clock precisely, Mr. Lincoln is escorted to the railway cars. He takes his stand on the platform of the rear car, removes his hat and, while the people stand with bared heads, in silence, Mr. Lincoln speaks these words:

"My friends, no one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of its people, I owe everything."

"Here I have lived a quarter of a century, and have passed from a young man to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried."

HIS VOICE BREAKS

"I now — I now leave," and Mr. Lincoln's voice breaks, "not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington."

"Without the assistance of that Divine Being Who ever attended Washington, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him, Who can go with me, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well."

"To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers, you will commend me, I bid you and affectionate farewell."

As Mr. Lincoln nears the conclusion of his remarks, he and his audience are moved to tears. His exhortation to pray for him, brings choked cries of: "We will do it. We will do it!"

The people give three cheers as Mr. Lincoln turns to enter the car. A few seconds after he disappears, the train moves slowly out of the station, and out of the sight of Mr. Lincoln's friends and neighbors.

And in the mind, the heart, and the determination of a lone mortal human being on that train rests the destiny of a confused and divided nation of people.

THE RIDE EAST

Now, as Mr. Lincoln rides east, let's set the scene for Mr. Lincoln's Finest Day. That day is Feb. 22, 1861, eleven days after Mr. Lincoln leaves home, and the day before he secretly enters Washington because of a reported plot to assassinate him.

It is significant that there are two Washington's birthdays involved in Mr. Lincoln's plans. George Washington was born on Feb. 11, 1732, under the Julian calendar then in effect. After 1752, when the British government adopted the Gregorian calendar, Washington's birthday falls on Feb. 22. Here is the significance of the two Washington birthdays: Mr. Lincoln chose to leave

his home for Washington, D.C., on Feb. 11, the old Washington's birthday, knowing that he was to appear at Independence Hall on Feb. 22, the new Washington's birthday. Let's think about that for a second. Mr. Lincoln found out as a boy that George Washington's actual birthdate was the day before his own. Washington was born Feb. 11, Mr. Lincoln was born Feb. 12.

LET'S SUPPOSE
For an exercise of the imagination, let's suppose that we were born on Feb. 13. Would we — as children — down deep in our hearts, have felt a close relationship to Mr. Lincoln? And then, suppose, at the age of 51, we are elected President of the United States, and we are to sit in the chair of Lincoln. Suppose that we are to be inaugurated on March 4, in a period of great crisis for

the nation, after a visit to Independence Hall on Feb. 22, George Washington's birthday. What day would we choose to leave for Independence Hall, and Washington, D.C.? What day would you choose? Feb. 13, your own birthday? Or, Feb. 12, Mr. Lincoln's? Who would be uppermost in your mind as you left home? Mr. Lincoln? Whose task would you, in your heart, compare to your own?

Mr. Lincoln's? To you, your own task naturally would appear to be greater than Mr. Lincoln's, if only because Mr. Lincoln had borne his successfully, while you still have yours to meet. Yes, it is only natural that as Mr. Lincoln leaves Springfield on Feb. 11 — Washington's actual birthdate — and the day before Mr. Lincoln's own, that Mr. Lincoln's mind is on Washington, and that Mr. Lincoln

Card Party to Raise Money for Boy Scouts
A valentine card party to raise money to buy additional equipment for Troop 245 of the Boy Scouts will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Spero, 4206 Torrance Blvd., at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9. Whist will be the game. compares his own task to that of Washington's. (Continued Wed., Feb. 13)

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Peninsula GOP Plans Active Year

The newly-elected board of the Peninsula Republican Men's Club says that 1963 probably will be a more active year for the club than 1962.

President Lou Cockley said "the road to victory in '64 for the GOP must be paved in '63. Our club calls upon every male Republican in the greater Peninsula area to join the club and to participate in the 1963 program." Cockley said the club is made up of a wide range of political opinion.

Those desiring to join the club should contact any of the board members, all of whom live in the greater Peninsula area. Bryan Hardwick is vice-president.

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