

# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor.  
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

No. 358

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

February 17, 1936

## ORIGINAL DRAFT OF THE FIRST INAUGURAL

The seventy-fifth anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's first inaugural address is an occasion worth memorializing. It is doubtful if a state paper delivered previous to it, or since, has been anticipated with more anxiety throughout the nation.

Lincoln students are aware that the first draft of the famous instrument was finished and printed before the President-Elect left Springfield for Washington. On February 2, 1861, he wrote to a friend, "I have the document blocked out; but in the now rapidly shifting scenes I shall have to hold it subject to revision up to the time of delivery."

The original draft was printed by one of the proprietors of the Illinois State Journal at Springfield to whom Lincoln entrusted his manuscript; and no one else seems to have been taken into the confidence of Mr. Lincoln as to its contents until after he started for Washington on February 11. Upon reaching Indianapolis February 12 he presented a copy to O. H. Browning, who had accompanied him from Springfield. Lincoln asked him to make such comments on it as he chose. Upon arriving at Washington Lincoln submitted a copy to Secretary Seward with the same invitation to criticize it. As far as we know these two men are the only ones who made any suggestions about certain revisions in the original copy.

Mr. Browning advised but one change, and it was adopted by Mr. Lincoln. According to some authorities it was the most important one in the entire document. Mr. Seward made thirty-three suggestions for improving the document and nineteen of them were adopted, eight were used after Mr. Lincoln had modified them, and six were discarded *in toto*. Mr. Lincoln himself without suggestion from any one made sixteen changes in the original draft.

In this bulletin and the one that follows there will be presented a comparative series of exhibits showing just what changes were made in the original and incorporated in the final copy. The excerpts are prefaced with the following symbols: "O" indicating Original Draft, and "F" referring to Final Copy. Symbols at the conclusion of the excerpts from the final copy make known who was responsible for the change (B) Browning, (S) Seward, and (L) Lincoln himself on his own initiative.

The final draft of the First Inaugural Address as delivered by Abraham Lincoln contains thirty-six paragraphs. The numbers refer to the paragraphs in the final copy where additions, omissions, or changes have been made in the revision of the first draft before incorporation in the address now known as "The First Inaugural."

1. Two paragraphs immediately following paragraph one in the original draft were omitted at the suggestion of Mr. Seward. They are presented herewith:

"The more modern custom of electing a Chief Magistrate upon a previously declared platform of principles, supercedes, in a great measure, the necessity of re-stating those principles in an address of this sort. Upon the plainest grounds of good faith, one so elected is not at liberty to shift his position. It is necessarily implied, if not expressed, that, in his judgment, the platform which he thus accepts, binds him to nothing either unconstitutional or inexpedient.

"Having been so elected upon the Chicago Platform, and while I would repeat nothing in it, of aspersion or epithet or question of motive against any man or party, I hold myself bound by duty, as well as impelled by inclination to follow, within the executive sphere, the principles therein declared. By no other course could I meet the reasonable expectations of the country."

2. O. "to say more than I have in relation to those matters of administration about which there is no special excitement."

F. "to discuss those matters of administration about which there is no special anxiety or excitement." (L).

5. O. "to all the states."

F. "to all the states when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause." (L).

10. Clause added to paragraph by Mr. Lincoln:

"And might it not be well at the same time to provide by law for the enforcement of that clause in the Constitution, which guarantees that "the citizen of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States?"

12. O. "It is now seventy-two years."

F. "It is seventy-two years." (L).

12. O. "and, on the whole, with great success."

F. "and generally with great success." (S).

12. O. "A disruption of the Federal Union is menaced and, so far as can be on paper, is already effected. The particulars of what has been done are so familiar and so fresh that I need not to waste any time in recounting them."

F. "A disruption of the Federal Union heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted." (S).

15. O. "It was further matured and expressly declared and pledged, to be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778."

F. "It was further matured and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly pledged and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778." (L).

16. O. "The Union is less perfect than before, which contradicts the Constitution, and therefore is absurd."

F. "The Union is less perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of its perpetuity." (L).

17. O. "nothing."

F. "void." (S).

17. O. "reasonable."

F. "revolutionary." (S).

18. O. "that the Union is unbroken; and, to the extent of my ability, I shall take care that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States."

F. "that in view of the Constitution and the laws the Union is unbroken, and, to the extent of my ability, I shall take care as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States." (S).

18. O. "tangible ways."

F. "authoritative manner." (S).

18. O. "it will have its own, and defend itself."

F. "it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself." (S).

19. O. "All the power at my disposal will be used to reclaim the public property and places which have fallen; to hold, occupy and possess these, and all other property and places belonging to the government and to collect the duties on imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion of any State."

F. "The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but, beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere." (B).

(Continued in Lincoln Lore No. 359.)