

LINCOLN LORE

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NOTES ON LINCOLN'S INAUGURAL TRIP

The inaugural exercises to be held in Washington on January 20, recall the long, tiresome journey which Lincoln made to the nation's capitol in 1861 for his first inaugural. Reports of his speeches on this itinerary are available and the incidents of importance which occurred enroute have been made known, especially the much publicized story of the Baltimore conspiracy resulting in Lincoln's night ride to Washington.

Little has been written, however, about the many peculiar incidents which occurred on the way which were observed by news correspondents who were on the special train. As many of these human interest happenings throw light on Lincoln's character, some of them have been compiled for this issue of Lincoln Lore.

A news correspondent wrote that upon leaving Cincinnati "the train rushed on at the rate of thirty miles an hour." Whether or not the remarkable speed of the train had anything to do with it is not known but the committee of arrangements forgot to provide any dinner for the presidential party and, although they had breakfast at 7:00 a. m., it was after 4:00 p. m. before any meal was served. Two baskets of cakes were brought on the train about noon but Lincoln's three boys managed to do away with most of them. Probably the train did not travel too fast for any of the group as the afternoon wore on with no food in sight.

Just before the procession arrived at the American Hotel, in Pittsburgh, a wagon filled with wood drove in front of the hotel in fulfillment of a bet, conditioned, that if Mr. Lincoln was elected, one party was to saw a half cord of wood in front of the American and present the wood to the poorest negro in the city. If Mr. Lincoln was not elected the other party was to saw the wood and present it to a Buffalo newspaper. The losing party sawed vigorously while Mr. Lincoln was speaking. Undoubtedly it would have pleased the President-elect, to have pitched in and helped the man who had bet against him. It is quite sure he was much interested rather than disconcerted by the side attraction.

At a station, just out of Erie, a flag inscribed "Fort Sumter" was displayed in Mr. Lincoln's immediate presence but he made no allusion whatever to it.

Horace Greely appeared unannounced at Girard, Pa., "equipped with a valise and his well known red and blue blankets." He was ushered into the presidential car and rode with the party as far as Erie, traveling about twenty miles on the special train. Mr. Greely joined the party again at Buffalo and the representative of the New York Herald on the train wrote this comment, "Mr. Greely slept most of the way down and while in a very graceful position he furnished a subject for the pencils of two artists of New York illustrating newspapers."

The correspondent for the New York Herald gives an interesting account of Mr. Lincoln greeting Grace Bedell, an eleven year old girl:

"At Westfield, New York, Mr. Lincoln took occasion to state that during the campaign he had received a letter from a young girl of this place, in which he was kindly admonished to do certain things, and among others to let his whiskers grow, and that, as he had acted upon that piece of advice, he would now be glad to welcome his fair correspondent, if she was among the crowd. In response to the call a lassie made her way through the crowd, was helped on the platform and kissed by the President."

While in Buffalo, President elect Lincoln was the luncheon guest of Ex-President Filmore and they attended church services together at the Unitarian Church, Sunday morning. Sunday evening, Mr. Lincoln went to hear Father Beason, the Indian preacher, who evoked a benediction on behalf of the chief executive-elect.

A banner stretched across the street in Albany called for much attention. It bore the inscription "no compromise." We are wondering if Lincoln heard the comment which one of the reporters recorded:

"This banner, so exceedingly *inappropos*, attracted very much attention and remark. On the one side it was tied to the attic window of the residence of N. G. Weed, Esq., a black republican; on the other it was fastened to the window shutter of the dwelling of J. B. King, Esq.—one of those natural curiosities—a democratic American, or Know Nothing democrat. Whether the banner meant no compromise between these two gentlemen is a question. . ."

Beside the tracks at nearly every depot the train passed through, a platform was constructed from which it was hoped Mr. Lincoln would speak. Some of them were well finished and beautifully decorated, while others were poorly constructed. At one place where a large table had been placed near the car for the speaker, Lincoln said that he "preferred to stick by the car." Possibly he recalled an event that happened at Erie, Pennsylvania. A large number of men had gathered on the roof of an old shed to get a glimpse of the president. Just as he passed, the roof fell in. The disappearing act of the whole company was ludicrous, indeed.

Lincoln's refusal to stand on the rickety platform, however, drew forth these comments from him: "I had to decline standing on some very handsome platforms prepared for me yesterday. But I say to you, as I said to them, you must not on this account draw the inference that I have any intention to desert any platform I have a legitimate right to stand on." There was a large live eagle on the platform at Syracuse, New York, from which it was hoped that Lincoln would speak but time would not permit.

Enroute from Albany to New York, two new engines, never before used except on trial, were made available for the special train, one called "Union" pulled it from Utica to Poughkeepsie, and the other called "Constitution" hauled it the rest of the trip. In many ways the President-elect was impressed with the importance of preserving both the Union and the Constitution.

At an Orphan Asylum on the outskirts of New York City the children had been lined up beside the railroad track with the hope of getting a glimpse of Mr. Lincoln. Although the slowly moving train was not scheduled to stop, Mr. Lincoln had it detained a moment so that he might greet them.

On Wednesday, February 20, Mr. Lincoln attended the Irving Place Opera House in New York City at the solicitation of the reception committee. Probably he would have preferred to visit the Winter Garden, where Edwin Booth (brother of John Wilkes Booth) and J. W. Walleck, Jr., were appearing as Othello and Iago. Tad and Willie Lincoln accompanied by an attendant went to Laura Keen's theater that evening.