

LINCOLN LORE

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PRINTING THE COOPER INSTITUTE ADDRESS

The printing in pamphlet form of the address which Abraham Lincoln delivered at Cooper Union in New York City on February 27, 1860, was one of the most important contributions to his candidacy for the Presidency. The address was first published in the New York papers the day after its delivery.

It is generally admitted that Horace Greeley's paper, the *New York Tribune*, had the original manuscript from which the address was set in type by Amos J. Cummings who claimed to have been the compositor. Cummings stated that Mr. Lincoln came to the *Tribune* office after the speech at the Institute to read proof. This copy was made available to the other papers and served as the master galley-proof.

The address was immediately put in pamphlet form under the caption "*Press and Tribune Documents for 1860, No. 1*" and with a subhead, "Great Speech of Hon. Abraham Lincoln at the Cooper Institute, New York, Feb. 27, 1860." Just above this subhead was the theme of the address, "The Testimony of the Framers of the Constitution," and just below the subhead was the line, "Price 60 cents per 100 or \$5.00 per 1000."

On Wednesday, March 15, shortly after arrival home from his New England trip, Lincoln made arrangements to have his New York speech printed locally. Bailhache and Baker brought out the address in a fourteen-page pamphlet under the title, "Speech of Hon. Abraham Lincoln in New York, in vindication of the Policy of the Framers of the Constitution and the Principles of the Republican Party. Delivered in the Cooper Institute, February 27, 1860."

It was neither the *Tribune* pamphlet nor the Springfield copy which pleased Lincoln most, but a more elaborate printing of the address supervised by the Young Men's Republican Union, which organization had been his host during the New York visit. Lincoln is said to have told the Hon. Ira Harris that this pamphlet was the only thing of his which he had seen handsomely printed—everything else, he said, had been in newspapers and public documents.

One other printing of the address must be mentioned before reviewing some of the correspondence which passed between Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Nott of the Young Men's Republican Union, with reference to the careful printing of the edition revised by the approval of Mr. Lincoln. A pamphlet was published subsequent to May 23, called *Evening Journal Tracts—No. 5* with a caption, "National Politics." This was followed by the subject, "Speech of Abraham Lincoln of Illinois Delivered at the Cooper Institute Monday, February 27, 1860." The pamphlet contained ten pages and was advertised for sale by the *Albany Evening Journal* at 2 cents each, 20 cents a dozen, \$1.00 per hundred, and \$8.00 per thousand.

One of the above pamphlets was enclosed in a letter written to Mr. Lincoln by Mr. Nott on May 23, 1860. Some excerpts from the letter follow:

Dear Sir:

I enclose a copy of your address in New York.

We (the Young Men's Rep. Union) design to publish a new edition in larger type & better form, with such notes & references as will best attract readers seeking information. Have you any memoranda of your investigations which you would approve of inserting?

I desire that it should be as nearly perfect as may be. Most of the emendations are trivial & do not affect the substance—all are merely suggested for your judgment.

I cannot help adding that this speech is an extraordinary example of condensed English. After some experience in criticising for Reviews, I find hardly anything to touch & nothing to omit. It is the only one I

know of, which I cannot shorten and—like a good arch—moving one word tumbles a whole sentence down.

Respectfully,

Charles C. Nott

Mr. Lincoln replied to Mr. Nott on May 31, and such portions of this letter which seem to be essential to an understanding of the suggested revisions are excerpted: My Dear Sir:

Of course I would not object to, but would be pleased rather, with a more perfect edition of that speech . . .

So far as it is intended merely to improve in grammar, and elegance of composition, I am quite agreed; but I do not wish the sense changed, or modified, to a hair's breadth. . . . On page 5 your proposed grammatical change would certainly do no harm—The "*impudently absurd*" I stick to—The striking out "*he*" and inserting "*we*" turns the sense exactly wrong—The striking out "*upon it*" leaves the sense too general and incomplete—The sense is "act as they acted *upon that question*"—not as they acted generally.

After considering your proposed changes on page 7, I do not think them material, but I am willing to defer to you in relation to them.

On page 9, striking out "*to us*" is probably right—The word "*lawyer's*" I wish retained. The word "*Courts*" struck out twice, I wish reduced to "*Court*" and retained—"Court" as a collection more properly governs the plural "*have*" as I understand—"The" preceding "*Court*," in the latter case, must also be retained—The words "*quite*" "*as*" & "*or*" on the same page, I wish retained. The italicising,—and quotation marking, I have no objection to.—

I return your copy of the speech, together with one printed here, under my own hasty supervising—That at New York was printed without any supervision by me—If you conclude to publish a new edition, allow me to see the proof-sheets.—

Your friend and servant

A. Lincoln.

On August 28 Mr. Nott again wrote Mr. Lincoln stating that "Mr. Judd insists on our printing the revised edition of your Cooper Institute speech without waiting to send you the proofs." Nott then mentioned two small errors he had discovered which he had taken the liberty to correct, one with reference to Mr. Baldwin's term in Congress and another in a quotation where the word "delegated" was used instead of "granted." With these and the former corrections made, Mr. Nott sent the revised copy to the press. The introduction was dated September 1860.

On September 17 Mr. Nott again wrote to Mr. Lincoln stating that he was sending 250 copies of the revised pamphlets. The copies had not reached Lincoln on September 22 when he wrote to Nott thanking him for his generosity and explaining about the two apparent mistakes Nott had mentioned in the letter dated August 28.

Aside from the several issues of the thirty-two page pamphlet in 1860, a later edition was published which carried a four-page introduction and the correspondence which passed between Lincoln and Nott, eleven new pages in all, indicated by Roman numerals added to the preliminary pages of the pamphlet. In 1907 another facsimile was printed with this inscription on the back cover:

"This is a facsimile of Lincoln's Cooper Union Address as used by him for presentation to his friends, and now, in this reprint of which there shall be but eleven hundred copies, it is used as the souvenir of the Lincoln Dinner of the Republican Club of the City of New York, given at the Waldorf-Astoria, February 12th, 1907."