

# LINCOLN LORE

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## THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATION'S BIRTH

Abraham Lincoln wrote a letter in August 1855 in which he stated that "the fourth of July has not quite dwindled away: it is still a great day—for burning fire-crackers!!!" Now, a hundred years later the firecrackers are gone and with the exception of a few displays of pyrotechnics in the evening no one would suspect from the activities of the holiday that the anniversary of the nation's birth is being commemorated.

Independence Day is a term seldom used in referring to the time of the nation's birth. The fact that our elementary schools are not in session during the month of July prevents a contemporary emphasis being placed on it as is the case with other patriotic holidays falling within the school year. But this negative factor has not contributed so much to the failure to properly observe the day as a certain very positive hindrance. The inroad of money making enterprises such as commercialized sport has had a tendency to detract greatly from the patriotic programs which at one time emphasized the significance of the contributions made to posterity by the founding fathers. Thomas Jefferson is a colorless hero indeed, in the minds of many devotees of the national sport, when compared with a home run king of today who may rule for a season or two.

One would think that a nation that has been at war for a quarter of a century, and is still engaged in war, would keep its patriotic fires burning by encouraging constructive loyalty demonstrations. At the beginning of the first World War the colors were displayed day by day on a large majority of the nation's homes, yet one is impressed with the almost total disappearance of the flag, except on public buildings, even on our most important national holiday, July the Fourth.

This year marks the 175th anniversary of the famous Declaration of Independence and for the first time in many decades some plans are being made to revive an interest in what has been formerly known as Independence Day. Publicity on this renewed effort to revive a general interest in the Declaration, which ushered in a new nation, was released on June 8 by a group of "fifty-six founders" known as a "Committee to Proclaim Liberty." It will be observed that the number fifty-six was so chosen to represent the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence. The sponsors of this emphasis to be placed on Freedom are outstanding figures in the field of education,

entertainment, government, labor, management and religion.

It is planned to have the festivities start off on Saturday afternoon, June 30 with Jimmy Stewart introducing famous Americans in his "Freedom

### THE PREAMBLE TO THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

Under God" radio program. All clergymen, priests, and rabbis have been invited to cooperate in presenting preliminary to July 4 at their regular assembly a message on the subject "Freedom Under God." On Independ-

ence Day itself at noon it is requested that all church bells be rung for ten minutes and that all citizens read again on this day the Declaration of Independence.

If Lincoln were here he would heartily concur in this movement as on one occasion in the spirit of this 1951 revival he said, "Let us readopt the Declaration of Independence, and with it the practices and policies which harmonize with it." Certainly Lincoln would be in sympathy with the appeal for the universal reading of the document as he admonished his hearers on one occasion: "My good friends, read that (the Declaration of Independence) carefully over some leisure hour, and ponder well upon it." Lincoln commended the annual observation of Independence Day in these words: "We hold this annual celebration to remind ourselves of all the good done in this process of time, of how it was done and who did it, and how we are historically connected with it."

No other document influenced Lincoln quite so much as the Declaration of Independence. On his way to be inaugurated President he visited Independence Hall and in a brief address there stated:

"I am filled with deep emotion at finding myself standing here, in this place, where were collected together the wisdom, the patriotism, the devotion to principle, from which sprang the institutions under which we live. . . . All the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn, so far as I have been able to draw them, from the sentiments which originated and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence. I have often pondered over the dangers which were incurred by the men who assembled here, and framed and adopted that Declaration of Independence. I have pondered over the toils that were endured by the officers and soldiers of the army who achieved that Independence. I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this Confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of the separation of the Colonies from the motherland; but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but, I hope, to the world, for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weight would be lifted from the shoulders of all men. This is a sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence."