

LINCOLN LORE

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LINCOLN ATTENDS EASTERN CHURCHES IN 1860

When Paul Angle completed his data for the publications locating Abraham Lincoln day by day, he made this notation with reference to Lincoln's whereabouts in New York on Saturday and Sunday, February 25 and 26, 1860, respectively: "The accounts of Lincoln's activities are so confused, when compared with each other, that it is impossible to make a coherent narrative of them." We do not presume to have untangled the confusion but possibly an attempt to clarify the situation somewhat is permissible.

The day after Washington's birthday in 1860, Abraham Lincoln left Springfield for the east. He understood that the address he was engaged to make would be delivered in Plymouth Church, Brooklyn. Upon arrival in New York, however, he discovered that the place of meeting had been changed to Cooper Union in New York. Although his original schedule was changed, during the three Sundays he was away from home he did attend at least five religious services, two of them at Henry Ward Beecher's church in Brooklyn.

Sunday, February 26, 1860

Soon after Abraham Lincoln reached the Astor House in New York on Saturday he was visited by a political admirer by the same surname, George Lincoln, who had visited Springfield on several occasions. We are fortunate in having George Lincoln's reminiscence for this week end. He states: "When evening came and I was returning to my Brooklyn home I asked him (Abraham) if he would like to go over to Brooklyn and listen to a sermon from Mr. Beecher in the morning. 'Oh Yes' he exclaimed, 'My wife told me that I must go and hear Beecher while in New York.'"

In the letter to Cephas Brainard in which George Lincoln records his reminiscence he states: "After having my supper I went to the house of my neighbor, Mr. H. C. Bowen, who had a more eligible pew in the church than my own, and asked him if he would give Mr. Lincoln a seat in his pew the next morning. It would afford him great pleasure to do so he said. We reached the church in good season and found Mr. Bowen already in his seat awaiting the arrival of his western friend. . . . The service over, Mr. Beecher came down to greet him and took him by the hand for the first time. Many of the congregation came and were introduced." This of course is the famous pew No. 89 on which there is a tablet noting

Abraham Lincoln's visit to the church on Sunday, February 26, 1860. The tablet was dedicated by Rev. Newell Dwight Hillis, the minister, in 1909. According to Stephen M. Griswold, a member of the church, Henry C. Bowen was the man who first suggested the name of Abraham Lincoln to the Plymouth Church committee as a possible speaker on their lecture program. Lincoln is said to have had legal connections with the New York firm Bowen and McNamee in collect-

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL ITINERARY

The Mississippi Valley will be the location of the speaking itinerary of the editor of *Lincoln Lore* for January and February 1956. Those who might be interested in learning of the schedule in detail in the various cities named, may contact the local offices of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company.

Lafayette, La., Jan. 10, 1956.
Beaumont, Tex., Jan. 11, 12.
Corpus Christi, Tex., Jan. 13.
Houston, Tex., Jan. 16-18.
San Antonio, Tex., Jan. 19, 20.
Dallas, Tex., Jan. 23-25.
Fort Worth, Tex., Jan. 26, 27.
Tulsa, Okla., Jan. 30.
Kansas City, Mo., Jan. 31, Feb. 1.
St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 2, 3.
Detroit, Mich., Feb. 8, 9, 10.
Chicago, Ill., Feb. 12-15.
Milwaukee, Wis., Feb. 16, 17.
Appleton, Wis., Feb. 20.
Madison, Wis., Feb. 21, 22.
Minneapolis, Minn., Feb. 23, 24.

ing claims in Illinois. Although Mr. Lincoln was invited to have dinner at the Bowens, he felt as if he should return to his hotel.

Sunday, March 4, 1860

When Abraham awoke on Sunday morning March 4 at Exeter, New Hampshire, where he had gone to visit his son Robert, he could not have surmised that just one year from that date he would be inaugurated President of the United States. Although two days before at Manchester he had been introduced as "The next President of the United States." Edwin L. Page in his book on *Lincoln in New Hampshire* presents the reminiscences of a young printer of Exeter who recalled that early Sunday morning Lincoln had taken a walk and engaged him in conversation at Pickpocket Bridge about two miles out of town.

Lincoln attended church at Exeter Sunday morning with his son Robert in the Second Church of the New Parish and heard Rev. Orpheus T. Lanphear deliver the sermon. Although the church was torn down some years later the pew in which Lincoln sat was preserved.

Sometime during the day he wrote two letters, one of them to his wife in which he advised her if he had forseen the "toil"—speech making—"I think I would not have come east at all." The other letter was written to James A. Briggs at New York acknowledging the \$200.00 check for his Cooper Union speech. Although the letter to Briggs is fragmentary it is evident that further engagements were proposed for Lincoln at New York on his return which he declined to accept.

Sunday, March 11, 1860

It was undoubtedly this correspondence with Briggs which brought them together in New York on Sunday morning March 11 when another visit to Plymouth Church was made. Apparently they did not arrive until the church was crowded and they found seats in an obscure spot in the balcony. Lincoln would not have been observed had it not been for an elderly deacon who recognized him as the visitor of two weeks before. According to this usher . . . Lincoln told him that he had preferred the balcony as "his feet were too long to fit between the pews" on the first floor. A more favorable location was found for him and for Mr. Bates.

We are indebted to Mr. Bates for what may be called the most dependable story about Lincoln's controversial visit to the Five Points Mission School. Bates claims that it was this last Sunday in New York when the visit occurred and that Lincoln's host was his old friend Hiram Barney, Esq. Bates further states that after Barney had told the superintendent of the Sunday School, who the distinguished visitor was, that Mr. Lincoln was asked to speak to the children which he did and the children seemed to enjoy it. Mr. Bates further recalls: That he met Mr. Lincoln at Mr. Barney's that evening and that Lincoln attended the Fourth Universalist Church in New York with him. Edwin Hubbell Chapin was the minister and his biographer states that, "In the period preceding the Civil War he was conspicuously among the opponents of negro slavery . . . he had long been one of the most prominent of metropolitan preachers."