

Theodore Roosevelt's Lincoln Day Address of 1909 Remains Appropriate as Tribute Paid

(Editor's note: Congress meets in joint session this week to honor the memory of Abraham Lincoln on the 150th anniversary of his birth. Just half a century ago, on Lincoln's 100th birthday anniversary, President Theodore Roosevelt led the nation in its centennial tribute to Lincoln. The speech he delivered—regarded as one of "TR's" finest—is as appropriate today as it was on that Feb. 12, 1909, when Roosevelt spoke at the dedication of the restored log cabin in which the Civil War President was born near Hodgenville, Ky. This is a condensation of that address.)

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We have met here to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of one of the two greatest Americans; of one of the two or three greatest men of the 19th century; of one of the greatest men in the world's history.

This rail-splitter, this boy who passed his ungainly youth in the dire poverty of the poorest of the frontier folk, whose rise was by weary and painful labor, lived to lead his people through the burning flames of a struggle from which the nation emerged, purified as by fire, born anew to a loftier life.

After long years of iron effort, and of failure that came more often than victory, he at last rose to the leadership of the Republic, at the moment when that leadership had become the stupendous world-task of the time.

He grew to know greatness, but never ease. Success came to him, but never happiness, save that which springs from doing well a painful and vital task.

Power was his, but not pleasure. The furrows deepened on his brow, but his eyes were undimmed by either hate or fear. His gaunt shoulders were bowed, but his steel thighs never faltered as he bore for a burden the destinies of his people.

His great and tender heart shrank from giving pain; and the task allotted him was to pour out like water the life-blood of the young men, and to feel in his every fibre the sorrow of the women.

Disaster saddened but never dismayed him. As the red years of war went by they found him ever doing his duty in the present, ever facing the future with fearless front, high of heart and dauntless of soul. Unbroken by hatred, unshaken by scorn, he worked and suffered for the people.

Triumph was his at the last; and barely had he tasted it before murder found him, and the kindly, patient, fearless eyes were closed forever. Lincoln saw into the future with prophetic imagination

usually vouchsafed only to the poet and the seer. He had in him all the lift toward greatness of the visionary, without any of the visionary's fanaticism or egotism, without any of the visionary's narrow jealousy of the practical man and inability to strive in practical fashion for the realization of an ideal.

Common Sense

He had the practical man's hard common sense and willingness to adopt means to ends; but there was in him none of that morbid growth of mind and soul which blinds so many practical men to the higher things of life.

No more practical man ever lived than this homely backwoods idealist; but he had nothing in common with those practical men whose consciences are warped until they fail to distinguish between good and evil, fail to understand that strength, ability, shrewdness, whether in the world of business or of politics, only serve to make their possessor a more noxious, a more evil member of the community, if they are not guided and controlled by a fine and high moral sense.

Yet perhaps the most wonderful thing of all, and, from the standpoint of the America of today and of the future, the most vitally important, was the extraordinary way in which Lincoln could fight valiantly against what he deemed wrong and yet preserve undiminished his love and respect for the brother from whom he differed.

Terrible Days

In the hour of a triumph that would have turned any weaker man's head, in the heat of a struggle which spurred many a good man to dreadful vindictiveness, he said truthfully that so long as he had been in his office he had never willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom, and besought his supporters to study the incidents of the trial through which they were passing as philosophy from which to learn wisdom and not as wrongs to be avenged; ending with the solemn exhortation that, as the strife was over, all should reunite in a common effort to save their common country.

He lived in days that were great and terrible, when brother fought against brother for what each sincerely deemed to be the right. In a contest so grim the strong men who alone can carry it through are rarely able to do justice to the deep convictions of those with whom they

grapple in moral strife.

At such times men see through a glass darkly; to only the rarest and loftiest spirits is vouchsafed that clear vision which gradually comes to all, even to the lesser, as the struggle fades into distance, and wounds are forgotten, and peace creeps back to the hearts that were hurt.

Supreme Vision

But to Lincoln was given this supreme vision. He did not hate the man from whom he differed. Weakness was as foreign as wickedness to his strong, gentle nature; but his courage was of a quality so high that it needed no bolstering of dark passion.

He saw clearly that the same high qualities, the same courage, and willingness for self-sacrifice, and devotion to the right as it was given them to see the right, belonged both to the men of the North and to the men of the South.

As the years roll by, and as all of us, wherever we dwell, grow to feel an equal pride in the valor and self-devotion, alike of the men who wore the blue and the men who wore the grey, so this whole nation will grow to feel a particular sense of pride in the man whose blood was shed for the union of his people and for the freedom of a race; the lover of his country and of all mankind; the mightiest of the mighty men who mastered the mighty days: Abraham Lincoln.

Rogue River Library Receives Tax Money

Payment of \$223.18 for the now independent Rogue River library's share of the library tax money was approved yesterday by the Jackson county court.

The authorization followed a letter from the Rogue River city council stating the city has not received any complaints on the "new set up."

A good selection of reference books has been purchased recently through public donation. The library also is open an extra evening a week, the letter stated.

WITHDRAW TAX CLAIM

Jackson, Miss.—City officials withdrew their \$4.30 tax claim on an old house belonging to John B. Leonard. Leonard reminded authorities that he had let firemen burn the structure for a training exercise.



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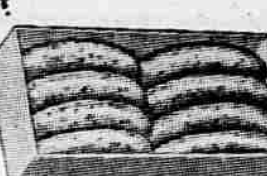
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