

# The Speech That Made Abe Lincoln President

By PHILIP VAN DOREN STERN  
Written for Newspaper  
Enterprise Assn.  
No one paid any attention to the tall, badly dressed man on the ferry that was taking railroad passengers from Jersey City to New York. He had come by train from the Middle West with only one small satchel as baggage.  
After the boat docked, he walked a few blocks east. He had been in New York before and knew his way. He turned in at the Astor House, which faced City Hall Park. When he signed the register on the page dated February 25, 1860, he wrote: "Abraham Lincoln, Springfield, Illinois."  
HE THEN WENT to the nearby office of "The Independent" to call on Henry Bowen. It was late Sat-

urday afternoon, but the hard-working editor was still in his office. Lincoln introduced himself and, saying that he was tired from the long train journey, asked if he could lie down on the office lounge while Bowen explained the arrangements for the speech scheduled for Monday night.  
"There's been a change in plan," Bowen said. "The meeting won't be in Brooklyn. We think you can fill the Great Hall in the new Cooper Union Building here in Manhattan."  
Bowen may have had some misgivings about the gawky-looking Westerner, but he tried to sound encouraging. "Greely has given you a good write-up," he said, handing his visitor a copy of the "New York Tribune."

Lincoln, obviously impressed, read the notice and then said he would have to revise his speech to make it fit the changed surroundings. When he left, Bowen invited him to Brooklyn the next day to hear Beecher preach.  
HENRY WARD BEECHER'S Plymouth Church was then one of the most celebrated in the country. Its pastor had a remarkable sense of showmanship. Only a few weeks before, he had held a mock slave auction at which a 9-year-old Negro girl was sold from the pulpit. The congregation bought her freedom, enthusiastically donating jewels and wedding rings as well as money.  
Lincoln went to the church with Bowen. After the sermon was over, Bowen invited him to dinner, but

the Western lawyer, still worried about his speech, begged off and returned to the Astor House to work on it.  
Lincoln had spent several weeks in the state library in Illinois preparing his speech. He knew how important it was, how subject to criticism it would be when newspapers, North and South, printed it, as they were sure to do if it attracted any attention.  
He had accepted the original invitation and its promised fee of \$200 because he wanted to come east to see his son Robert. The boy had expected to enter Harvard but had failed 15 out of 16 of the entrance examinations. He was at Phillips Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire, where he was preparing to take the tests again. Lincoln planned to go there as soon as he finished his New York assignment.  
He worked hard polishing his long speech, but it was difficult to concentrate, for people kept calling on him at the hotel. Some wanted him to speak in nearby towns. Others were curious to see the new political figure from the West. Lincoln had to be polite to them all—and that took time.  
FINALLY MONDAY evening came. It had been snowing, and the bad weather discouraged attendance at Cooper Union. But 1,500 of the huge basement hall's 2,000 seats were taken. The "carriage crowd" was there, for they could be driven to Astor Place in comfort. Men who formed public opinion were present. Among them were Horace Greeley and George Palmer Putnam, while William Cullen Bryant and David Dudley Field were on the platform.  
When Lincoln appeared, the audience studied the strange looking figure in silence. One of them said:  
"His dress . . . was . . . unbecoming for a tall, gaunt man—a black frock coat, ill-setting and too short . . . a rolling collar disclosing his long, thin, shriveled throat."  
The suit was not only ill-fitting; it was creased and wrinkled from having been jammed into a small satchel all the way from Illinois.  
Bryant was quickly nominated as chairman; he then introduced Lincoln, saying that he had made a name for himself in the widely publicized debates with Stephen A. Douglas, the "Little Giant" who was sponsoring state sovereignty as the solution for the slavery problem.  
Amid applause, Lincoln went to the lectern. When the audience quieted down he turned to Bryant and said in a high-pitched Middle Western voice: "Mr. Chieftain."  
It was not the kind of accent the audience had expected. Lincoln was beginning badly. He spoke his first few sentences in a low tone. Then, as he warmed up to his subject, the careful preparation and logical organization of his material lent meaning to what he said. He became surer of himself, and the audience began to listen with respectful attention.  
FOR HIS THEME he took Douglas' statement that the founders of the nation had clearly understood the slavery problem. He then went on to show that in framing the government a majority of the 39 men who had signed the Constitution were in favor of federal control. To them, he said, slavery was "an evil not to be extended and was to be tolerated only because its actual existence made such toleration a necessity."  
One after another he replied to the South's arguments and in doing so denied that the new Republican Party was sectional in interest. He also said that his party had in no way been implicated in John Brown's attempt to start a slave insurrection.  
It was a long and closely reasoned speech, interrupted only by occasional applause when Lincoln made some good point. He concluded with the ringing words:  
"Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it."  
This statement brought a burst of applause from the sophisticated New York audience that had come to inspect this wild and woolly Westerner and pass judgment on him. With those often-quoted words, Abraham Lincoln was on his way to the presidency. He was elected in November and took the oath of office a few days more than a year after he spoke at Cooper Union.  
But before 1860 was over, the first Southern state to secede (South Carolina) had left the Union, and 39 days after Lincoln entered the White House the guns roared out at Fort Sumter. That day of fire and thunder, April 12, 1861, marked the beginning of open hostilities in the Civil War.



FAMED PHOTOGRAPHER Matthew Brady took this photograph of Lincoln on February 27, 1860, just before the speech at Cooper Union.

## Mother Of Nine Becomes Citizen

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Annie Flanagan, 37, came here from Londonderry, North Ireland, in 1944 with her husband, Harry, but was too busy raising nine children to become one herself—until Wednesday.  
Then with her husband, whom she met while he was a Marine during World War II, and their nine children present, she took the citizenship oath from Judge John W. Lord of U.S. Dist. Court.  
"I wanted to take a course in citizenship a long time ago, but there always seemed to be a baby around the house," Mrs. Flanagan said.

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## Presentation Of Evidence Begins Today

BOSTON (AP) — Presentation of evidence begins today in the murder trial of Dutch radio ship operator Willem Van Rie, 31, accused of killing a pretty divorcee ship passenger.  
The first witness was due to be called on this third day of the trial after opening statements to an all-male jury by the district attorney's staff.  
Efforts to speed the trial were made Thursday night when both the prosecution and defense met with Superior Court Judge Frank J. Murray to go over maps, charts and plans of the Dutch vessel SS Utrecht.  
Judge Murray explained the private session was planned to reach an area of agreement to save trial time.  
Van Rie is accused of beating Miss Lynn Kauffman, 23, divorced daughter of a Chicago manufacturer, and dumping her overboard in Boston harbor as the Utrecht steamed from Boston to New York.  
The state contends Van Rie killed the girl in a violent climax to an illicit affair in which the pair allegedly was involved during the vessel's 44-day voyage from the Orient.  
Van Rie denies both the slaying and the love-making.  
Miss Kauffman's body was found washed ashore on the rocks of bleak Spectacle Island on Sept. 19, the day after the state contends she was tossed overboard.  
The 12-man jury and the two alternate jurors were taken out into the harbor in a private boat Thursday while the prosecution pointed out skyline landmarks, warships docked at the naval shipyard and the various islands and buoys which dot the harbor.

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**HOTEL CHANGES HANDS**  
NEW YORK (UPI) — The St. Regis Hotel, perhaps the most luxurious in New York, was purchased by the Zeckendorf Hotels Corp. and Col. Serge Obelensky. It was announced Thursday.  
The price paid to the estate of the late Vincent Astor was reported to be more than 14 million dollars.

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## Foresters Hold School

LAKEVIEW—A Radiological Defense Instructors School was held at Bend, February 3 and 4, for forest service personnel from the Fremont and Deschutes national forests. The purpose of this school was to train forest service personnel in the use of radiological equipment and procedure. The instruments used in this type of work are very similar to those used in prospecting for uranium. These instruments will be used in measuring the amount of radioactivity in the atmosphere.  
Lakeview, Silver Lake, Crescent and Bend have been selected as civil defense radiological stations. These stations will be operated and maintained by forest service personnel in cooperation with the state of Oregon Civil Defense Organization. In event of an atomic attack the trained personnel will assist other civil defense people in estimating the total amount of radiation in the atmosphere.  
Personnel from the Fremont attending the school were Harold Herrin, Colon McLain, Stanley Wood, Oscar King, Jeanne O'Harra, Bonnie Nelson, Raymond Cox and Richard Nelson.

## RIGGED FREE ELECTION

LONDON (UPI) — The Daily Telegraph today reported the finding of a writ from England's 12th Century King Henry II to the monks at Winchester that read: "I order you to hold a free election, but nevertheless I forbid you to elect anyone except Richard, my clerk, the archdeacon of Poitiers."

## On The Record

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