

LINCOLN LORE

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MOST TIMELY EDITORIAL—FEBRUARY 12, 1954

Very few of the nation's newspapers failed to pay tribute to Abraham Lincoln in their editorials on February 12. Political questions predominated inasmuch as the Republican party was preparing to celebrate the centennial anniversary the following month. However, a contribution free from partisan bias found in the Columbus, Ohio *Evening Dispatch* has been judged by the Lincoln Foundation advisory group as the most timely editorial appearing on Lincoln's birthday. Through the courtesy of the *Evening Dispatch* it is displayed in this column.

LINCOLN'S MORAL INTEGRITY IS LESSON FOR US TODAY

A question of great moment to this day and age is whether political questions are important from the standpoint of expediency and material well-being only, or whether they are essentially moral questions.

It is the consistent belief of conservative people that political questions are at base moral questions. This, obviously, was the belief of Abraham Lincoln, whose anniversary we observe today.

In all of the searchings and probings into the life of this great man for the purpose of identifying the qualities which made him great the moral integrity of his being continuously stands out.

The most astute and at the same time probably the most practical politician in the nation's history, Lincoln is far more greatly honored for his traits of humanitarianism, tolerance, understanding and infinite devotion to the political ideals for which he suffered and died.

It is not coincidence, merely that throughout the years the great political issues which have gripped America have been issues of Constitutional importance. It is in the nature of the Republic that these should be the continual and pertinent matters of concern for all of us. For in these issues are the moral controversies around which the progress of mankind must revolve.

The natural rights of freedom, liberty, security, equality, these are our daily concerns. And in Lincoln's time they were all caught up in the great and all-enveloping issues of Union.

If the Union were dissolved, or if it were impaired, the Constitution and its guarantees would have no meaning for anyone. If the Union were allowed to disintegrate there would be only chaos, and liberty and freedom and equality would disappear because without the Union there could not be law and without law there could be no guarantees of individual rights in any degree.

Lincoln's contribution to us was the permanence of the Union, and therefore the permanence of that system which guarantees for men on earth those vital moral necessities which can be enjoyed only under the law.

Our law is the guidepost for a government which derives its power from the consent of the governed, and to dramatize this George Washington directed that in building the new White House it be set not on the hill but in the valley below.

The Capitol was placed on the hill to symbolize the eternal supremacy of the legislative branch as the policy-making body of the Republic.

This concept was saved for us by Lincoln. It was strengthened beyond destruction by him, and although attacked many times and in many ways, both externally and internally, it remains as the nation's bulwark against the loss of its Constitutional liberties.

Excerpts From Other Feb. 12 Editorials

The central fact about Lincoln, which places him far above party affiliation, is that he loved his country so dearly that all else became unimportant.—*Boston Post*.

There is a majesty about the democratic Lincoln that makes him, for all time, a man of the people and yet a man apart.—*Davenport Daily Times*.

His wisdom and philosophy has the quality of timeless universality; his insight was turned upon the problems that are common to all.—*Evansville (Ind.) Courier*.

Surely it is significant that Lincoln is one of the few great heroes who has never been successfully "debunked."—*Kansas City Star*.

There was in Lincoln a rare perception of the true ends of statesmanship.—*New York Herald Tribune*.

The luster that increasingly surrounds his memory is not a product of antiquity but of the instinctive desire to learn more of the truth about this unsurpassed leader.—*Evening Journal and Nebraska State Journal*.

Of no other man in American history, and few others in world history, can it be said more surely than it can of Abraham Lincoln: He belongs to the ages.—*Buffalo Evening News*.

He is our most glorious man—the consummate flower of our national civilization.—*Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*.

He became the prophet of freedom and has gained immortal fame because he was forever on the side of right, regardless of the cost.—*Lexington (Ky.) Leader*.

The qualities which made Lincoln great are timeless.—*St. Paul Pioneer Press*.

Today he stands firmly enshrined as the American who, above all others, most represents the American faith.—*Hartford Courant*.

In popular history Abraham Lincoln holds the copy-right to democracy.—*Meridian Record*.

The man who killed Lincoln was perhaps the greatest enemy that America ever had.—(Oklahoma City) *Daily Oklahoman*.

Lincoln's greatness, his grip on our imaginations, is measured by the fact that so much of his wisdom applies today.—*Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*.

Lincoln more than any other of our historic great, left behind him words that live and inspire a nation to pursue its mission.—*Detroit News*.

He voiced the doctrines of democracy with words that cling eternally in the minds of men.—*Salt Lake City Tribune*.

For the oppressors, and for those who meekly submit to oppression as well, there is need for Abraham Lincoln's philosophy.—*Spokane Spokesman-Review*.