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ABRAHAM LINCOLN



ABRAHAM LINCOLN, sixteenth President of the United States, and intimately associated with the great struggle of the Civil War, was born in a humble cabin in Hardin Co., Ky., Feb. 12, 1809, and assassinated by John Wilkes Booth at Washington, D. C., April 14, 1865, dying on the following day. In 1816, his parents, who were both Virginians, crossed the Ohio from Kentucky into Indiana, settling on a small farm, where young Lincoln did much rough out-door work and had but a year's schooling. Two years later he lost his mother, Nancy Hanks, by death, and his father marrying again, the future President owed to his stepmother not a little in the formation of his character. What education he had was meanwhile picked up as chance and his studious habits enabled him to acquire in an early life of assiduous labor as "rail-splitter" and flatboatman. The family now removed to a farm in Illinois near Decatur, and Lincoln in the neighborhood made his first political speech, and after occupying himself in various ways settled at New Salem, Ill., where he was successively clerk in a drugstore, village postmaster, and surveyor. In 1832, he took part in the Black Hawk War, and in 1834 was elected Whig member to the Illinois State legislature, studied law, and in 1837 was admitted to the Bar. He then removed to Springfield, Ill., soon to become capital of the State, and there he pursued the profession of law, and in 1846 was elected to Congress. In 1858, in his own State, as Republican candidate for the United States Senate, he held a series of remarkable discussions with the Democratic nominee, Stephen A. Douglas, during which Lincoln delivered himself of his views on slavery, taking strong ground as an opponent of the vile traffic, and directing prominent attention to himself as a possible candidate for the Presidency. His election to that high office followed in November, 1860, at the Republican convention in Chicago, and he was inaugurated President in the following March. Immediately the secession movement in the Southern States occurred and civil war was precipitated. In his Inaugural he voiced the sentiment of the entire North by declaring the Union perpetual and all acts of secession void, while announcing the determination of the Federal government to maintain the integrity of the nation and its decision to uphold its authority. This was followed by placing the Southern ports under blockade, and in September, 1862, appeared the proclamation emancipating all slaves in any State which should be in rebellion to the Federal authority on Jan. 1, 1863. In March, 1865, Lincoln entered upon his second term of office, which was so soon to have its sad and calamitous ending. The patriot and martyr sleeps in the cemetery at Springfield, Ill., where a noble monument has been erected to his memory. Comparisons have sometimes been made between Lincoln and Washington to show the service rendered by each at a crisis in the history of the nation and bring out the fact that both statesmen, in their respective eras, were equal to the emergency of the time. Each was in the highest sense a providential man raised up for his era, and filled with those eminent qualities that enabled him to do the great work of the hour. What Washington accomplished was, first, the successful maintenance, despite the weak-

ness and want of unity and resources, and spirit of independence in the colonies; and, secondly, the wise administration, at its outset, of the Federal government, by which the nation was started in its great career. Lincoln's great work was to restore the dissevered Union, to guide the country safely through the tempestuous scenes of a terrible Civil war, and to rid the land of the blighting curse of slavery. See "Abraham Lincoln, a History," by Nicolay and Hay.

FAREWELL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, FEBRUARY 11, 1861

MY FRIENDS,—No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place and the kindness of this people I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in him who can go with me and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To his care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

COOPER INSTITUTE SPEECH

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 27, 1860

MR. PRESIDENT AND FELLOW CITIZENS OF NEW YORK,—The facts with which I shall deal this evening are mainly old and familiar; nor is there anything new in the general use I shall make of them. If there shall be any novelty it will be in the mode of pre-

senting the facts and the inferences and observations following that presentation.

In his speech last autumn at Columbus, Ohio, as reported in the New York "Times," Senator Douglas said:

"Our fathers, when they framed the government under which we live, understood this question just as well and even better than we do now."

I fully indorse this and I adopt it as a text for this discourse. I so adopt it because it furnishes a precise and an agreed starting point for a discussion between Republicans and that wing of the Democracy headed by Senator Douglas. It simply leaves the enquiry: "What was the understanding those fathers had of the question mentioned?"

What is the frame of government under which we live?

The answer must be: "The constitution of the United States." That constitution consists of the original, framed in 1787 (and under which the present government first went into operation), and twelve subsequently framed amendments, the first ten of which were framed in 1789.

Who were our fathers that framed the constitution? I suppose the "thirty-nine" who signed the original instrument may be fairly called our fathers who framed that part of the present government. It is almost exactly true to say they framed it, and it is altogether true to say they fairly represented the opinion and sentiment of the whole nation at that time.

Their names, being familiar to nearly all, and accessible to quite all, need not now be repeated.

I take these "thirty-nine" for the present as being our "fathers who framed the government under which we live."

What is the question which according to the text those fathers understood "just as well and even better than we do now?"

It is this: Does the proper division of local from Federal authority, or anything in the constitution, forbid our Federal government to control as to slavery in our Federal territories?

Upon this Senator Douglas holds the affirmative and Republicans the negative. This affirmation and denial form an issue, and this issue—this question—is precisely what the text declares our fathers understood "better than we."

Let us now enquire whether the "thirty-nine" or any of them acted upon this question; and if they did how they acted upon it—how they expressed that better understanding.

In 1789, by the first Congress which sat under the constitution, an act was passed to enforce the Ordinance of 1787, including the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. The bill for this act was reported by one of the "thirty-nine," Thomas Fitzsimmons, then a member of the House of Representatives from Pennsylvania. It went through all its stages without a word of opposition and finally passed both branches without yeas and nays, which is equivalent to a unanimous passage. In this Congress there were sixteen of the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original constitution. They were John Langdon, Nicholas Gilman, William S. Johnson, Roger Sherman, Robert Morris, Thomas Fitzsimmons, William Few, Abraham Baldwin, Rufus King, William Paterson, George Clymer, Richard Bassett, George Read, Pierce Butler, Daniel Carroll, James Madison.

This shows that in their understanding no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the constitution,

properly forbade Congress to prohibit slavery in the Federal territory; else both their fidelity to correct principles and their oath to support the constitution would have constrained them to oppose the prohibition.

Again: George Washington, another of the "thirty-nine," was then President of the United States and as such approved and signed the bill; thus completing its validity as a law and thus showing that in his understanding no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the constitution, forbade the Federal government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

No great while after the adoption of the original constitution North Carolina ceded to the Federal government the country now constituting the State of Tennessee; and, a few years later, Georgia ceded that which now constitutes the States of Mississippi and Alabama. In both deeds of cession it was made a condition by the ceding States that the Federal government should not prohibit slavery in the ceded country. Besides this slavery was then actually in the ceded country. Under these circumstances Congress, on taking charge of these countries, did not absolutely prohibit slavery within them. But they did interfere with it—take control of it—even there, to a certain extent. In 1798 Congress organized the Territory of Mississippi. In the act of organization they prohibited the bringing of slaves into the Territory from any place without the United States by fine, and giving freedom to slaves so brought. This act passed both branches of Congress without yeas and nays. In that Congress were three of the "thirty-nine" who framed the original constitution. They were John Langdon, George Read, and Abraham Baldwin. They all probably voted for it. Certainly they would have placed their opposition to it upon record if in their

understanding any line dividing local from Federal authority or anything in the constitution properly forbade the Federal government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

In 1803 the Federal government purchased the Louisiana country. Our former territorial acquisitions came from certain of our own States; but this Louisiana country was acquired from a foreign nation. In 1804 Congress gave a territorial organization to that part of it which now constitutes the State of Louisiana. New Orleans, lying within that part, was an old and comparatively large city. There were other considerable towns and settlements, and slavery was extensively and thoroughly intermingled with the people. Congress did not, in the Territorial Act, prohibit slavery; but they did interfere with it—take control of it—in a more marked and extensive way than they did in the case of Mississippi. The substance of the provision therein made in relation to slaves was:

First. That no slave should be imported into the Territory from foreign parts.

Second. That no slave should be carried into it who had been imported into the United States since the first day of May, 1798.

Third. That no slave should be carried into it except by the owner and for his own use as a settler; the penalty in all the cases being a fine upon the violator of the law and freedom to the slave.

This act also was passed without yeas and nays. In the Congress which passed it there were two of the "thirty-nine." They were Abraham Baldwin and Jonathan Dayton. As stated in the case of Mississippi it is probable they both voted for it. They would not have allowed it to pass without recording their opposition to it if in their understanding it vio-

lated either the line properly dividing local from Federal authority or any provision of the constitution.

In 1819-20 came and passed the Missouri question. Many votes were taken, by yeas and nays, in both branches of Congress, upon the various phases of the general question. Two of the "thirty-nine"—Rufus King and Charles Pinckney—were members of that Congress. Mr. King steadily voted for slavery prohibition and against all compromises, while Mr. Pinckney as steadily voted against slavery prohibition and against all compromises. By this Mr. King showed that in his understanding no line dividing local from Federal authority, nor anything in the constitution, was violated by Congress prohibiting slavery in Federal territory; while Mr. Pinckney by his vote showed that in his understanding there was some sufficient reason for opposing such prohibition in that case.

The cases I have mentioned are the only acts of the "thirty-nine," or of any of them, upon the direct issue which I have been able to discover.

To enumerate the persons who thus acted, as being four in 1784, two in 1787, seventeen in 1789, three in 1798, two in 1804, and two in 1819-20, there would be thirty of them. But this would be counting John Langdon, Roger Sherman, William Few, Rufus King, and George Read each twice and Abraham Baldwin three times. The true number of those of the "thirty-nine" whom I have shown to have acted upon the question which by the text they understood better than we is twenty-three, leaving sixteen not shown to have acted upon it in any way.

Here, then, we have twenty-three out of our thirty-nine fathers "who framed the government under which we live," who have, upon their official responsibility and their corporal oaths, acted upon the very question which the text affirms

they "understood just as well and even better than we do now;" and twenty-one of them—a clear majority of the whole "thirty-nine"—so acting upon it as to make them guilty of gross political impropriety and wilful perjury if in their understanding any proper division between local and Federal authority or anything in the constitution they had made themselves and sworn to support, forbade the Federal government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. Thus the twenty-one acted; and, as actions speak louder than words, so actions, under such responsibility, speak still louder.

Two of the twenty-three voted against Congressional prohibition of slavery in the Federal Territories in the instances in which they acted upon the question. But for what reasons they so voted is not known. They may have done so because they thought a proper division of local from Federal authority or some provision or principle of the constitution stood in the way; or they may, without any such question, have voted against the prohibition on what appeared to them to be sufficient grounds of expediency. No one who has sworn to support the constitution can conscientiously vote for what he understands to be an unconstitutional measure, however expedient he may think it; but one may and ought to vote against a measure which he deems constitutional if at the same time he deems it inexpedient. It therefore would be unsafe to set down even the two who voted against the prohibition as having done so because in their understanding any proper division of local from Federal authority or anything in the constitution forbade the Federal government to control as to slavery in Federal territory.

The remaining sixteen of the "thirty nine" so far as I have discovered have left no record of their understanding upon the direct question of Federal control of slavery in the

Federal Territories. But there is much reason to believe that their understanding upon that question would not have appeared different from that of their twenty-three compeers had it been manifested at all.

For the purpose of adhering rigidly to the text, I have purposely omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any person, however distinguished, other than the thirty-nine fathers who framed the original constitution; and for the same reason I have also omitted whatever understanding may have been manifested by any of the "thirty-nine" even on any other phase of the general question of slavery. If we should look into their acts and declarations on those other phases, as the foreign slave-trade and the morality and policy of slavery generally, it would appear to us that on the direct question of Federal control of slavery in Federal Territories the sixteen, if they had acted at all, would probably have acted just as the twenty-three did. Among that sixteen were several of the most noted anti-slavery men of those times,—as Dr. Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and Gouverneur Morris,—while there was not one now known to have been otherwise, unless it may be John Rutledge of South Carolina.

The sum of the whole is that, of our thirty-nine fathers who framed the original constitution, twenty-one—a clear majority of the whole—certainly understood that no proper division of local from Federal authority, nor any part of the constitution, forbade the Federal government to control slavery in the Federal Territories; whilst all the rest probably had the same understanding. Such unquestionably was the understanding of our fathers who framed the original constitution; and the text affirms that they understood the question "better than we."

But so far I have been considering the understanding of the question manifested by the framers of the original constitution. In and by the original instrument a mode was provided for amending it; and as I have already stated the present frame of "the government under which we live" consists of that original and twelve amendatory articles framed and adopted since. Those who now insist that Federal control of slavery in Federal Territories violates the constitution, point us to the provisions which they suppose it thus violates; and as I understand they all fix upon provisions in these amendatory articles and not in the original instrument. The Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case plant themselves upon the fifth amendment, which provides that no person shall be deprived of "life, liberty, or property without due process of law;" while Senator Douglas and his peculiar adherents plant themselves upon the tenth amendment, providing that "the powers not delegated to the United States by the constitution" "are reserved to the States respectively or to the people."

Now it so happens that these amendments were framed by the first Congress which sat under the constitution—the identical Congress which passed the act already mentioned, enforcing the prohibition of slavery in the Northwestern Territory. Not only was it the same Congress but they were the identical same individual men who at the same session and at the same time within the session had under consideration and in progress toward maturity these constitutional amendments, and this act prohibiting slavery in all the territory the nation then owned. The constitutional amendments were introduced before and passed after the act enforcing the Ordinance of 1787; so that during the whole pendency of the act to enforce the ordinance the constitutional amendments were also pending.

The seventy-six members of that Congress, including sixteen of the framers of the original constitution, as before stated, were pre-eminently our fathers who framed that part of "the government under which we live" which is now claimed as forbidding the Federal government to control slavery in the Federal Territories.

Is it not a little presumptuous in any one at this day to affirm that the two things which that Congress deliberately framed and carried to maturity at the same time are absolutely inconsistent with each other? And does not such affirmation become impudently absurd when coupled with the other affirmation from the same mouth, that those who did the two things alleged to be inconsistent understood whether they really were inconsistent better than we—better than he who affirms that they are inconsistent?

It is surely safe to assume that the thirty-nine framers of the original constitution and the seventy-six members of the Congress which framed the amendments thereto, taken together do certainly include those who may be fairly called "our fathers who framed the government under which we live." And, so assuming, I defy any man to show that any one of them ever in his whole life declared that, in his understanding, any proper division of local from Federal authority or any part of the constitution forbade the Federal government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories. I go a step further. I defy any one to show that any living man in the whole world ever did prior to the beginning of the present century (and I might almost say prior to the beginning of the last half of the present century) declare that, in his understanding any proper division of local from Federal authority or any part of the constitution forbade the Federal government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories.

To those who now so declare I give not only "our fathers who framed the government under which we live," but with them all other living men within the century in which it was framed among whom to search, and they shall not be able to find the evidence of a single man agreeing with them.

Now and here let me guard a little against being misunderstood. I do not mean to say we are bound to follow implicitly in whatever our fathers did. To do so would be to discard all the lights of current experience—to reject all progress, all improvement. What I do say is, that if we would supplant the opinions and policy of our fathers in any case we should do so upon evidence so conclusive and argument so clear, that even their great authority fairly considered and weighed cannot stand; and most surely not in a case whereof we ourselves declare they understood the question better than we.

If any man at this day sincerely believes that proper division of local from Federal authority or any part of the constitution forbids the Federal government to control as to slavery in the Federal Territories, he is right to say so and to enforce his position by all truthful evidence and fair argument which he can. But he has no right to mislead others who have less access to history and less leisure to study it into the false belief that "our fathers who framed the government under which we live" were of the same opinion—thus substituting falsehood and deception for truthful evidence and fair argument. If any man at this day sincerely believes "our fathers who framed the government under which we live" used and applied principles in other cases which ought to have led them to understand that a proper division of local from Federal authority, or some part of the constitution, forbids the Federal government to control as to slavery in the

Federal Territories he is right to say so. But he should at the same time brave the responsibility of declaring that, in his opinion he understands their principles better than they did themselves; and especially should he not shirk that responsibility by asserting that they "understood the question just as well and even better than we do now."

But enough! "Let all who believe that 'our fathers who framed the government under which we live understood this question just as well and even better than we do now,' speak as they spoke and act as they acted upon it. This is all Republicans ask—all Republicans desire—in relation to slavery. As those fathers marked it, so let it be again marked, as an evil not to be extended, but to be tolerated and protected only because of and so far as its actual presence among us makes that toleration and protection a necessity. Let all the guaranties those fathers gave it be not grudgingly, but fully and fairly maintained. For this Republicans contend and with this, so far as I know or believe, they will be content.

And now, if they would listen—as I suppose they will not—I would address a few words to the southern people.

I would say to them: You consider yourselves a reasonable and a just people; and I consider that in the general qualities of reason and justice you are not inferior to any other people. Still when you speak of us Republicans you do so only to denounce us as reptiles or at the best as no better than outlaws. You will grant a hearing to pirates or murderers, but nothing like it to "Black Republicans." In all your contentions with one another each of you deems an unconditional condemnation of "Black Republicanism" as the first thing to be attended to. Indeed such condemnation of us seems to be an indispensable prerequisite—license so to speak—among you to be admitted or permitted to speak at all.