

Change of Plan

On the morning of February 22 in Philadelphia, Lincoln arrived at Independence Hall for a ceremonial event, feeling rejuvenated after a good night's rest. Despite his original plan to simply raise the flag, a large crowd demanded he deliver a speech. He hesitantly obliged, speaking in a nearly inaudible tone, yet his words moved the audience profoundly.

Standing in a place that symbolized the nation's inception, Lincoln expressed the political sentiments rooted in the Declaration of Independence. He reflected on the struggle for independence, pondering the essential principles that had preserved the union. He emphasized that it wasn't merely the act of separation from Britain but the ideals of liberty encapsulated in the Declaration that offered hope and possibility for future generations. This notion received enthusiastic applause.

Lincoln's compelling assertion that liberty should extend to all individuals resonated deeply with the crowd. He posed a rhetorical question regarding the nation's viability based on these principles, asserting that he would prefer to be assassinated than to abandon them. His conviction regarding equality was a powerful moment, evoking cheers and applause from the gathered audience.

He ascended a platform to hoist the flag, an act that prompted manic cheers from the crowd, signifying unity and hope. A reporter noted that the essence of Lincoln's remarks points towards the deeper meaning of equality, emphasizing the gradual steps toward African emancipation.

In light of the events, Lincoln agreed to modify his travel plans as suggested by Pinkerton and Norman Judd. He committed to speaking in Harrisburg to the state legislature before embarking on a secret journey back to Philadelphia. From there, Lincoln planned to board a midnight train to Baltimore, understanding that the notion of sneaking into the capital could be politically risky. Nonetheless, he dismissed concerns over ridicule, determined to follow through with Judd's plan, signaling his resolve and eagerness to embrace the potential risks ahead.