

HARNEY COUNTY HISTORY PROJECT

AV-Oral History Project #227 - Sides A & B

Subject: Henry Slater Speeches

Place:

Date:

Interviewer:

HENRY SLATER: No longer does it commemorate the patriotism of one generation of Americans. It is a day consecrated to an appreciation of a valor, or a loyalty, and a sacrifice of every generation of Americans since the birth of our republic. To have meaning and significance to us this day, Veterans' Day must serve a noble purpose. That purpose is to keep forever dreams a memory of the cost of American lives, and America's blood, and America's toil, and an America's sweat, and has gone into the founding and the preservation of our free institutions.

Our nation was founded on a belief in God, and his divine precepts. From this space sprang the immortal ideas in which our free way of life, based on our government of the people, by the people, and for the people was built. It marked the birth of democracy in this world with its then revolutionary concept that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, and among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

This new system of life, and government depended from the beginning upon a faith in America's heart, in the newly declared and religiously inspired ideals, preservation rights, that transcended the fears of death itself. In no other way could we ... human values be upheld except by a loyalty and an allegiance that counted no cost too high in their

defense.

Every generation of Americans has been blessed with men and women so fiercely imbrued with personal dedication to these national values that they were ready and willing to give their all to defend her and perpetuate her in. More than a million and a quarter of gallant Americans exemplified this last full measure of devotion by laying down their lives in the defense of these immortal truths in all our wars.

Each succeeding American generation extended the lease on our freedom and rights with its un... expenditure of sacrifice. So on Veterans' Day we should enter into solemn communion with the voices of our gallant from beyond the grave. It is an eloquent chorus of American patriots who died on the field of battle to assure that every American child of the future would be born into a heritage of freedom. I believe their message to us is, and always will be, to every generation, by no act of yours either of commission or omission, undoing what we have done, or cancel out the cost we paid to keep you free. The ranks of those who are with us in spirit reach from the conquered road in Lexington to the beaches of the Pacific, and to the rugged bloodstained hills of Korea.

The hero dead of our wars include seventy-seven thousand patriots who fought in the first American Armed Forces in the Revolutionary War to back up our Declaration of Independence. They include thirty thousand who died in the War of 1812. Fourteen thousand, four hundred and forty-five of the War with Mexico in 1845. Almost five hundred thousand who died in the War Between the States in which our union was preserved. Six thousand four hundred and seventy-two in the War with Spain in 1898. One hundred and seventy three thousand, three hundred and seventy-four who paid the supreme sacrifice during World War I, in an effort to make the world a place for democracy? The four hundred and eight thousand, eight hundred and twenty-eight who died in World War II, and the thirty three thousand,

four hundred and seventeen who died in the Korean War. There are others, the hundreds who died in the Indian Wars, the thousands who have died in service of one cause or another on the long road of the lifeless ... survival. Stretching from the birth of the republic to the latest crash of one of our jet fighters.

All these were the keepers of America's faith. They have set us deathless examples. Very silent but eloquent testimonial is, and always will be, that only the brave deserve to be free. No coward has ever shaken off the shackles of slavery and tyranny. The large ... of freedom is today, as it has been in the life of every American generation, a courage that vanquishes even the fear of death itself. A faith that is rooted in immortality. A belief in the right as God gives us the ability to see it, that no earthly power can shape. This courage, this faith, and this belief constitutes the dynamic conviction of Americanism.

It is more than subscribing to a free way of life; it is the solemn and resolute underwriting with such a way of life with our most sacred bonds of ... fidelity to the freedoms, rightful institutions that make that life possible.

The honored dead of all American Wars gave their lives for God and country, to make good their bonds of eternal fidelity. We can honor them in no greater way than Veterans' Day, than to so live, and so serve our God and country that their supreme sacrifices shall not turn out within our lifetimes to have been made in vain.

Our hero dead gave their all for God and country in great national emergencies, when our survival as a free people will get ... The few who have crises precipitated by eternal enemies was enforced. Today we face another survival test. In it, the nation it surpasses in presence a clear danger, any previous hostile menace. It is a double-edged threat of the overthrow of our government and free way of life. Both have come without, as well as from within. We are living with an H-bomb literally suspended over our heads.

An H-bomb that bears the symbol of a hammer and sickle, a world conquest bent communism.

At the same time we are confronted at home with a galvanized red stiff column, that has gained a new lease on life. Because a recent court decision, through technical rather than logical interpretations of the law. These decisions have for the present galled our legal weapon and set back our fight against communism twenty years. The communists in this country are now enjoying immunity, while they plot the destruction of our democratic form of government.

At the same time there has developed a trend of softness toward wrong doing which can cause irreparable harm to the moral fiber of our nation. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover told the Atlantic City National Convention of the American Legion that during 1956, a shocking total of two million, five hundred and sixty three thousand, one hundred and fifty major crimes was reported by the nations police. He said the 1957 total would be even greater, averaging better than one major crime every twelve seconds day and night. He warned that to give up the battle against subversion, or to give up on the war on crime will bring national disaster. And he also said, and I quote, "With the unprecedented material advantages of today, an attitude of complacency seems to have permeated the national minds to an unbelievable expense." In effect, he was warning that the pursuit of the dollar has become such an absorbent passion today, that there is a danger and vicious new type of thinking spreading over the land.

This new concept as vicious and as destructive to our national character as any imported foreignism is the growing belief that there is only one crime in these United States today. That is the crime of getting caught. So here we face a trend of softness towards wrongdoing. A revived subversive movement in which American communists are

being aided and abetted by a multiple cohorts of fellow travelers, pinkos, traitors, brain-washed fools, and a growing cults of the pseudo-liberals. And on top of all that, we are faced by public apathy.

These aggressive forces within our midst today, are day by day, raising the cost of speaking up for, and defending America. Few citizens today have the intestinal fortitude to speak up for what they believe is right, because it is easier and much less painful to remain silent. The communists, and the anti anti-communists today hold the upper hand. And they are well organized. Just as well entrenched and organized are the racketeers and other crime syndicates and their countless stooges. And ... if you believe and spread the doctrine that the only crime is that of getting caught.

This is the challenge that faces every patriotic body, and every dedicated and patriotic American today. Unless you as good Americans, and as good citizens, work as a patriotic team, we can rest assured that Nikita Khrushchev will ... be right when he predicted that our grandchildren would live under the heel of communist socialism. The salvation of our nation depends upon a great new re-birth of dynamic conviction of Americanism. We must translate that conviction into positive steps, whatever personal sacrifices this may entail.

We need to forge new legal weapons and quickly. We need to dispel the apathy of the majority. We need to fan into bright flame our individual and collective appreciation of our American heritage. To put the highest civic premium once again on public service, and the personal bonds of eternal fidelity to America. And a great moral and human values for which it stands. Our goal should be to bring up new generations of Americans, whose words of ... would be as good as a gold bond. Whose national pride is based on the knowledge and appreciation of our free institutions. To understand the need of close guarding, and preserving every cherished Americans freedom and right. And who will be

young men, and young women with the moral courage to speak up and defend, both their personal beliefs and their national heritage.

Our hero then followed this God given chain of Americanism, and made possible the entrustment into our hands of our heart ... heritage. We must keep faith with them, and hand it down enhanced and preserved to all successive generations of Americans.

1967 . . . (Tape Interruption) (Sound Poor) Lincoln was born in the dawn of an eighteenth century when the armies of Napoleon were marching with conquering swords to overthrow the powers of the early world. In the horror of Auschwitz with one stomp of his foot in the center of Europe ...

Lincoln passed away in the closing hours of a most terrible ... War that ever visited this ...

On a Sunday morning on February 12th, 1809, Tom Lincoln stepped out of his cabin to call to a neighbor on the road to ask him to fetch the ... woman to come and help Nancy. The ... woman came, and there in the bleak windowless ... draped old cabin in the wilderness of Kentucky was born the man ... Abraham Lincoln, one hundred and fifty-eight years ago yesterday.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln, the mother of Lincoln, was a ... pioneer woman. She lived only nine years after her son Abe was born. But in those nine years she found some time to ... a never ending survival story ever present in the wilderness frontier to instill in her boy a love of learning, and a deep religious philosophy. Both of these attributes he carried with him to his grave.

How does Abraham Lincoln endure one hundred and fifty-eight years after his humble birth in Kentucky, as the man who has affected most profoundly the lives, thoughts, attitudes, and actions of modern Americans? Why does Lincoln continue to draw in our political philosophy, our cultural inheritance, our social and moral

consciousness. Why has he remained in death as powerful an influence in reality as he had in life? Why is it that that influence is vague, not ...

I have ... and answered those questions for you in the next few minutes. It would be a gross miscalculation of the role of Lincoln to regard him as a ... politician reaching for some pattern by which to conduct the highest political office in the land. He was a professor-politician, with much experience in his State of Illinois ...

Woodrow Wilson asked this question over fifty-five years ago. Can you have other Lincolns? You cannot grow without them. This country is going to have crisis after crisis. There will be ... and ... You have to have the leadership of stern ... like Lincoln, to service and ... and give us the necessary leadership in such days of trouble and difficulty. Lincoln never knew the ... of faith in any particular ... during his life. Although he did ... in the First Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Illinois. No man can say that Abe was ... just as Lincoln ... public religious activities were, because no one ever became politically associated with the man.

There are definite areas in Lincoln's life which instead ... The first ... that Lincoln believed in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. He believed in serving God as ... that his church and justice are eternal. He recognized that those nations only ... as God is the Lord. Lincoln once said that he could not support a man for office whom he knew to be a ... Lincoln belongs to the ages because he knows he belongs to eternal God.

The trials and persecutions that Lincoln endured after his election as president are indubitable proof of his nobility of character. When ... divided, friend criticized, abuse and persecution were heaped upon him. Members of his cabinet told him his manners were rusty, but he spoke the Illinois vernacular. They said he lacked the responding ... for sitting in the highest office in the land. Lincoln replied, "The people will understand."

Seventy-five professional historians rated Lincoln as a ... of the United States Congress. Lincoln maintained consistently, before and after his election in ... contrary to the judgment of the Supreme Court, that equality of ... of people for self-government as expressed in the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution, were advocated and included all persons, as people, regardless of creed, nationality of race. And that this had been the fundamental intentions, and the original hope of the founders of our country. He constantly did his best to do right, and ... but not without feeling ... involve peace and justice for another person. And so he apologetically corrected himself.

He continued s he had all of his official life, to take umber of himself, as a servant of the people, with certain business to perform in limited legal powers to execute them.

I would remind those who are listening to this talk, that Lincoln ... with the people of his day ... and religious liberty. ... she said. It was a ... and patriotic voice of ancestors. Lincoln ... passionately against ... fear. In his opinion, any-thing of ... was in direct opposition to the preservation of our political institution. Lincoln's greatness asks nothing of this, nothing of pride or fortune, and nothing of success. He was a humanitarian, as broad as the universe, and he will be remembered for this as long as the world is. And for mortal joy ... upon his name. Armed with ... with one of Lincoln's biographers, they wrote of Lincoln as follows: His ... of his time had renounced personal gain and vindictiveness when adopted Lincoln's plan of getting liberated Negroes as they became literate and learn how to become citizens. Whereas constitutional rights enjoyed by White people were ... to each individual. We have now had established throughout the United States such narrowing political ... principles of government, for I wish that other nations would emulate, and not condone and ridicule us. ... would not now be the country of democracy. For those are the ... that are baptized by the ... and kissed by the morning and evening stars. Lincoln's untamed spirit lays in the realization and grandeur of divine ...



Her sad tired face, now ... and glorified look down on the people who ... Let the ... of Lincoln be our watchtower. Let us ... and keep vigil with him so that the government of the people, by the people, for the people, will not perish from the earth. Let us guard well our heritages. We know that ... of communism ... our liberty. ... Let us not permit the ... of the house of God to be ... so that the hope of immortality will be ... from our hearts.

Later this month, as always, on George Washington's birthday his farewell address will be read aloud to Congress. History ... this time be special attention be paid to the ... Let us ... endowed with supposition that morality can be maintained without religion.

In closing may I leave you with this thought, ... carefully. You do not know what destiny ... And I ask that God extend his mercy to the hour of retribution that will come to the nation that closes the doors to the house of God. Let each one of us renew allegiance to God and country. And when the walls of freedom and liberty come tumbling down, if they must, that there will be an angel hovering above. ... of time, in the beginning of eternity. I thank you.

SIDE B

1963

MAN: ... these awards, and I'd like to go over and present it to him, but since it's a pretty good hunk of mileage for me to drive, and since you're only about half as old as I am, why I'd like for you to do it. So, I consider it quite an honor to represent Freedom's Foundation here today, and to say a few words about the Freedom's Foundation and what it means to Burns and what it means to this country to have men like Henry Slater active in this --- in the community.

This is not, as you probably know, the first award that Mr. Slater has won from Freedom's Foundation. It's his tenth personal award, and twice he

has received awards for the school that include trips to the Valley Forge to visit the museum there, the library, the historic shrine, the - - - and to visit some of the places where early American history was made.

Now of course as you recall these people lived here in the high country, and probably get temperatures just about as low as those at Valley Forge, but the winter when George Washington was struggling to keep his army together, it was not only cold, but it was wet, which is something you don't have very often when ... soldiers didn't have any shoes, and it was touch and go whether or not we would gain our freedom from England or whether it would be, or whether our galleons would be put down and we would be back under the loving care of King George and Parliament.

Well anyway, we survived that. And the years since then, this country has been gaining strength in some directions, and perhaps losing strength in some other directions. And in 1949, a group of men thought it would be a good thing if people of this country would speak up for America once in awhile. And set examples, and pass the word to our next generations so that the country will continue to be able to govern itself and to preserve the freedoms that made this country great. And the Freedom's Foundation has a few wealthy donors who make it possible to present awards of various kinds. Trips, as I've mentioned to Valley Forge, cash awards. Mr. Slater has won twice as ... cash awards, from Valley Forge. And other distinguished Americans have won similar awards each year.

This year, the particular award that comes to Mr. Slater as a George Washington medal, which shows the General at Valley Forge. Not only --- if you walk into his office sometime, you will probably see some more of these. But he also has a nice plaque on his wall, which takes note of other awards. But this medal is fixed up with a little stand so that he can put it on a desk, and has a little flag, so it makes a nice table centerpiece or a

desk piece. And something to remind Henry that people are aware of what you have been doing for our young people, and the way that you have set this example. And that we do think it's important. And it's a great pleasure to present this to you at this time.

HENRY SLATER: Thank you very, very kindly.

Friends in Harney County. In this humble way, I want to take a few minutes of your time, to dedicate a small portion of this 31st day of March to the memory of a great American, Dwight David Eisenhower, who answered his last roll call on March 28th, 1969. And is being borne to his beloved Kansas, there to rest until the Master Sergeant calls us all back into the ranks.

General Eisenhower was born in Denison, Texas, on October 4th, 1890. When he was a year old, he moved with his father and mother and two brothers to Abilene, Kansas. There he grew to manhood and began his full life of adventure, leadership, and statesmanship. To Abilene he has returned for his final memoirs.

President Eisenhower's career was a series of peaks with few valleys. He was a general, allied commander in chief for North Africa, commanding general for allied powers in the European theater, chief of staff of the army, president of Columbia University, and served two terms as President of the United States.

On June 6th, 1944, as supreme allied commander, Dwight David Eisenhower organized, directed, and led the greatest military armada in the history of the world, and forced the unconditional surrender of Germany. He saved the world from complete dominance of Nazism. General Eisenhower was a God fearing man. He often called on the Supreme Being for comfort and solace. He was a humble man in times of great tribulations. He was a man whose profession was war. But it was General Eisenhower who warned against the excessive power of the military industrial complex. He said he hoped to see people in my profession permanently put out of a job.

His death will leave a void in a not too secure society. He will be long remembered for his love of his fellow men, and for his deep sincere loyalty to his country. His live mate, Mamie, as most of the world knows Mrs. Eisenhower, was his life's companion, and his favorite person. They had fifty-three years of togetherism.

The world will miss Dwight David Eisenhower. Two giants in one century seems almost more than the world can bear. Churchill and Eisenhower were these two men.

In closing, abide with me, and offer your prayer in your own way as I offer mine. May God grant eternal rest to Dwight David Eisenhower, and may perpetual light shine upon him. Thank you.

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