

Challenges City

Accompanied article
"Stidger Compares Lindy
to Lincoln"

Detroit Times
Feb 12, 1928



TELLS MESSAGE OF STATUE—The Rev. William L. Stidger, in an accompanying article tells the message of the marble head of Lincoln on the lawn of the Detroit Institute of Arts. The marble, by Borglum, challenges the city to rise above its wheels and industry to the spiritual, the clergyman says.

Stidger Compares Lindy to Lincoln

By A. F. MUNROE

Detroiters should stand today—the 119th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln—with uncovered heads before the marble bust of Abraham Lincoln on the lawn of the Detroit Institute of Arts, says the Rev. William L. Stidger.

Pastor of the Linwood Boulevard M. E. Church, Kansas City, and former minister of St. Mark's M. E. Church here, the Rev. Dr. Stidger believes that of all the marble busts of the Great Emancipator, the Detroit marble, by the noted Gutzon Borglum, is the best symbolic expression.

He believes that of all men, excepting only Jesus Christ, Lincoln most truly symbolized the ideal man. Here last Thursday to lecture in his former pulpit, the minister took time to view the bust.

Standing before the marble masterpiece, his head uncovered, the former Detroit minister said:

"This Lincoln head, carved from the virgin stone, is to my way of thinking the best symbolic expression of Lincoln in marble. The Lincoln bronzes are all over the world. I'll never forget the thrill I experienced to find a Saint Gaudens' Lincoln in the shadow of Westminster Abbey in London, across from the parliament buildings.

"There is also a great Lincoln bronze by Bernard in Manchester, Eng., and on the Hill of the Martyrs in Edinburgh, Scotland.

"The greatest Lincoln bronze is the Saint Gaudens' bronze in Chicago. The qualities of Charles Lindbergh seem to be a strange reincarnation of the Lincoln qualities: Tall, angular, simple, friendly-hearted—in a word a cross-section of the best of what every American boy or man would like to be.

"The more you trace the parallel between Lindbergh and Lincoln, the more astonished you are at the likeness. Without knowing I would wager that

Charles Lindbergh has been a Lincoln student.

"Detroit is particularly fortunate in having this fine Lincoln marble by Borglum. It suggests to me the whiteness of the Lincoln life. They have delved into the life of George Washington, Franklin and others of our great national leaders and have found much of which we are not proud, but the touch of taint has never sullied Lincoln's name. There has never been a man so much written about as Lincoln, except Christ. The most intimate details of his private and public life have been under the spotlight for half a century, and no dark spots have been found.

"The Henry M. Lelands of this city have for long been collectors of Lincolnia as has Mr. Ford. I believe it was due to Mr. Ford's interest in the Oldroyd home that it was taken over by Congress. The home, where Lincoln died, is in Washington.

"At one time Mr. Ford considered purchasing this home, but he said to me in an interview for The Detroit Times, 'I would much rather see it purchased and protected by the United States government.' That has since been done.

"In this hectic day of automobiles and machinery, the statue, standing as it does in the heart of Detroit's art center, calls us back to the idealization of the Lincoln life.

"It teaches us that machinery and commerce are trivial things compared with ideas and ideals. This piece of marble will stand forever as a challenge to Detroit to rise above its wheels, its manufacturing and its commerce, to the realm of the spiritual.

"No city can rise higher than its ideals; no city can build buildings which surmount its spiritual living. Detroit would be a modern Babylon without its art center, its symphony orchestra and its churches."

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2-12-28