

The Reception at Normal

The immediate neighbors of Mr. Bryan at Normal, the village of which Fairview adjoins, tendered to Mr. and Mrs. Bryan a reception Friday evening, September 7. The following is from the Lincoln (Neb.) Journal's report:

"Do nothing till you hear from Normal," was the cablegram said to have been sent to W. J. Bryan by Uncle Jake Wolfe of Normal when Lincoln, Omaha and New York City were striving to be the first to receive Mr. Bryan on his return from abroad. Mr. Bryan could not help it because New York City, Detroit, Chicago and Lincoln got the first chance to receive him. His real home coming was celebrated Friday night at the suburb of Normal, a village a short distance from his country home, "Fairview," and where he and his family are attendants at the Methodist Episcopal church at Normal. Mr. and Mrs. Bryan are both teachers of Sunday school classes in that church and it was there that 400 people of the community gathered to greet them. The grounds surrounding the church were decorated with many Chinese lanterns with flags and flowers. Many people were obliged to stand during the reception and the rendition of the program that had been arranged. J. A. Brown presided. The singing of America was first on the program. Dr. George W. Martin, pastor of the church, made a brief address of welcome on behalf of the church. He assured Mr. Bryan that the people of the church appreciated him and were glad he had been returned to them. J. V. Wolfe extended a hearty welcome on behalf of the citizens of Normal. D. R. Tuttle welcomed him on behalf of the Sunday school. Mr. Bryan responded with an address on the work of American missionaries in foreign countries and a description of his travels in the Holy Land. He said he came home thoroughly convinced of the propriety of the work being done by American missionaries in foreign lands and of continuing that work. Mrs. Bryan was called for and made a few remarks and presented to Dr. Martin for the church two plates for the taking of collections that were obtained in Jerusalem and which were made of olive wood. Mr. and Mrs. Bryan shook hands with the people and the reception closed with a song.

The following are extracts from the Lincoln News' report: "Uncle Jake" Wolfe was presented to voice the welcome of the community of Normal, which he did in the following words: "Mr. and Mrs. Bryan and family: As we have no governors nor mayors, nor even a justice of the peace or constable, in Normal, I have been called upon as an humble citizen to deliver

to you a few words of welcome back to our midst, and to your beautiful home on yonder hill. While it has been my good fortune to perform many pleasing duties, none has ever been so delightfully pleasing as the one now before me. You left us, your nearest neighbors, almost a year ago, and have since been rocked upon the railroads of almost every land, and rocked in the cradle of almost every sea in the known world. While our eyes have not been able to follow you in all your wide and winding paths, our solicitude and our prayers have followed the windings of every highway, and in the wake of every vessel that bore you from us and that has brought you safely back to us again. We meet here this evening in this modest little church, within which are so many pleasing recollections of yourselves, in this village of your real neighbors and home folks, to greet your return and welcome you again to our midst. While I acknowledge that the name Bryan, like a few and only a few other names in American history, is too great for any one people to claim or any one country to appropriate to itself, yet history should be kept at least as straight as any lady's bonnet on an Easter Sunday. These people here tonight, Mr. and Mrs. Bryan, I want to say in the truth of history, are your real home folks, and even in a Bible sense, are your real neighbors. It is true that in a wider sense you belong not only to the city of Lincoln and the state of Nebraska, and to our common country, but to the world and to humanity at large. While this is our common country, known and honored throughout the world, whose government and institutions are the inspiration of every aspiring heart, and the terror of every oppressor's heel, and whose flag is an open sesame to the entrance or the exit of any port of any nation on earth, yet in a narrower, and perhaps in a more selfish, sense we still claim you as a citizen of Normal. Of course we would not rob Nebraska, the state of your adoption, and the one you love so well, and to whose bright star on the blue of our flag you have added so much luster, of the just pride she feels in claiming you as a citizen. Nor of the city of Lincoln, our beautiful capital city, and your former home, and around whose very name cluster so many hallowed memories. But while your abiding place is everywhere and in the hearts of all people, your home is in Normal, and we who are here tonight are 'it,' with a capital 'I.' Normal is in voting precinct No. 4, in road district No. 3, and in school district No. 2, Lancaster precinct, Lancaster county, Nebraska. And while I would not for the world, Mr. Bryan, in your presence, and with these surroundings, make the slightest allusion to politics, yet it is my candid opinion that you could and would receive a majority, if not the unanimous, vote of all, these, your neighbors, for any office to which you might hereafter see fit to aspire. We know you as only near neighbors can know each other. We, however, do not claim to be your only true friends. We simply wish to be reckoned among the number. We know and rejoice in the knowledge that your friends are everywhere, numberless almost as the sands upon the seashore, and scattered like the leaves of the forest. But I was admonished to be short in my remarks. These greetings between friends after long separation are indeed pleasant, and yet how feebly can words express what hearts so often feel. To say that all the citizens of Normal, from Grandfather West to the youngest child that has learned to lip the name of Bryan, welcome you back to our midst from

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