

Lincoln's Beard

Nine-year-old Grace Bedell, who lived in Westfield, a small town in upstate New York, saw a picture of Abraham Lincoln shortly after he was elected President of the United States. It occurred to her that the President would look more impressive if he had whiskers, so she wrote him a letter to that effect.

President Lincoln wrote back, pointing out that people might think that growing a beard was a silly affectation. Grace came right back with another letter saying it was the right thing to do because he looked too solemn.

On his way from Illinois to Washington for his inauguration, Lincoln ordered his special train to stop at Westfield, where he appeared on the rear platform and announced, "I have a correspondent in this town named Grace Bedell, and if she's present, I hope she'll step forward."

"Here I am!" cried the astonished Grace. "Well, Grace," said Lincoln, leaning over the rear rail, "I let these whiskers grow for you. I hope you think I'm looking better now."

"You look wonderful now," the little girl assured him, "and I bet you're going to be the greatest President this country ever had!"

Lincoln put his stovepipe hat on his head and the train chugged away.

What difference does encouragement make – even when it comes from a child? The answer is obvious. The power of suggestion is awesome. In the centers of Life Care and Century Park and in the work of Life Care at Home, let's use it for good today – both in the giving and receiving of it.

--Beecher Hunter