

## POLITICS &amp; GOVERNMENT

*Suburban  
Welfare?*

"One County's Pipeline to the Treasury" by Irwin Ross, in *Fortune* (Feb. 20, 1984), 541 North Fairbanks Ct., Chicago, Ill. 60611.

If anybody in Washington is still trying to find fat in the federal budget, he need look no farther than just across the Potomac, to Arlington County, Virginia.

Ross, a *Fortune* writer, says that while congressional budget-cutters eye Washington's massive welfare and defense outlays, generous federal aid to state and local governments escapes attention. Those governments "are generally in much sounder shape than the U.S. Treasury," he notes, yet last year they received over \$90 billion in federal largess. That amounts to about 11 percent of all federal outlays.

Arlington, the nation's third wealthiest county in terms of per capita income (\$19,519), received \$24.2 million in federal assistance in fiscal year 1983. Half of the money was devoted to "means-tested" programs for the poor: refugee assistance for the county's Indochinese residents, rent subsidies, and job training for the unemployed. But the remaining \$12.9 million benefited people who could well afford to pay their own way.

Some \$2.6 million, for example, came in the form of a "no-strings" revenue-sharing grant. The county used this money to fund its fire department. (Local officials thus freed county funds for road and other construction, circumventing the Davis-Bacon Act, which stipulates that any construction undertaken with federal funds must pay, in effect, union wages.) Another \$4 million was used to complete a sewage treatment plant whose construction over 14 years has consumed \$60 million of federal money. Local officials say that they could have done the job more quickly and at lower cost with county funds.

Arlington's public schools, meanwhile, collected \$4 million from 22 federal education programs—for vocational education, writing seminars, and special help for gifted children. The U.S. Department of Agriculture sent Arlington \$643,445 in school lunch subsidies, including an 11-cents-per-meal subvention enjoyed by the children of the affluent.

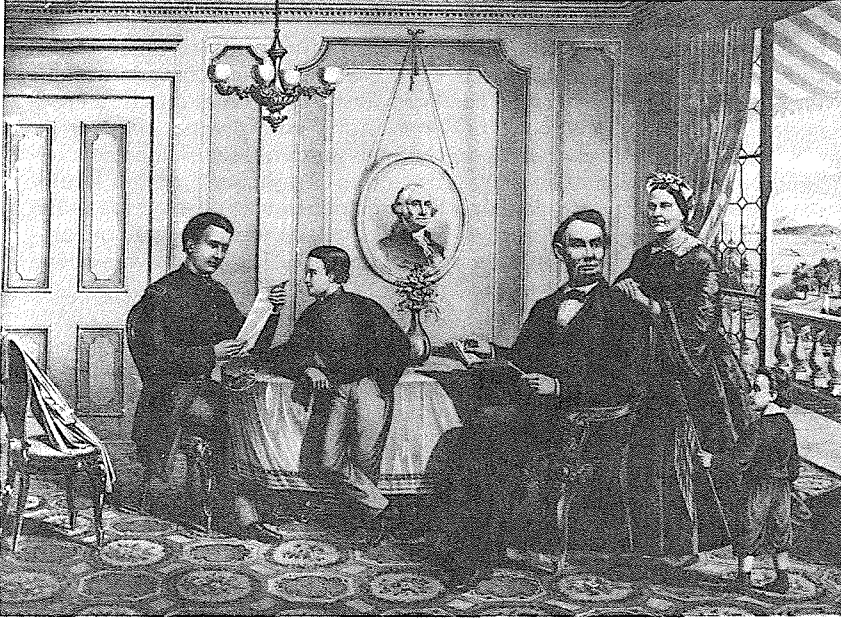
To top it all off, Ross says, the county government's tax levy is among the least burdensome in the 11-county Washington metropolitan area. Last year, Arlington rang up a \$7.5 million budget surplus. Which suggests to Ross "that Arlington could tax itself more and dispense with a lot of federal aid. So, probably, could many other communities."

*Shaping Lincoln's  
Public Image*

"The Lincoln Image, Abraham Lincoln, and the Popular Print" by Harold Holzer, Gabor Boritt, and Mark E. Neely, Jr., in *The OAH Newsletter* (Feb. 1984), Organization of American Historians, 112 North Bryan St., Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

The all-seeing TV camera makes today's politicians worry a lot about appearances—haircuts, waistlines, and wrinkles. Ironically, the U.S. politician whose image is among the most vividly etched in Americans' imagination was a homely man who seemed scarcely to care how he

## POLITICS &amp; GOVERNMENT



*An 1867 lithograph of Lincoln with three of his four sons and his wife, Mary. No Lincoln family portraits were published until after his death.*

was seen by the public.

Abraham Lincoln began his Presidency just as the technical processes of engraving, lithography, and photography were being perfected. According to the authors, who are creators of an exhibit of Lincoln pictures now at Gettysburg College, early prints and photographs were rare, prized possessions. *Political* prints took on an almost religious aura and were often proudly displayed at home. But while Lincoln obligingly posed for many artists, "neither he nor his managers made substantial efforts to manipulate in any systematic fashion the printmakers' products."

If anything, it was the entrepreneurs who made engravings and lithographs for the market, who did the manipulating, creating three distinct "Lincolns" that both shaped and reflected popular sentiment. The first was "Honest Abe, the Railsplitter of the West," who appeared during the late 1850s. "His homely face was beautified to encourage people to buy his picture," the authors remark, "and, incidentally, to vote for him." Where Lincoln was unpopular, what sold were unflattering portraits of a "nigger-lover."

At the suggestion of 11-year-old Grace Bedell, a New York state youngster who hinted in a letter that whiskers might improve his appearance, Lincoln grew a beard before moving to the White House in 1861. Printmakers struggled to document the change, sometimes "slop-

## POLITICS & GOVERNMENT

---

ping inaccurate and even grotesque beards onto beardless Lincoln portraits." Interestingly, while Lincoln was Commander-in-Chief of the Union forces during the American Civil War, he was seldom pictured in the company of military men. The President's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation ignited a new round of commentary-cum-prints.

After Lincoln's assassination in 1865, he suddenly seemed largely beyond politics. Printmakers began depicting him in sentimental family scenes, the authors note, "though the presidency was destructive to his domestic happiness, and though he never posed with his wife or family." In Victorian America, the authors observe, "the home was above criticism, and so at last was Lincoln."

### *The Mirage of Cabinet Government*

"The Cabinet in the American Presidency, 1789-1984" by R. Gordon Hoxie, in *Presidential Studies Quarterly* (Spring 1984), Center for the Study of the Presidency, 208 East 75th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.

Nearly every U.S. president solemnly promises at the beginning of his first term that he will rely heavily on his cabinet. Yet the U.S. Constitution makes no mention of a cabinet; the institution has varied in function and importance according to the desires of each chief executive.

After his inauguration in April 1789, George Washington asked Congress to create three departments—State, Treasury, and War—whose secretaries he regarded as no more than "assistants." (Today there are 13 departments.) According to Hoxie, who heads the Center for the Study of the Presidency, the secretaries became an advisory cabinet largely by default: It quickly became apparent that the president would not be able to turn to either the Supreme Court or Congress for counsel. (When Washington went to the Senate floor in August 1789 to seek advice, he received a chilly welcome. Washington left "with sullen dignity," one senator recalled.)

Washington's cabinet was powerful, largely because of the presence of two energetic personalities, Thomas Jefferson at the State Department and Alexander Hamilton at the Treasury. But when Jefferson won the Presidency in 1800, memories of his running feud with Hamilton dimmed his enthusiasm for cabinet government. The institution went into decline.

Thereafter, the cabinet's importance varied with circumstance and the president's needs. Andrew Jackson, who occupied the White House from 1829 to 1837, was the first President to call regularly on the advice of a group of outsiders, his "Kitchen Cabinet." (Grover Cleveland had his "Fishing Cabinet," Franklin Roosevelt his "Brains Trust.")

Especially since the creation of the Executive Office of the President in 1939, the White House staff has been the cabinet's chief rival for the president's ear. Dwight D. Eisenhower was the chief practitioner of cabinet government in recent times, but he also greatly strengthened the National Security Council, which now competes with the Department of State for influence in the Oval Office.

Gerald Ford restored the cabinet to prominence. Watergate, he said,