

THE LEGACY OF THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS, 1863-1965

A Dissertation

by

JARED ELLIOTT PEATMAN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2010

Major Subject: History

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Approved by:

Chair of Committee,	April Hatfield
Committee Members,	Julia Kirk Blackwelder
	Cynthia Bouton
	Peter Hugill
	Andrew Kirkendall
	Harold Livesay
Head of Department,	Walter Buenger

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ABSTRACT

The Legacy of the Gettysburg Address, 1863-1965. (August 2010)

Jared Elliott Peatman, B.A., Gettysburg College; M.A., Virginia Tech

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. April Lee Hatfield

My project examines the legacy of the Gettysburg Address from 1863 to 1965. After an introduction and a chapter setting the stage, each succeeding chapter surveys the meaning of the Gettysburg Address at key moments: the initial reception of the speech in 1863; its status during the semi-centennial in 1913 and during the construction of the Lincoln Memorial; the place it held during the world wars; and the transformation of the Address in the late 1950s and early 1960s marked by the confluence of the Cold War, Civil Rights Movement, Lincoln Birth Sesquicentennial, and Civil War Centennial. My final chapter considers how interpretations of the Address changed in textbooks from 1900 to 1965, and provides the entire trajectory of the evolving meanings of the speech in one medium and in one chapter. For each time period I have analyzed what the Address meant to people living in four cities: Gettysburg, Richmond, New York, and London.

My argument is twofold. First, rather than operating as a national document the Gettysburg Address has always held different meanings in the North and South. Given that the speech addressed questions central to the United States (equality and democracy), this lack of a common interpretation illustrates that there was no singular

collective memory or national identity regarding core values. Second, as the nation and world shifted, so did the meaning of the Gettysburg Address. Well into the twentieth-century the essence of the speech was proclaimed to be its support of the democratic form of government as opposed to monarchies or other institutions. But in the middle twentieth-century that interpretation began to shift, with many both abroad and at home beginning to see the speech's assertion of human equality as its focal point and most important contribution.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“It will live, that speech. Fifty years from now American school-boys will be learning it as part of their education.”

The Perfect Tribute (1906)
Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews

Text of the Gettysburg Address¹

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new Nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. [Applause.] Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that Nation, or any Nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting-place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our power to add or detract. [Applause.] The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. [Applause.] It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished

This dissertation follows the style of the *Journal of American History*. For items not covered in that journal, and for the format of the bibliography, please see the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 15th edition.

¹ This is the version that was reported by the Associated Press. Abraham Lincoln, “Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863,” *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols., eds. Roy P. Basler, Marion Dolores Pratt, and Lloyd A. Dunlap (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953-1955), 7:19-21.

work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. [Applause.] It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom; and that Governments of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from this earth. [Long-continued applause.]

Introduction

On September 10, 1978, the sixth day of the Camp David Peace Accords, Jimmy Carter halted the process and took Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Gettysburg for a day of rest. Since September 5, the men had tried to reach an agreement that would bring peace in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The two Middle Eastern leaders had not seen each other in three days, and at their last meeting had refused to speak. In her 1984 memoirs Rosalynn Carter noted that Sadat, a military man, “Was very interested in our Civil War. He knew much of the history of the area we were going to visit and recalled the details of the battle.” In contrast, “Begin, an admirer of Abraham Lincoln, recited the Gettysburg address to us as we neared the famous battle site.”²

In 2004, with the Boston Red Sox trailing the New York Yankees by a game in the American League Championship Series, Sports Illustrated writer Frank Deford

² Rosalynn Carter, *First Lady from Plains* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), 253.

penned “The Fenway Park Address.” Deford called on Sox fans to “forgive all those brave BoSox who lost their noble reputations in certain cursed Series past” in order “that memories of the Babe, by the Bambino, for the Sultan of Swat, shall yet perish from The Hub.” The Red Sox went on to win the series in dramatic fashion, then swept the St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series, overcoming four score and six years of history.³

These two incidents represent the tremendous range of ways people have invoked the Gettysburg Address since its delivery. Lincoln enthusiasts can now buy a tie with the text of the Gettysburg Address featured prominently, or, for only fifty cents, a flattened penny commemorating the famous speech. While these anecdotes and trinkets suggest the continuing resonance of Lincoln’s words, a focus on the speech’s familiarity belies signification variation in its interpretation.

Lincoln intended the Gettysburg Address as his most *eloquent* statement on the inseparability of *democracy* and *equality*. But for 99 years most individuals praised the Gettysburg Address for just one of those three components. While this conception perverted Lincoln’s original intention, it brought the speech wider acceptance. As the Address grew in fame, opponents had an increasingly difficult time dismissing the speech. But by focusing on one component they could acknowledge its greatness while making Lincoln’s discourse fit within their world-view. For white Southerners that meant praising Lincoln’s defense of democracy while ignoring his comments on equality. For African-Americans it meant just the opposite. Those who rejected both democracy and equality focused instead on Lincoln’s eloquence to the exclusion of the

³ Frank Deford, “Fenway Park Address,” *Sports Illustrated*, October 13, 2004.

underlying philosophy. In 1962 a notable shift occurred, with many outside the South seeing the Gettysburg Address in the light Lincoln intended, as linking democracy and equality. But most white Southerners still refused to recognize this connection. Thus, this dissertation uses the Gettysburg Address to show that deep regional divisions persisted within the United States throughout the period under study, forcing us to question the extent to which the United States can claim to have possessed a collective memory between 1863 and 1965. The persistence of regional memories that precluded the development of any national memory of the Address further suggests we consider carefully the coherence of national identity.

Examining the legacy of the Gettysburg Address at home and abroad from 1863 through the end of the Civil War Centennial in 1965 illuminates three major themes: the contrasting regional views of the speech, the growing international acclaim offered the Address, and the evolving interpretation of whether the Gettysburg Address was about democracy, equality, or both.

By focusing on the reception and uses of the speech in Gettysburg, Richmond, New York, and London, the contrasting regional interpretations of the speech come to light. Recent work by John Seelye and Robert Tilton examine attempts in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century to establish regional primacy by situating either New England or Virginia as the nation's point of origin.⁴ In the second half of the nineteenth

⁴ John Seelye, *Memory's Nation: The Place of Plymouth Rock* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Robert S. Tilton, *Pocahontas: The Evolution of An American Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

century regionalism peaked in the United States. The secession of eleven southern states pitted one region against another over the fate of a third (the West).

Ten days after the ceremonies at Gettysburg, resident Harvey Sweney wrote that Lincoln's "modest appearance and dignified manners, to say nothing of the noble speeches he made here, has endeared him to the hearts of the people and added thousands of friends to him on that day."⁵ In Richmond, on the other hand, the *Enquirer* noted, "President Pericles, or rather Abe, made the dedicatory speech; but had to limit his observations within small compass, lest he should tell some funny story over the graves of the Immortals."⁶ The *Richmond Examiner* offered harsher criticism:

A vein of comedy was permitted to mingle with the deep pathos of the piece. This singular novelty, and the deviation from classic propriety, was heightened by assigning this part to the chief personage. Kings are usually made to speak in the magniloquent language supposed to be suited to their elevated position. On the present occasion Lincoln acted the clown.

No Richmond newspaper printed the speech, even though they had the *New York Herald* of November 20 which carried the complete text of the Address.⁷

David Blight argues that in the decades after the war a triumphant reunion based on the memory of common sacrifice and heroics during the war left out any discussion of the causes and results of the war. Merrill Peterson supports this contention and asserts that the sixteenth president played a starring role in the reconciliation, with the

⁵ Harvey Sweney to Andrew Sweney, November 29, 1863, folder 8-18b, Gettysburg National Military Park Library. This letter was also printed in the *Gettysburg Times* on November 3, 1984, though the author was misidentified as "Henry" Sweney.

⁶ *Richmond Enquirer*, November 27, 1863.

⁷ *Richmond Examiner*, November 28, 1863.

North and South uniting around Lincoln during World War I.⁸ Historical actors also speculated on this perceived white alliance. In July 1875 Frederick Douglass asked, “If war among the whites brought peace and liberty to the blacks, what will peace among the whites bring?”⁹ During the fiftieth anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Gettysburg, Woodrow Wilson observed, “We have found one another again as brothers and comrades in arms, enemies no longer, generous friends rather, our battles long past, the quarrel forgotten.”¹⁰ But this narrative of mutual reconciliation and a shared white history of the war crumbles when examined through the lens of the Gettysburg Address. Rather than collapsing into a national interpretation, conflicting regional readings of the Address persisted for over a century.

In 1963 Gettysburg celebrated the centennial of the Address with a three day ceremony featuring speeches from Secretary of State Dean Rusk, former President Dwight Eisenhower, the French and Italian ambassadors, and the foreign minister from Britain; a performance by singer Marian Anderson; and several academic considerations of the Address. The *Gettysburg Times* produced two commemorative editions devoted to the Address on November 19, 1963, including letters from senators, former presidents, governors, and other celebrities, capped off by a telegram from President

⁸ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001), dust jacket; Merrill Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 119.

⁹ Frederick Douglass, “Celebrating the Past, Anticipating the Future: An Address Delivered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 14 1875,” in *The Frederick Douglass Papers*, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, eds. John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 4: 417.

¹⁰ Woodrow Wilson, “An Address at the Gettysburg Battlefield, July 4, 1913,” in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 69 vols., ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966-1994), 28: 23-26.

John Kennedy noting that he planned to visit Texas that week and apologizing for his absence. The celebrations expanded past Gettysburg: the *New York Times* offered seven articles and a reprinting of the Address.

Not so in the South. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* ran just one article, an Associated Press account of the events in Gettysburg that spent more time on Eisenhower's 1963 speech than Lincoln's original oration. The *Richmond News Leader* of November 19, 1963, carried just one article; "Gettysburg Address: Unforgettable Words." But rather than noting the eloquence of the Address or the political ideals Lincoln set forth, the author instead identified all of the speech's faults. The writer concluded, "Today, 100 years later, the world acclaims Lincoln's Gettysburg Address as one of the finest public utterances in English or any other language." Yet this praise came not in the first person, but rather from "the world" at large. Northern and Southern attempts to gain acceptance for their version of the Gettysburg Address (and by extension the causes and results of the war) demonstrate the extent to which sectional interpretations of the war remained divergent, fomenting regional hostility and precluding the development of a true national identity well into the twentieth century.

When contrasted with the second theme of this work, the growing international acclaim offered the speech, these regional variations stand out. In 1863 Londoners reacted to the speech in a variety of ways. While many editors in that city printed the Address, they offered little commentary, and in many ways stood closer to Richmond's interpretation than that of either Gettysburg or New York. But that soon changed. During a speech at the University of Cambridge in 1913 Earl (later Lord) George Curzon

declared the Gettysburg Address and Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address the two greatest speeches in the English language, calling them "part of the intellectual patrimony of the English-speaking race." Shortly after Pearl Harbor Winston Churchill noted that throughout his career, "I have steered confidently towards the Gettysburg ideal of government of the people, by the people, for the people."¹¹

The praise extended past London. In 1911 when Sun Yat-sen led the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty and established the People's Republic of China he based the new government on the Gettysburg Address. Yat-sen explicitly modeled his "Three Principles of the People" (nationalism, sovereignty, and democracy) on "government of the people, by the people, for the people."¹²

France followed a similar path. In 1958 the Fourth Republic collapsed, and in its last act the parliament called for the establishment of a new constitution. That constitution moved France to a semi-presidential system, with a strong chief executive. The new constitution that France adopted on October 4, 1958, made clear its model: "Son principe est : gouvernement du peuple, par le peuple et pour le peuple." That constitution still governs France today. The international appeal of the Gettysburg Address in the twentieth century brings into striking relief the refusal of some at home to even acknowledge the speech.¹³

¹¹ Earl George Curzon, *Modern Parliamentary Eloquence* (London: MacMillan, 1914), 73-75; *New York Times*, December 27, 1941.

¹² Lyon Sharman, *Sun Yat-sen; His Life and Its Meaning; A Critical Biography* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934), 271-272.

¹³ "Constitution," *Journal Officiel de la Republique Française* 9151 (October 5, 1958).

When dealing with these latter day disquisitions on the significance and meaning of the Gettysburg Address, issues of memory, both individual and collective, come into play. In his landmark work on French history Pierre Nora notes that memories “buttress our identities, but if what they defended were not threatened, there would be no need for them.”¹⁴ Historians of American history including John Bodnar, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, and Mitch Kachun agree, and add that useful memories must not only address the past, but also deal with present concerns. Thus we find the Gettysburg Address most frequently invoked when the country faced some type of crisis, whether during domestic crises like the Populist or Civil Rights Movements, or an international affair like the world wars or Cold War. In each case historical actors introduced the Gettysburg Address to identify their position with the great Lincoln and his iconic speech. Thus, in the 1960s, with the United States facing domestic issues dealing with race and international issues over democracy, the Address appeared in the *New York Times* on 208 occasions. Over the next decade, when those issues receded, the Address showed up just 96 times.¹⁵

Contests between localities or factions constitute a critical part of the construction of collective memory. Kachun notes, “Various social and political factions attached their own complex and competing meanings to the ritual festival and to the

¹⁴ Pierre Nora, “General Introduction: Between History and Memory,” in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, English translation by Arthur Goldhammer), 7.

¹⁵ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 15; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 10; Mitch Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808-1915* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 2.

character of American nationalism,”¹⁶ while Brundage contends that shifts in relative power amongst groups impact both the events remembered and the memories of those events.¹⁷ However, the contestations are not merely among people of different politics, but also among regions. Bodnar argues that most people cannot conceive of something the size of the United States, and thus they view the larger nation through a smaller lens.¹⁸ This certainly holds true for the Gettysburg Address, which most people saw strictly in local or regional perspectives, not national ones. Kachun contends that the “extent to which a nation or a people can reach some consensus regarding its past and traditions defines the degree to which it can truly consider itself a coherent cultural entity.”¹⁹ If true, the United States does not share a consensus about its past and traditions and consequently does not have a coherent collective memory.

Lastly, this dissertation examines the evolving meaning of the Gettysburg Address. In the last 140 years dozens of books and hundreds of articles have considered the Gettysburg Address.²⁰ Surprisingly, the existing literature on the Gettysburg Address has yet to systematically examine the speech in the twentieth century when it was sometimes used to pull the country together, as during the world wars, or

¹⁶ Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom*, 24.

¹⁷ Brundage, *Where These Memories Grow*, 10.

¹⁸ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 16.

¹⁹ Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom*, 2.

²⁰ The best of these works, in chronological order, are Barton, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*; Louis A. Warren, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration: "A New Birth of Freedom"* (Fort Wayne, IN: Lincoln National Life Foundation, 1964); Gary Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992); Gabor Boritt, *The Gettysburg Gospel: The Lincoln Speech That Nobody Knows* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006).

alternatively as a tool to point out its faults, which happened repeatedly during the 1960s. Most scholars, then and now, remain more interested in the ideas that went into the Gettysburg Address than in what came out of it. Two of the best books on the Address, those by William Barton and Louis Warren, only devote six pages each to analyzing responses after 1865. This lack of full consideration of responses to the Address in the twentieth century has led many historians to portray a convergence in interpretations of the speech, while in fact they remained divergent throughout the period under study.

Rather than covering every time period, this dissertation focuses on key moments in the history of the speech. Chapter II reviews the events that took place in Gettysburg from the end of the battle through the dedication ceremonies on November 19, arguing that one cannot understand the meaning behind Lincoln's words without knowing what led him to Gettysburg, the specific words he and the other orators spoke that day, and how those speeches were received by the audience. Two revelations, the precise timing of Lincoln's invitation to speak at Gettysburg and the influence of abolitionist Theodore Parker on his speech, highlight this chapter, and show that the Gettysburg Address must be viewed as part of Lincoln's continuing effort to make equality, one of the founding principles in his view, a permanent part of the government, and to remove the elements associated with inequality so prominently a part of the Constitution. The third chapter looks at the immediate responses to the dedication ceremonies in the cities of New York, Gettysburg, Richmond, and London, focusing largely on newspaper coverage. Lincoln chose to speak at Gettysburg as part of his continuing effort to make equality, one of the

founding principles in his view, a necessary component of the nation's democratic government. However, the meanings the speech held over the next century depended not only on Lincoln's intent, but also on the other orators who spoke that day, and on the audience's immediate reception of Lincoln's address and the other speeches they heard along with it. Chapter IV fast-forwards fifty years to look at the commemorations of the Address in Gettysburg in 1913 and the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922. From the end of the Civil War until the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922 some, including Charles Sumner and Robert Morton, to name two, reminded Americans that Lincoln's fundamental message connected democracy and equality. But most rejected this connection, either because they believed it wrong or because they knew others did and they wished to avoid reopening sectional divisions. The fifth chapter considers the uses of the Gettysburg Address during the world wars. Whereas wars typically bring nations closer together, an examination of sectional and international responses to the Gettysburg Address during the world wars reveal that invocations of the speech awakened and deepened regional divides. The sixth chapter examines the status of the Address during the Lincoln Birth Sesquicentennial and Civil War Centennial commemorations from 1959 to 1965. The era suffered from strife at home with the Civil Rights Movement, and abroad with the Cold War, and the interpretations of the Gettysburg Address depended on the speaker, audience, and subject. During this period the meaning of the Address shifted, and once again included the connection of democracy and equality that Lincoln originally intended.

The final chapter studies the place of the Gettysburg Address in the nation's public schools. Because parents and local school board members understood school curricula as central means whereby children learned their nation's values, and because choosing textbooks required parents and school board members to articulate the reasons for their support or rejection of particular portrayals, debates over textbook adoption often laid bare the regional and political stakes entailed in remembering or forgetting the Gettysburg Address.

CHAPTER II
“THE FINAL RESTING PLACE”: THE CREATION AND DEDICATION OF
THE SOLDIERS’ NATIONAL CEMETERY

“It is the desire that, after the Oration, You as Chief Executive of the Nation formally set apart these grounds to their Sacred use by a few appropriate remarks.”

David Wills to Abraham Lincoln
November 2, 1863

On June 26, 1863, the Civil War arrived in the small crossroads town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. A raiding column of two thousand Confederates fought with a militia unit on the outskirts of the town, routed the largely untrained volunteers, and occupied Gettysburg for the night. Apart from destroying a railroad bridge and burning some railroad cars, the Confederates did little damage. The next morning they left the town and pushed east, but five days later both the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac converged on the borough. At the end of three days the Union army emerged victorious, but it had suffered 23,000 casualties, nearly as many as the 28,000 Confederate casualties. By July 7 both armies had pulled out of Gettysburg, carrying the conflict back to the Old Dominion. Left behind were roughly 7,000 corpses, and thousands more wounded not well enough to travel.

Initially the dead were buried where they fell, often in shallow graves. At the end of July local lawyer David Wills wrote “Our dead are lying on the fields unburied (that is no grave being dug), with small portions of earth dug up alongside of the body and thrown over it. In many instance arms and legs, and sometimes heads, protrude, and

my attention has been directed to several places where the hogs were actually rooting out the bodies and devouring them.”¹ Additionally, only a portion of the soldiers were properly identified, making it impossible to return the remains of most to their families. Clearly, the bodies could not long remain in their hastily dug graves. Just a week after the battle, Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin visited Gettysburg and appointed Wills to coordinate the removal of all Pennsylvanians killed in the battle.²

Thus began the process that brought Lincoln to Gettysburg four months later to dedicate the Soldiers’ National Cemetery. David Armitage suggests that the Declaration of Independence was an event as well as a document. So too with the Gettysburg Address. One cannot understand the meaning behind Lincoln’s words without knowing what led him to Gettysburg, the specific words he and the other orators spoke that day, and how the audience perceived those speeches. While we remember Lincoln’s role at Gettysburg to the exclusion of all others, in 1863, and in some cases even after that, the speeches of William Seward, John Forney, Theodore Stockton, and Edward Everett all received significant attention, oftentimes even more than did Lincoln’s.³

This chapter seeks to get at the fundamental question of why Lincoln went to Gettysburg, and what message he tried to convey that day. In the middle of a war whose

¹ David Wills to Andrew Curtin, July 24, 1863, in *The Soldiers’ National Cemetery at Gettysburg: With the Proceedings at Its Consecration, at the Laying of the Corner-Stone of the Monument, and at Its Dedication* by John Russell Bartlett (Providence: Board of Commissioners of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery, 1874), 1-2.

² *Revised Report of the Select Committee Relative to the Soldiers’ National Cemetery Together with the House of Representatives and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA: Singerly & Myers, 1865), 161-165.

³ David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 13.

direction consumed all of his waking minutes, Lincoln took nearly two days to travel to Gettysburg and speak his few words. The Emancipation Proclamation had dealt slavery a blow, but only a half-blow, for it made no mention of morality or equality. But at Gettysburg Lincoln was able to wed these two ideas, and in so doing set forth his vision for the future. Six years earlier, shortly after the *Dred Scott* decision declared that African-Americans were not citizen of the United States, Lincoln had articulated that vision in a speech to his neighbors in Springfield:

Now I protest against that counterfeit logic which concludes that, because I do not want a black woman for a slave I must necessarily want her for a wife. I need not have her for either, I can just leave her alone. In some respects she certainly is not my equal; but in her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands without asking leave of any one else, she is my equal, and the equal of all others.⁴

Thus, this chapter shows that Lincoln chose to speak at Gettysburg as part of his continuing effort to make equality, one of the founding principles in his view, a necessary component of the nation's democratic government. However, the meanings the speech held over the next century depended not only on Lincoln's intent, but also on the other orators who spoke that day, and on the audience's immediate reception of Lincoln's address and the other speeches they heard along with it.

⁴ Abraham Lincoln, "Speech at Springfield, Illinois, June 26, 1857," *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols., eds. Roy P. Basler, Marion Dolores Pratt, and Lloyd A. Dunlap (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953-1955), 2:405. Hereafter *Collected Works*.

Creating the Cemetery

An 1851 graduate of Pennsylvania College, David Wills studied law under the noted abolitionist and congressman Thaddeus Stevens, gaining admission to the bar in 1854. That same year Wills became the first superintendent of the Adams County Public Schools. As befitted a Stephens protégé, Wills was a pro-abolition Republican.⁵

In those first few weeks after his appointment by the governor Wills attempted to locate and identify the remains of Pennsylvania's soldiers and return them to their families. As late as July 20, no plan existed to create a national cemetery in Gettysburg.⁶ Theodore Dimon, New York's agent in charge of taking care of the state's deceased soldiers at Gettysburg, claimed the national cemetery was his brainchild:

It seeming to me impracticable to have *all* these removed to their former homes, and especially in the case of the more distant States. I concluded, after much consideration of the matter to present it to several gentlemen, from the various States interested, who were at Gettysburg. At my request, therefore, a meeting was held at the office of David Wills, Esquire, agent of the State of Pennsylvania. At this meeting I presented a proposition that a portion of the ground occupied by our line of battle on Cemetery Hill should be purchased for a permanent burial place for the soldiers.⁷

Wills maintained that the idea was his. We will probably never know for certain who really originated the idea for the cemetery, but on July 24, 1863, Wills submitted a plan to Governor Curtin identifying East Cemetery Hill, the key to the Union position during the battle, as the ideal location for the cemetery. The lawyer urged Curtin to act quickly

⁵ H. C. Bradsby, *1886 History of Adams County, Pennsylvania: Containing History of Their Counties, Their Townships, Towns, Villages, Schools, Churches, Industries, etc.; Portraits of Early Settlers and Prominent Men; Biographies* (Chicago: Warner, Beers & Co., 1886), 375-376.

⁶ *Pennsylvania Daily Telegraph*, July 20, 1863.

⁷ Theodore Dimon to John F. Seymour, August 1, 1863, in *Report of the General Agent of the State of New York for the Relief of Sick, Wounded, Furloughed and Discharged Soldiers* (Albany: Comstock & Cassidy, 1864), 60-61.

as he “was afraid the owners of the land might be operated on by speculators.” Curtin agreed, and authorized Wills to begin purchasing the land.⁸

Wills’ fear of speculators proved a reality. On July 25 David McConaughy, a Republican lawyer and the superintendent of the Evergreen Cemetery in Gettysburg, told Curtin he had bought the land in question and was attaching it to the town cemetery where he would bury the soldiers at a cost of \$5 per body. Additionally, McConaughy announced a plan to raise a monument in the cemetery and boldly asked the governor to make the first contribution.⁹

On August 3 Wills notified Curtin that he and the other state agents agreed that the cemetery needed to be national in outlook and “independent of local influences and control” such as those McConaughy was trying to exert. Realizing that Curtin had no intention of interring Pennsylvania’s dead in the local cemetery, McConaughy offered the land to the state at cost. On August 13 Wills notified Curtin that he and the other state agents had agreed that the expense of the cemetery would be shared by all the states according to their representation in Congress. By mid-August Wills had purchased five parcels of land comprising seventeen acres atop Cemetery Hill and adjacent to the Evergreen Cemetery. Having procured a location for the cemetery, Wills called on William Saunders, a landscape gardener and rural architect from the Department of Agriculture, to design the cemetery. By arranging the graves in a semi-circle Saunders

⁸ Kathleen R. Georg, “‘This Grand National Enterprise’: The Origins of Gettysburg’s Soldiers’ National Cemetery & Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association” (Unpublished manuscript located at the Gettysburg National Military Park Library, 1982), 7, 15.

⁹ Ibid, 16, 20.

was able to take advantage of the oddly shaped parcels that Wills had cobbled together and also ensure that no state received a more privileged position than any other.¹⁰

Planning the Ceremony

While Saunders designed the cemetery, Wills gave serious thought to the dedication ceremonies. In late August Governor Curtin implored Wills to see to “the proper consecration of the grounds.”¹¹ There was little question as to who should give the dedicatory oration; sixty-nine-year-old Edward Everett was the obvious choice. After graduating from Harvard University at the age of seventeen in 1811, Everett served five terms in the House of Representatives, won four terms as the governor of Massachusetts, was the Secretary of State in 1850, and served in the United States Senate for eighteen months. A staunch Whig and Unionist, Everett was the vice-presidential candidate on the Constitutional Union Party ticket that opposed Lincoln in 1860. In 1863 Everett held no high political office, but was invited to Gettysburg because he was the foremost orator of the day, as evidenced by the four volumes of his speeches then in print. His oration on George Washington, which he delivered 134 times, earned more than \$58,000 for the Mount Vernon Memorial Committee. All told, Everett earned over \$100,000 in royalties for his speeches. Everett combined oratorical

¹⁰ Ibid, 16, 20, 31; *Revised Report*, 6, 9, 147.

¹¹ Ibid, 167.

excellence with political insight, making him an ideal choice to deliver the dedicatory address.¹²

On September 23, Boston mayor F. W. Lincoln privately inquired whether Everett would prepare and deliver an oration at the dedication of the cemetery. Everett indicated his acceptance and that same day David Wills sent a formal invitation. In response to Wills' letter Everett replied that he would be happy to take part in the ceremonies but could not possibly prepare an appropriate address before November 19. Wills agreed, changing the date of the dedication to November 19.¹³

On November 2, 1863, David Wills sent President Lincoln the following:

Sir,

The Several States having Soldiers in the Army of the Potomac, who were killed at the Battle of Gettysburg, or have since died at the various hospitals which were established in the vicinity, have procured grounds on a prominent part of the Battle Field for a Cemetery, and are having the dead removed to them and properly buried.

These Grounds will be Consecrated and set apart to this Sacred purpose, by appropriate Ceremonies, on Thursday, the 19th instant.

Hon Edward Everett will deliver the Oration.

I am authorized by the Governors of the different States to invite you to be present, and participate in these Ceremonies, which will doubtless be very imposing and solemnly impressive.

It is the desire that, after the Oration, you, as Chief Executive of the Nation, formally set apart these grounds to their Sacred use by a few appropriate remarks.

For years many cited this letter as Lincoln's only invitation to Gettysburg, and noted that its late date indicated a desire to keep Lincoln out of the dedicatory ceremonies.

¹² Louis A. Warren, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration* (Fort Wayne, IN: Lincoln National Life Foundation, 1964), 93-94.

¹³ Massachusetts Historical Society, *Edward Everett at Gettysburg* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1963), 1.

Naysayers, from 1863 to the present, cite this supposed last minute invitation to argue that Lincoln's words at Gettysburg were a minor part of the program that neither he nor the audience took seriously, and that the speech occupies too exalted a place in the pantheons of literature and political philosophy. But now some historians believe that Wills, through an intermediary, invited Lincoln at an earlier date, making this letter a formality.¹⁴ By examining the account penned by Clark E. Carr, newspaper coverage of the impending dedication ceremonies in October 1863, and circumstantial evidence, one must conclude that Abraham Lincoln was invited to participate and speak in the Gettysburg ceremonies long before November 2.

Clark E. Carr was appointed Illinois' trustee of the cemetery by Governor Richard Yates, and played an integral role in the planning of the dedication ceremonies. Decades later Carr delivered many popular lectures on the creation of the Soldiers' National Cemetery and Lincoln's Address, eventually publishing his account as *Lincoln at Gettysburg* in 1906. Carr noted, "The President of the United States had, like the other distinguished personages, been invited to be present, but Mr. Lincoln was not, at that time, invited to speak." Carr contended, "The proposition to ask Mr. Lincoln to *speak* at the Gettysburg ceremonies was an afterthought."¹⁵

¹⁴ Three recent works note that in October the press reported Lincoln would be attending the ceremonies: Joseph George, Jr., "The World Will Little Note? The Philadelphia Press and the Gettysburg Address," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 114 (July 1990): 387; Gabor Boritt, *The Gettysburg Gospel: The Lincoln Speech That Nobody Knows* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 38; and Douglas L. Wilson, *Lincoln's Sword: The Presidency and the Power of Words* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 208.

¹⁵ Clark E. Carr, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: An Address* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1906), 20-21.

On October 13, nearly three weeks before the formal invitation, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that David Wills had told its Baltimore correspondent that Lincoln was “expected to perform the consecrational service” at the cemetery’s dedication. Two days later Gettysburg’s *Star and Banner* ran a column titled “Consecration of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery” that noted “Edward Everett is to deliver the dedicational oration. President Lincoln will also be present and participate in the ceremonies.” On October 19 Gettysburg’s *Compiler* printed the identical column that had appeared four days earlier in the *Star and Banner*. An early article on the upcoming ceremonies published in the October 6 edition of the *Adams Sentinel* noted that Edward Everett would deliver the oration but made no mention of Lincoln or any role he might play. Thus, it seems the press became aware of Lincoln’s intended role in the ceremonies between October 6 and October 12.

So what of David Wills’ November 2nd letter to Lincoln? The fourth paragraph of the letter asks Lincoln “to be present, *and participate*” (emphasis added). It seems probable that Lincoln had already agreed to be in Gettysburg and that this letter was not an invitation to the ceremonies, but an invitation to *speak* at the event. Lincoln never responded to the letter, likely because he had already accepted the offer. This scenario certainly fits with Clark Carr’s account in which he noted that was Lincoln invited first and only later asked to speak.

One last piece of circumstantial evidence supports the case for an earlier invitation. On August 28 Andrew Curtin visited Lincoln in Washington, D.C. Newspapers the following day noted that the two discussed draft quotas for

Pennsylvania. However, if the same method was employed to ask Lincoln to participate in the ceremonies that was used with Edward Everett in September, it is likely that Curtin broached the topic with Lincoln at this late-summer meeting. Between August 28 and November 2 this was the only meeting between Lincoln and anyone in a position to ask him to speak at Gettysburg, increasing the likelihood that the two men discussed the dedication ceremonies and Lincoln's potential role in them. Further, given Curtin's role in the cemetery and its dedication, it is nearly impossible to imagine he would miss this opportunity to ask Lincoln to grace his state with a visit.

Rarely did Lincoln leave Washington, D.C., making his acceptance of the invitation to speak at Gettysburg extraordinary and underscoring the argument that Lincoln viewed this as an important opportunity to define the meaning of the war. If, as it appears likely, Lincoln was asked to participate in the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery on August 28, 1863, he was asked nearly a month before Edward Everett, making a strong case that the ceremony organizers also conceived of Lincoln's role as a major one. One of the charges leveled against Lincoln over the ensuing years, particularly from the South, was that he played a minor role at Gettysburg, so his words should be passed over lightly. But the preceding evidence suggests that the event planners really did intend for Lincoln to be the main speaker at Gettysburg.

The days leading up to the dedication at Gettysburg were busy with preparations. On October 15, Wills requested proposals to contract for the removal of the bodies from the battlefield, and Frederick W. Biesecker won with a bid of \$1.59 per body. Wills employed Samuel Weaver to oversee and record the process. In a letter to Curtin that

was also printed in the local papers Wills noted, “The Contractor commenced the work on the 26th ult, and has been removing about sixty bodies daily.” Originally Wills had planned to move the bodies to the cemetery after the dedication ceremonies, but since Everett moved the date back by nearly four weeks, the work had already begun before the consecration in mid-November.¹⁶

November 18

As the burials began, the town prepared for visitors. David Wills invited the key figures to stay at his house, and soon was preparing for more than thirty houseguests. On November 9 the *Compiler* announced a meeting to arrange accommodations for those expected to attend the cemetery dedication. Three days later the *Star and Banner* reported, “The Committee have issued an appeal to our citizens generally to throw open their houses on the 18th and 19th and invite all who intend on furnishing eating or sleeping accommodations for compensation to send in their names . . . we take the liberty of suggesting that some uniform price should, if possible, be agreed upon – not to exceed, say, 50 cents per meal, and the same for lodging.”

Harvey Sweney, a Gettysburg resident living on the town’s main street, noted, “Nothing scarcely could be heard but the loud snort of the iron horse and the rumble of the long and heavy trains . . . every building public or private was filled and for miles around town the houses were filled with the congregated throng.” The little town of

¹⁶ David Wills to Andrew Curtin, November 7, 1863, in *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), November 10, 1863; *Revised Report*, 8, 14-5.

Gettysburg, with a population of only 2,400, was overflowing with visitors. “All the rooms in the hotels were engaged several weeks ahead but our old town roused up to action . . . Churches, public schools, town halls, all the private dwellings, barns, etc. were thrown open to receive them,” Sweney wrote.¹⁷

Back in Washington, Lincoln worked through the morning of November 18 before boarding the train for Gettysburg at noon. Accompanying the President were several of his cabinet members, including Secretary of State William Seward, Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, and Secretary of the Interior John Usher. Additionally, French minister Henri Mercier, Italian minister Joseph Bertinatti, Canadian minister William McDougall, as well as secretaries John Nicolay and John Hay, Charlotte Everett Wise (Edward Everett’s daughter), and several lower ranking public officials, military personnel, and reporters also travelled with Lincoln. That three cabinet members accompanied Lincoln to the ceremonies reveal its importance.¹⁸

At the train station in Gettysburg a mob formed, eager to glimpse the president. David Wills, Edward Everett, and a receiving committee met Lincoln and escorted him the block to Wills’ house where a formal dinner was planned. The president had been inside for just a few moments when citizens called for a speech. After several minutes Lincoln appeared, briefly acknowledged their presence, and ducked back inside the

¹⁷ Harvey Sweney to Andrew Sweney, November 29, 1863, folder 8-18b, Gettysburg National Military Park Library.

¹⁸ Warren, *Lincoln’s Gettysburg Declaration*, 56.

house. The crowd was not discouraged, and during dinner even more well-wishers congregated on the square.¹⁹

J. Howard Wert, a Gettysburg resident (and a future historian of the era) remembered, “The square upon which the [Wills] house fronted was one dense mass of people eagerly awaiting the appearance of Mr. Lincoln. And when he did appear, never did mortal have a more enthusiastic greeting.”²⁰ After the crowd quieted, Lincoln spoke a few words:

I appear before you, fellow-citizens, merely to thank you for this compliment. The inference is a very fair one that you would hear me for a little while at least, were I to commence to make a speech. I do not appear before you for the purpose of doing so, and for several very substantial reasons. The most substantial of these is that I have no speech to make. [Laughter.] In my position it is somewhat important that I should not say any foolish things.

A VOICE – If you can help it.

Mr. LINCOLN – It very often happens that the only way to help it is to say nothing at all. [Laughter.] Believing this is my present condition this evening, I must beg of you to excuse me from addressing you further.²¹

This short little speech is called “The First Gettysburg Address” by some historians and, but in truth it was nothing more than some off-the-cuff remarks. Lincoln had suffered through several embarrassing situations in the early years of his presidency after making extemporaneous remarks, and he was not going to make a fool of himself the night before the dedication ceremonies. One Gettysburg newspaper, the *Adams Sentinel*,

¹⁹ Ibid, 65.

²⁰ J. Howard Wert, “Lincoln at Gettysburg,” *The Patriot*, February 12, 1909.

²¹ *New York Herald*, November 20, 1863.

reported favorably on comments, noting that Lincoln “made but a few remarks, but they were characteristic of the pure and honest President.”²² John Hay was more straightforward in his evaluation: “The President appeared at the door and said half a dozen words meaning nothing.” A number of Southern papers reported this speech rather than the one he gave the following day, convincing their readers that Lincoln really was an uncouth jokester who could not even be serious at a funeral.²³

After listening to Lincoln, the crowd went next door to where Secretary of State William Seward was staying, and called for the statesman to speak a few words. Seward leaped at the chance. On November 14 Wills had written Seward, “In the event of [Lincoln’s] not being able to be present that duty would, I think, naturally devolve on you.”²⁴ Undoubtedly this was the speech Seward delivered. Over the ensuing days many newspapers at home and abroad scrutinized his words even more than Lincoln’s:

Fellow Citizens – I am now sixty years old and upwards; I have been in public life practically forty years of that time, and yet this is the first time that ever any people or community so near to the border of Maryland was found wiling to listen to my voice and the reason was that I said forty years ago that slavery was opening before this people a graveyard that was to be filled with brothers falling in mutual political combat. I knew that the cause that was hurrying the Union into this dreadful strife was slavery, and when I did elevate my voice it was to warn the people to remove that cause when they could by constitutional means, and so avert the catastrophe of civil war that now unhappily has fallen upon the nation, deluging it in blood. That crisis came, and we see the result. I am thankful that you are willing to hear me at last. I thank God that I believe this strife is

²² *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), November 24, 1863.

²³ John Hay, *Inside Lincoln’s White House: The Complete Civil War Diary of John Hay*, eds. Michael Burlingame and John R Turner Ettlenger (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), 112.

²⁴ David C. Mearns, “Unknown at This Address,” in *Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address: Commemorative Papers*, ed. Allan Nevins (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), 122.

going to end in the removal of that evil which ought to have been removed by peaceful means and deliberate councils. (Good.) I thank my God for the hope that this is the last fratricidal war which will fall upon the country – a country vouchsafed by Heaven – the richest, the broadest, most beautiful, most magnificent and capacious ever yet bestowed upon a people, that has ever been given to any part of the human race. (Applause.) And I thank God for the hope that when that cause is removed, simply by the operation of abolishing it, as the origin of the great treason that is without justification and without parallel, we shall thenceforth be united, be only one country, having only one hope, one ambition and one destiny. (Applause.) Then we shall know that we are not enemies, but that we are friends and brothers, that this Union is a reality, and we shall mourn together for the evil wrought by this rebellion. We are now near the graves of the misguided, whom we have consigned to their last resting place with pity for their errors and with the same heartfelt of grief with which we mourn over the brother by whose hand raised in defence of his government, that misguided brother perished. When we part to-morrow night let us remember that we owe it to our country and to mankind that this war shall have for its conclusion the establishing of the principle of democratic government – the simple principle that, whatever party, whatever portion of the Union, prevails by constitutional suffrage in an election, that party is to be respected and maintained in power until it shall give place, on another trial and another verdict, to a different portion of the people. (Good.) If you do not do that, you are drifting at once and irresistibly to the very verge of the destruction of your government. But with that principle this government of ours – the freest, the best, the wisest and the happiest in the world – must be, and, so far as we are concerned, practically will be, immortal. (Applause.)²⁵

According to Henry Jacobs, a student at the local college, the statesman’s implication that south-central Pennsylvania was full of Confederate sympathizers offended the townspeople.”²⁶ The county had, after all, given a majority of their votes to Lincoln in

²⁵ *New York Herald*, November 20, 1863. This was the version reported by the Associated Press.

²⁶ Henry Eyster Jacobs, *Lincoln’s Gettysburg World-Message* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1919), 62.

the 1860 presidential election.²⁷ Jacobs also observed, “There is, we think, a trace of [Seward’s] having been apprised of what Mr. Lincoln was to say the next day . . .”²⁸ If John Hay’s evaluation of the speech is accurate, few shared either of Jacobs’ concerns: “[Seward] was called out and spoke so indistinctly that I did not hear a word of what he was saying.”²⁹

After leaving the Secretary of State, the crowd sought out other officials and listened to their thoughts. John Hay peeled off from the crowd, and “went back to Forney’s room having picked up Nicolay and drank more whiskey.”³⁰ The special correspondent of the *New York World* observed, probably accurately given the descriptions of the evening’s festivities, “There seemed to be among the great crowds many who came to Gettysburg simply to have a good time, and to them it did not matter much whether the occasion was a funeral or a marriage.”³¹ Eventually John Forney, a Democratic newspaperman from eastern Pennsylvania, decided it had come time for him to address the roving crowd, and so John Nicolay, Lincoln’s other secretary, set off to find a band to serenade the newspaperman. When Forney eventually had an audience the speech he gave was rambling and rather incoherent. He alternated between berating the crowd for not cheering Lincoln louder during the president’s earlier speech and defending his own opposition to Lincoln in 1860 as a political move designed to breakup

²⁷ *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), November 24, 1863.

²⁸ Jacobs, *Lincoln’s Gettysburg World-Message*, 62.

²⁹ Hay, *Inside Lincoln’s White House*, 112.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 112-113.

³¹ *New York World*, November 21, 1863.

the Democratic Party. His comment that Stephen Douglas had died at the right time would come back to haunt him in later editorials, particularly in the South.³²

While hundreds of people made their rounds, Lincoln remained at the Wills House. After passing time in the parlor, Lincoln went to his room, accompanied by William Johnson, his African-American servant. According to Wills:

Between nine and ten o'clock the President sent his servant to request me to come to his room. I went and found him with paper prepared to write, and he said that he had just seated himself to put upon paper a few thoughts for to-morrows exercises, and had sent for me to ascertain what part he was to take in them, and what was expected of him. After a full talk on the subject I left him.

An hour later Lincoln left his room and made his way next door to talk with Seward about what he had written. Wills stated, "The next day I sat by him on the platform when he delivered his address, which has become immortal, and he read it from the same paper on which I had seen him writing it the night before."³³

Controversy surrounds the question of when Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address. Did he compose it in Washington before November 18, on the train on November 18, at the Wills house on the night of November 18, or did he deliver it

³² J. Cutler Andrews, "The Pennsylvania Press During the Civil War," *Pennsylvania History* 9 (January 1942): 24-25.

³³ "Statement Given By Judge Wills to Charles M. McCurdy, About 1890," Folder 9-G17a, Gettysburg National Military Park Library. This statement was printed by Charles McCurdy in his *Gettysburg: A Memoir* (Pittsburgh: Reed and Whitting, 1929). McCurdy explained: "[Wills] came to me one day nearly more than thirty years ago and said that he had prepared a statement covering his recollections of the circumstances attending the preparation of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, and that he wished to give me a copy because, as time passed, everything relating to the address would be of increasing interested and value" (33). It was also printed in Orton Carmichael's *Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*, a 1917 publication. On February 12, 1941, the *Gettysburg Times* printed the account with the explanation that it had been sent to Louisa A. W. Russell in March 1893 in response to a letter from her. It seems Wills sent the affidavit out in response to questions about Lincoln's stay at his home and the authorship of the Address.

extemporaneously? The issue matters since the amount of time that Lincoln spent preparing his remarks gives us a sense of the importance he ascribed to the occasion. Mostly likely Lincoln wrote a rough draft in Washington, put the finishing touches on it at the Wills house, and added a few words while giving the Address. Jacobs' statement supports this timeframe. Lincoln's personal secretary, John G. Nicolay, remembered it that way,³⁴ and there is a great deal of circumstantial evidence to support him, including Ward Hill Lamon's observations about Lincoln's writing style:

When Mr. Lincoln had a speech to write, which happened very often, he would put down each thought, as it struck him, on a small strip of paper, and, having accumulated a number of these, generally carried them in his hat or his pockets until he had the whole speech composed in this odd way, when he would sit down at his table, connect the fragments, and then write out the whole speech on consecutive sheets.³⁵

November 19

The nineteenth of November boasted a blue sky and a temperature that reached 52 degrees.³⁶ At 7:00 a.m. artillery pieces on Cemetery Hill fired a salvo and inaugurated a day of festivities. Already many visitors were out on the battlefield touring and looking for mementos.³⁷ The *Adams Sentinel* noted:

The ground in these vicinities is yet strewn with remains and relics of the fearful struggle – ragged and muddy knapsacks, canteens, cups, haversacks, threadbare stockings trodden in the mud, old shoes, pistols, holsters, bayonet sheaths, and here and

³⁴ John G. Nicolay, "Lincoln's Gettysburg Address," *Century Magazine* 47 (February 1894): 601.

³⁵ Ward Hill Lamon, *Life of Abraham Lincoln* (Boston: J. R. Osgood, 1872), 2:471.

³⁶ Jacobs, *Lincoln's Gettysburg World-Message*, 63.

³⁷ Warren, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration*, 74;

there fragments of gray and blue jackets . . . hides and skeletons of horses still remain upon the ground. Grave marks of unrecognized heroes were in every quarter of the field, and rows of graves ranged along the line of the stone or wooden fences.³⁸

The procession to the cemetery lined up at 9:00 a.m. As President Lincoln made his appearance on the square he surely noticed the national flag flying at half mast. Eight-year-old William Storrick remembered the scene well. The square was “rife” with people who were “awed by the appearance of the great tall man . . . We and others shook hands with him and then Mr. Lincoln walked to the curb and mounted a horse . . .”³⁹ The horse, one observer remembered, was tiny, creating a situation that “was next to the humorous, and no one seemed more conscious of it” than Lincoln.⁴⁰ Daniel Skelly, a local boy who ran next to Lincoln as the procession made its way to the cemetery, believed “Mr. Lincoln was the most peculiar-looking figure on horseback I had ever seen . . . but he was perfectly at ease.”⁴¹ Harvey Sweney observed that the procession was “a living sea of human beings” with Lincoln at its center: “He sat gracefully bowing with a modest smile and uncovered head to the throng of women, men and children that greeted him from the doors and windows.”⁴² Directly behind Lincoln was a contingent of college and seminary students, including many who eventually recorded their recollections of that day.

³⁸ *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), November 24, 1863.

³⁹ *Gettysburg Star and Banner*, November 26, 1863; *Gettysburg Times*, November 20, 1938.

⁴⁰ H.C. Holloway, “Lincoln at Gettysburg,” *Gettysburg Compiler*, November 21, 1914.

⁴¹ Daniel Skelly, *A Boy’s Experiences During the Battles of Gettysburg* (Gettysburg, PA: privately printed, 1932), 26-27.

⁴² Harvey Sweney to Andrew Sweney, November 29, 1863.

The program called for music, a prayer, more music, Edward Everett's oration, even more music, and then the dedicatory remarks of President Lincoln. Reverend Thomas H. Stockton, chaplain of the House of Representatives, opened the ceremonies with a moving prayer. The *Adams Sentinel* observed, "The President evidently felt deeply, and with the venerable statesman and patriot, Hon. Edward Everett, who was by his side, seemed not ashamed to let their sympathetic tears be seen."⁴³ As was his custom, John Hay offered a rather cynical evaluation: "Mr Stockton made a prayer which thought it was an oration."⁴⁴

After Stockton's prayer, Edward Everett rose. Lincoln had likely already read Everett's address. On November 14 the orator had sent his speech to the *Boston Daily Advertiser* to be printed for both his own use and to facilitate its distribution to various newspapers in advance of the ceremonies. Given the length of the oration, such a measure was necessary to ensure that the speech would appear in print the day after the ceremony. In two later articles Noah Brooks, a painter and journalist working in the White House in the fall of 1863, claimed that Lincoln had received a copy of Everett's speech as early as November 15, and that it is visible on a table next to Lincoln in a photograph taken by Matthew Brady that day. While this timetable seems improbable, it does seem likely that Lincoln received a copy of the speech before he left Washington D.C. on November 18.⁴⁵

⁴³ *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), November 24, 1863;

⁴⁴ Hay, *Inside Lincoln's White House*, 112.

⁴⁵ Noah Brooks, "Personal Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln," *Scribner's Monthly* 15 (February 1878): 565; Noah Brooks, "Glimpses of Lincoln in War Time," *Century Magazine* 49 (January 1895): 465.

Everett opened with a call for patience:

Standing beneath this serene sky, overlooking these broad fields now reposing from the labors of the waning year, the mighty Alleghenies dimly towering before us, the graves of our brethren beneath our feet, it is with hesitation that I raise my poor voice to break the eloquent silence of God and Nature. But the duty to which you have called me must be performed; - grant me, I pray you, your indulgence and your sympathy.

Beginning with an explanation of funerals in ancient Athens, Everett then discussed the causes of the war, the first two years of the struggle, the three days at Gettysburg, and finally offered some thoughts regarding the meaning of the great events.⁴⁶ The oration was exactly what the state officials had envisioned when they asked Everett to speak. After an hour and fifty-seven minutes, Everett finished his oration. Lincoln stood, grasped Everett's hand, and exclaimed, "I am grateful to you."⁴⁷

Those present enjoyed Everett's speech, though some later noted that it had been too long for the occasion. Henry Jacobs wrote that "the [length], however, would have been pardoned, and the speech have been commended as being what its author intended, viz. the crowning effort of his life, if President Lincoln had not been there." After a brief musical selection, Ward Hill Lamon, chief marshal for the event and a personal friend of Lincoln, rose and announced "The President of the United States!"⁴⁸

Charles Baum later remembered that Lincoln stood, clutching a piece of paper in his hand. Baum, who was only nine years old and suffering from an attention span

⁴⁶ *Revised Report*, 182.

⁴⁷ Warren, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration*, 99.

⁴⁸ Henry E. Jacobs, *Memoirs of Henry Eyster Jacobs*, ed. Henry E. Horn (Gettysburg, PA: Adams County Historical Society, 1974), 63.

diminished by Everett's performance, feared "now we are in for it again."⁴⁹ An older and more perceptive Harvey Sweney sensed "the dreadful responsibility that this nation and this wicked rebellion has cast upon him, has had its marked effect, and that he feels the terrible responsibility that rests upon him." The dedication ceremonies gave Lincoln a chance to share that burden with the nation, and he took full advantage of it.⁵⁰

Joseph Gilbert, the Associated Press reporter at the dedication ceremonies, offered perhaps the best description of Lincoln's delivery of the speech:

He stood for a moment with hands clasped and head bowed in an attitude of mourning – a personification of the sorrow and sympathy of the nation. Adjusting his old fashioned spectacles, a pair with arms reaching to his temples, he produced from a pocket of his Prince Albert coat several sheets of paper from which he read slowly and feelingly. His marvelous voice, careering in fullness of utterance and clearness of tone, was perfectly audible on the outskirts of the crowd. He made no gestures nor attempts at display, and none were needed.⁵¹

Lincoln's address was brief but eloquent:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new Nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. [Applause.] Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that Nation, or any Nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting-place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our power to add

⁴⁹ Charles Baum, "President Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg, Pa., November 19th, 1863," Statement written December 17, 1935. Gettysburg College Library Special Collections.

⁵⁰ Henry Sweney to Andrew Sweney, November 29, 1863.

⁵¹ Joseph I. Gilbert, "Lincoln in 1861," *Proceedings of the National Shorthand Reporters' Association Annual Meeting 19* (1917): 134.

or detract. [Applause.] The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. [Applause.] It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. [Applause.] It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom; and that Governments of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from this earth. [Long-continued applause.]⁵²

As Lincoln spoke, Gilbert started to record the Address in shorthand. Over fifty years later, Gilbert recalled, “He had not been known to prepare his speeches in advance and as he was expected to speak extempore, I was relied upon to take shorthand notes of his remarks.” But the reporter was unable to fulfill his assignment: “Fascinated by his intense earnestness and depth of feeling, I unconsciously stopped taking notes and looked up at him.” The frequent breaks for applause in Gilbert’s account indicate that the audience was similarly impressed. The reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* noted even greater applause than Gilbert had observed.⁵³

The Address was a marked contrast to the two-hour oration that had preceded it, and it was not at all what the people were expecting. No one knew exactly what Lincoln would say, or for how long he would speak, but his theme and brevity were both a surprise. This was, after all, the man who had delivered an address of more than 15,000 words during the Lincoln-Douglas debates.

⁵² Abraham Lincoln, “Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863,” *Collected Works*, 7:19-21.

⁵³ Gilbert, “Lincoln in 1861,” 134.

Despite the applause observed by Gilbert and the *Chicago Tribune* reporter, many historians argue that the audience did not applaud when Lincoln finished his speech, citing this supposed silence to argue that the Gettysburg Address of 1863 was a failure, and that the positive evaluations of it did not come until later. However, the recollections recorded by the citizens of Gettysburg overwhelmingly indicate that there was applause. T. C. Billheimer simply noted the Address was met with applause, but Henry Jacobs and Charles Baum both noted the applause was “hearty.” H. C. Holloway noted that the applause was delayed, but for a good reason:

The speaker had, as we thought, but barely commenced when he stopped. That clear, ringing voice ceased before we were ready for it. There was a pause between the closing of the address and the applause because the people expected more; but when it was apparent that the address was really concluded, the applause was most hearty . . . ⁵⁴

Charles Baum, agreed, stating, “To my great surprise, after a few sentences, he completed his remarks.” Even those who argued that there was no applause gave the seriousness of the occasion as the reason and not any dissatisfaction with the oration. Baum perhaps best summarized the reaction of the crowd when he noted that the Address was met with “profound silence, followed by hearty applause.”⁵⁵

Lincoln’s address had a clear purpose. On January 1, 1863, Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation, ending slavery in the areas under Confederate control. Emancipation was justified as a necessary war measure and the document was constructed to withstand the legal challenges that would surely come from a hostile

⁵⁴ *Gettysburg Compiler*, November 21, 1914.

⁵⁵ Baum, “President Lincoln’s Speech.”

Supreme Court. At Gettysburg Lincoln took the opportunity to put moral force and eloquence behind the legalistic language of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Lincoln did so by invoking the Declaration of Independence in the first line, not a new tactic for him. John Nicolay called the document “his political chart and inspiration”⁵⁶ while Lincoln himself proclaimed, “I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence.”⁵⁷ As the sectional crisis deepened in the 1850s, white Southerners came to rely more and more on the Constitution and its various clauses that protected slavery and strengthened the slaveholding states, while the Northern states looked increasingly to the Declaration and its disavowal of the ethics of human bondage.⁵⁸ In an 1852 speech marking the passing of Henry Clay Lincoln noted “An increasing number of men, who, for the sake of perpetuating slavery, are beginning to assail and to ridicule the white-man's charter of freedom – the declaration that ‘all men are created free and equal.’”⁵⁹

Two years later, in a speech at Peoria, Illinois, Lincoln attacked Stephen Douglas for opening the territories up to slavery, declaring, “My ancient faith teaches me that ‘all men are created equal,’ and that there can be no moral right in connection with one

⁵⁶ Nicolay quoted in Ida M. Tarbell, *The Early Life of Abraham Lincoln* (London: S. S. McClure, 1896), 166.

⁵⁷ “Speech in Independence Hall, February 22, 1861,” in *Collected Works* 4:240.

⁵⁸ Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 75; David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 96.

⁵⁹ “Honors to Henry Clay, July 6, 1852,” in *Collected Works* 2:130. Douglas L. Wilson, “Lincoln’s Declaration,” in *Lincoln Before Washington: New Perspectives on the Illinois Years* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 166-182, summarizes Lincoln’s evolving thoughts about the Declaration and the ways he incorporated that document into his attacks on slavery in the 1850s.

man's making a slave of another.”⁶⁰ A private letter in 1855 to his best friend, Joshua Speed, reveals that Lincoln was not merely publicly invoking the Declaration to make political hay, but that he was also considering the document in his private life:

As a nation, we began by declaring that “*all men are created equal.*” We now practically read it “all men are created equal, *except negroes.*” When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read “all men are created equal, *except negroes, and foreigners, and catholics.*” When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty--to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.⁶¹

Douglas Wilson argues that “Liberty,” “consent of the governed,” or the “pursuit of happiness,” all argued against slavery and were more palpable for most Americans who, even if they opposed human bondage, did not believe “all men are created equal.” But Lincoln passed by these half-way attacks and took up that which was potentially most damaging, both to himself and to his opponents.⁶² His reasoning is best illustrated in a letter he sent to James N. Brown in 1858 just three days after the last of his famous debates with Stephen Douglas: “I believe the declara[tion] that ‘all men are created equal’ is the great fundamental principle upon which our free institutions rest; that negro slavery is violative of that principle; but that, by our frame of government, that principle has not been made one of legal obligation.”⁶³

⁶⁰ “Speech at Peoria, Illinois, October 16, 1854,” in *Collected Works*, 2:266.

⁶¹ Abraham Lincoln to Joshua Speed, August 24, 1855, in *Collected Works* 2:323.

⁶² Wilson, “Lincoln’s Declaration,” 170.

⁶³ Abraham Lincoln to James N. Brown, October 18, 1858, in *Collected Works* 3:327.

Historian Eva Brann made clear the reason for Lincoln's devotion to that document: "To Lincoln the Declaration was not simply announcing independence, but also a principle, that all men are created equal, thus giving it the transcendent character that a mere declaration of independence would not have contained."⁶⁴ Indeed, in his speech at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on George Washington's birthday in 1861, Lincoln declared that the Declaration "gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that *all* should have an equal chance . . . If this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle – I was about to say I would rather be assassinated on this spot than to surrender it."⁶⁵

As Gary Wills so eloquently demonstrated in his 1992 Pulitzer Prize winning *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, the president sought to identify the Declaration as the central document in the United States' founding, not the Constitution. Whereas the Constitution established and promoted democracy, the Declaration announced the need for democracy to include equality, a stance that Lincoln had moved to throughout his life. However, the Declaration had no legal standing in 1863, and as such Lincoln had been forced to base emancipation on the legalistic argument that it was a military necessity rather than the humane argument, supported by the Declaration, that it was morally just. If any doubt remains as to Lincoln's intentions in this regard, the source of his final line puts them to rest.

⁶⁴ Eva Brann, "A Reading of the Gettysburg Address," in *Abraham Lincoln, The Gettysburg Address, and American Constitutionalism*, ed. Leo Paul S. de Alvarez (Irving, TX: University of Dallas Press, 1976), 24.

⁶⁵ "Speech in Independence Hall, February 22, 1861," in *Collected Works* 4:240.

Historians cite a number of possible sources for Lincoln's assertion that the United States was a "government of the people, by the people, for the people." However, none shows forcefully enough that Theodore Parker, an ardent abolitionist from Massachusetts, was Lincoln's inspiration. Beginning in 1850 Parker referred to democracy as "a government of all the people, by all the people, for all the people" in 1850. Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, corresponded with Parker and had a volume of the man's works in their office.⁶⁶ But historians of the Gettysburg Address overlook the fact that that Parker visited Springfield (at Herndon's invitation) and gave an address on October 24, 1856, titled "The Progressive Development of Mankind." The audience was disappointingly small, and Parker went away unimpressed with Illinois' Republicans. No evidence proves conclusively that Lincoln was in attendance that night, but given his schedule it seems likely that he attended. Lincoln was twenty miles away from Springfield in Atlanta, Illinois, on October 23, but the railroad made this a short trip, and Lincoln did not leave town again until October 27. If Lincoln lifted this line from Parker, an abolitionist who demanded a government "of *all* the people" (emphasis added), the line takes on new meaning, and further evinces Lincoln's conception of democracy and equality as intertwined.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Daniel Webster, "Second Speech on Foot's Resolution," in *The Great Speeches and Orations of Daniel Webster*, ed. Edwin Whipple (Boston: Little, Brown, 1889), 257; Theodore Parker, "The American Idea," speech delivered at the New England Antislavery Convention, Boston, Massachusetts, May 29, 1850.

⁶⁷ *Illinois State Register*, October 27, 1856; *Illinois State Register*, October 27, 1856; Paul Angle, "Here I Have Lived"; *A History of Lincoln's Springfield, 1821-1865* (Springfield: Abraham Lincoln Association, 1935), 188.

After the ceremony, Gilbert looked at Lincoln's original manuscript and completed his transcription of the Address. In the ensuing months Lincoln received many requests to produce copies of the Address that could be published or sold to raise funds for the war effort, and complied on several occasions. Of the five versions now in existence most argue that the last one Lincoln penned, now known as the Bliss copy, gets closest to what Lincoln wanted to say. At any rate, the differences are more cosmetic than consequential. Gilbert's report is quoted above because it was the most widely circulated at the time.⁶⁸

After a dirge and closing prayer, the crowd dispersed. Lincoln retired to the Wills house for a late lunch. Shortly thereafter, the President made an appearance on the square to shake hands with the many well wishers. With the train back to Washington not scheduled to leave for a few more hours, Lincoln had one special request. He wanted to meet John Burns, the citizen who had taken up arms and joined the Union forces during the July 1 fighting. A committee quickly brought Burns to the Wills residence. After talking with the old man for a short while, Lincoln, Seward, and Burns walked two blocks to the Presbyterian Church to listen to an address by Governor-elect Charles Anderson of Ohio. Before Anderson's address was finished, Lincoln and his party arose and left, arriving back in Washington, D.C., at 1:00 a.m. the following

⁶⁸ Abraham Lincoln, "Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863," *Collected Works*, 7:19-21. Charles Hale, an official emissary from Massachusetts and the nephew of Edward Everett, also recorded the speech as Lincoln spoke. Unlike Gilbert, Hale did not correct his version against Lincoln's manuscript, and as such many argue it is the closest version to what Lincoln actually said.

morning. As Lincoln journeyed back to Washington the reporters at Gettysburg scrambled to find an open telegraph.⁶⁹

Lincoln's role in the great drama was over. In less than three hundred words he put moral force behind the Emancipation Proclamation and made explicit his belief that democracy could not persist without equality, thus achieving his goal in coming to Gettysburg. For support Lincoln had invoked the Declaration of Independence, reminding his listeners and eventual readers that the nation had strayed from its founding promise, and that it must "highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom," that included universal equality. The reporters present now had more control over his words than Lincoln did, and what they reported, both of his speech the others delivered that day, forever shaped how the public remembered the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery, and what they made of Lincoln's speech. Unfortunately, as the following chapters will show, Lincoln's meaning was lost for nearly a century.

⁶⁹ *Gettysburg Compiler*, November 21, 1914.

CHAPTER III
“NOBLE SPEECH” OR “WORTHLESS PASTE”?: CONTEMPORARY
RESPONSES TO THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

“President Pericles, or rather Abe, made the dedicatory speech; but had to limit his observations within small compass, lest he should tell some funny story over the graves of the Immortals.”

Richmond Enquirer
November 27, 1863

More than any other person, Joseph Gilbert shaped the early reports from Gettysburg. Most papers around the country picked up his transcription of the speeches, and his account of the ceremonies accompanied those orations. But this does not mean that newspapers nationwide offered similar coverage of the ceremonies, or of the speeches that highlighted the events. Rather, local editors in the four cities under study, New York, Gettysburg, Richmond, and London, all honed in on the aspects they believed would most interest their readers. These cities, except Gettysburg, dominated news in their regions: New York for the North, Richmond for the South, and London for England. A half-century later that dominance waned, but in 1863 the editors in these cities almost singlehandedly determined what the people in their entire regions read about the ceremonies at Gettysburg.

First and foremost, these editors reported what happened in Gettysburg, underscoring that the dedication ceremony was an *event*. The bulk of the coverage, then, discussed the nuts and bolts of the procession to the cemetery, the scenery, and crowd

reactions to the speeches. Beyond that, this chapter makes clear that most newspaper editors read the events at Gettysburg through a local lens. Richmond papers rejected Lincoln's use of the Declaration to link democracy with equality, and therefore refused to print it. Editors in New York and London, while typically reprinting Lincoln's words, reserved the bulk of their editorial comment for William Seward's speech. By speaking in general terms about larger questions such as democracy and equality, and by avoiding references to particular people, places, or events, Lincoln both avoided offending constituencies in the short term (like William Seward, John Forney, and Edward Everett did) and ensured the perpetual relevance of his speech.

Spreading the News

When the press corps left the dedication ceremonies they scrambled to get reports back to their home papers the quickest way possible. Just three decades earlier journalism had entered an era of increased access to information from afar and decreased transmission times. In an attempt to speed the retrieval of news, a service using carrier pigeons connected London and Paris in 1835. That same year Samuel Morse invented a code to transmit messages across telegraph wires. Also in 1835, James Gordon Bennett began publication of the *New York Herald*, the first modern newspaper, and inaugurated the trend of gathering news from far and wide. In 1844 the telegraph successfully transmitted a message from Baltimore to Washington, D.C., making it easier for distant

reporters to provide stories for their home papers. Within two years the telegraph connected Richmond and Washington, D.C.¹

Although a tremendous tool, the telegraph was prohibitively expensive. To send a 2,000-word column from Washington to New York cost around \$100. A similar message sent from New Orleans to New York incurred a bill of \$450. To combat these high costs, several New York newspapers formed the New York Associated Press in 1849, a group that reorganized in 1856 as the General News Association of the City of New York. Subscribers could use any of the Association's reports in their papers as long as they paid part of the telegraph fees, thereby dividing the expense and making the service affordable. By 1860, some 50,000 miles of telegraph wires crisscrossed the United States. The telegraph had opponents, however. President James Buchanan worried it would increase the instances of inaccurate reporting: telegrams "are short and spicy, and can easily be inserted in the country newspapers. In the city journals they can be contradicted the next day," an impossibility for the country weeklies.²

By 1860 2,500 newspapermen worked in the United States, a third for Southern papers. The country boasted 4,051 newspapers, 387 publishing on a daily basis. Eighty of those dailies were in states that would soon secede. Approximately 5 percent of the nation subscribed to a paper, and an even larger percentage read the papers of friends or family members.³ Readers usually selected papers based on political affiliations, and

¹ Brayton Harris, *Blue & Gray in Black & White: Newspapers in the Civil War* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1999), 4-6.

² *Ibid.*, 6-8.

³ Richard A. Schwarzlose, *Newspapers: A Reference Guide* (New York: Greenwood, 1987), xxv.

eighty percent of the journals identified with a particular party, usually announcing their loyalties in the masthead. Due to low subscription prices, proprietors only made money by winning government contracts to print legislative journals and state laws, necessitating the political affiliations.⁴

The reporters at Gettysburg came from papers large and small, urban and rural, Democratic and Republican, nearby and faraway. Despite the multitude of cities represented in Gettysburg on November 19, New York stood above the rest. The papers from that city circulated throughout the North, and even found a wide circulation in the South and in Britain. So dominant was the New York press that the transcript of Lincoln's address printed in Gettysburg's *Adams Sentinel* on November 24, 1863, came from the *New York Herald* of November 20! The coverage in the New York, Gettysburg, Richmond, and London papers in 1863 reveals that each responded to the aspect of the dedication ceremonies they felt most directly affected them. While the four cities had mixed judgments on Lincoln's speech, in all cases they deemed other speeches delivered at Gettysburg on November 18 and 19 of more editorial interest than the President's words.

New York

In many ways, New York City in 1860 had more connections to the South than the North, particularly in commercial terms. That year the city carried out \$200 million in trade with the five major cotton states. Mayor Fernando Wood made clear on several

⁴ Harris, *Blue & Gray*, 15.

occasions that he considered New York's rise to prominence a product of slave labor, for he argued that without the commercial ties to Southern plantation owners the city would still rank behind Boston and Philadelphia. Wood so valued those connections that in January of 1861 he proposed the city secede, proclaim its independence, and carry on trade and normal relationships with both the North and South.⁵

The mayor had company in his views on slavery. Bennett of the *New York Herald* warned his readers that if elected Lincoln would free the slaves who would then flock northward and take their jobs. In 1860 the state of New York went Republican by over 50,000 votes, but the city returned a 30,000 majority against Lincoln. In an editorial just three days after Lincoln's inaugural address Bennett referred to abolitionism as "nigger worship" and asserted that slavery provided a comfortable existence for those in bondage.⁶

Initially, most New York newspapers supported allowing peaceful secession. In some cases the editors felt that their Southern brethren would back down, in others they genuinely felt that the Union would remain strong even if reduced by a handful of states. Many with commercial interests did not think business would change due to secession. However, when the shooting began most papers quickly backed the Union. This did not mean, however, that Lincoln had unconditional support. Henry Raymond, editor of the

⁵ Ernest A. McKay, *The Civil War and New York City* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 13, 14, 33.

⁶ *Ibid*, 14, 20, 22.

New York Times, was an ardent Republican, but even he berated Lincoln in early 1861 for having no plan to deal with secession or the war.⁷

The issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation polarized the New York press. William Cullen Bryant of the *Evening Post* and Horace Greeley of the *Tribune* both supported the measure, but the majority did not. James Gordon Bennett, as is easily surmised from his earlier comments, opposed emancipation. The *World*, *Express*, *Frank Leslie's*, and the *Irish-American* all vocally opposed the proclamation.⁸

The proclamation was just the beginning of a tumultuous year in New York City. The Battle of Gettysburg produced casualty lists the likes of which America had never seen. Just a week later draft riots in the city resulted in 119 deaths, 2,000 injuries, and property damages of \$1.5 million. Furthermore, while the war brought an economic boom, the poor suffered greatly from inflation. Retail prices in the city increased by 43%, with food expenses doubling or even tripling, while wages grew only 12%. Some made fortunes from war contracts, but the conflict also increased the wealth gap, and crowded tenements became even more overburdened.⁹

Into this environment arrived the first reports of the ceremonies at Gettysburg. Outside Gettysburg, New York City had perhaps the most natural interest in the dedication ceremonies. Of the 2,576 men buried at Gettysburg whose origins are known, 886 came from New York, 340 more than any other state. Additionally,

⁷ Ibid, 24, 51, 62.

⁸ Ibid, 159, 235.

⁹ Ibid, 209, 216.

Secretary of State William Seward hailed from New York and his role in the ceremonies garnered attention.

In 1863 nearly all of New York's dailies belonged to the Associated Press, by then a fairly well-oiled machine. The editors of most daily papers set aside a column or two for the usually-short messages that came across the telegraph wires. For example, on November 18 the *Herald* and *Times* both printed a notice from Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin especially inviting the veterans of the War of 1812 and the war with Mexico to attend the ceremonies, and noting that the flag would fly at half-mast at government installations. The *World* carried the same story the following day. On the day of the ceremonies, the *Herald*, *Tribune*, and *World* all printed an identical announcement that several representatives of France and Italy would accompany Secretary of State Seward to Gettysburg.

When it came to covering the dedication, the daily papers typically provided, usually on November 20, a straightforward review of the events and words from those days, largely based on a report by Joseph Gilbert of the Associated Press. Then – sometimes later in that same edition but more often in the ensuing days or even weeks – the editors penned some extended thoughts on one or more of the orations. Gilbert's report eventually made its way throughout New York, to Gettysburg, Richmond, and London.

Gilbert's account, telegraphed to the city on the night of November 19 in time for the editions the following day, covered the activities of November 18 with a four paragraph-long review of Lincoln's arrival and that of the other distinguished guests in

Gettysburg, a transcription of his speech to the serenaders that night, and an account of Seward's speech. The coverage of November 19 began with a three-paragraph review of the procession to the cemetery, before offering a transcription of Reverend Stockton's prayer. An account of Lincoln's speech followed, with applause markers and the comment, "Three cheers were here given for the President and the Governors of the States." Finally, Gilbert provided the text of the speech that New York Governor Horatio Seymour delivered on the afternoon of November 19.

The *Evening Post*, *Herald*, *Times*, *Tribune*, and *World* all carried Gilbert's account, though they used it in different ways. Some fore-grounded the events of the 19th and pushed those of the 18th to the end of the column. Perhaps most importantly, while the *Herald* held off running its coverage until the third page, the other papers put the stories on page one, above the fold, highlighting the importance they placed on the dedication. In all four cases the editors printed Edward Everett's complete speech, undoubtedly from the version he sent out in the preceding days.

In addition to the reporting by the Associated Press, most of the papers had a special correspondent at the ceremonies who provided more detailed accounts in the ensuing days. The only daily paper without additional coverage or editorials was Bryant's *Evening Post*. A very brief column in the 4:00 p.m. edition of November 19 mentioned the people present and that Everett had spoken. The following day the *Evening Post* simply reprinted the two principle speeches. The dearth of coverage is surprising as Bryant introduced Lincoln before his famous Cooper Union address in

1860, and perhaps signals that the editor, who did not support Lincoln in his reelection bid the following year, had already grown dissatisfied with the president.

The *New York Herald* offered easily the most extensive, and earliest, of these supplemental reports. Though out-shadowed in elite political circles by rival editors Henry Raymond and Horace Greeley, James Gordon Bennett had no peer when it came to capturing the ear of the masses. In addition to pioneering the art of long-distance newsgathering in the decades preceding the war, Bennett also popularized the type of “sensational” newspaper that focused less on lofty political concerns and more on grizzly crimes and scandals, indulging the guilty pleasures of the masses. His rate, a penny, helped ensure a wide circulation estimated as high as 105,000. In turn, he spent an estimated \$500,000 to \$750,000 on newsgathering during the war. Part of that bill came from the correspondent who telegraphed Bennett literally thousands of words on the ceremonies in Gettysburg.¹⁰

On November 20 the *Herald* printed the fullest account of the dedication ceremonies of any paper in the world. This was also the specific paper that first made its way to both Richmond and London, making its view of the ceremonies the most influential. The *Herald*'s coverage opened on page three with a four column-wide map of the borough of Gettysburg and the hills south of the town containing the cemetery. An accompanying column titled “The National Necropolis,” including the following subheads:

¹⁰ J. Cutler Andrews, *The North Reports the Civil War* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1955), 21. Circulation rate from Duncan Andrew Campbell, *English Public Opinion and the American Civil War*, Royal Historical Society Studies in History (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell, 2003), 37.

THE NATIONAL NECROPOLIS
 Our Heroic Dead at Gettysburg.
 Consecration of a National Cemetery for the Union Soldiers who Fell There.
 Arrival of the President and Cabinet.
 Speeches by Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Seward and Gov. Seymour.
 SOLEMN AND IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY
 Imposing Civil and Military Procession.
 THE CROWDS OF THE BATTLE FIELD.
 ORATION BY EDWARD EVERETT.
 History of the Three Days' Fighting at Gettysburg.
 Upon Whom the Responsibility of the War Rests.
 The Question of the Restoration of Concord Between the North and the South,
 &c., &c., &c.,

The column offered a brief review of the battle before describing the cemetery grounds.

Much of the Associated Press account appeared on the following page, including the review of Lincoln's journey to Washington, the President's remarks on the night of November 18, and the transcription of Seward's address. Forney's speech was also briefly summarized: "[Forney] declared that the reason he had not supported Mr. Lincoln for the Presidency in 1860 was that he wanted to break up the slaveowning democracy, that he was really in favor of his election, but did not want to let it appear, so that he might the better accomplish his purpose." This paragraph in particular would catch the eye of Richmond's editors. An explanation of the parade and the order of procession to the cemetery followed. Finally, Edward Everett's speech took up the rest of the fourth page and most of the fifth.

Page ten contained a much more detailed recounting of the day's ceremonies. The Associated Press account was again invoked, both for its version of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and the speech of Governor Seymour. A brief overview of the events following the dedication ceremonies up to the time Lincoln left to return to Washington, D.C. brought the coverage to a close. The inclusion of these accounts on

page ten, after a break of several pages, proved a fateful decision, for clearly many editors, particularly in Richmond, never read this far.

The *Herald* also printed an immediate commentary on the speeches. As befitted a journal known for its sensational news, the *Herald* focused on the happenings at Gettysburg and on Everett's speech, which, by the standards of the day, was an exciting retelling of the greatest battle fought on the North American continent. Lincoln's words, while eloquent and poignant, were far from sensational, and thus received no comment.

On the 21st the *Herald* offered a lengthy column comparing Everett's oration at Gettysburg with a recent speech by Henry Ward Beecher at the Brooklyn Academy. In the words of the *Herald*, "Mr. Beecher undertook to tell us what sentiments the English entertained towards the country." The comparison did not favor Everett, noting, "It is not necessary to compare this oratorical wet blanket with such giants as Webster. He seems dwarfish even when compared to Ward Beecher." The *Herald* criticized Everett for his lack of emotion, "He had written his essay in his library and he said that which he had written," and for deemphasizing the role of the common soldiers, the men most likely to subscribe to the *Herald*: "An inaccurate account of the battle gave occasion for kindly little puffs of Hooker and Meade, when, as every one knows, Gettysburg was a soldiers' battle – won not by Meade's generalship, but by the privates and the corps commanders." Though the editor did not reference the President, his description of Everett's oratorical style contrasts completely with that of Lincoln's: "Seldom has a man talked so long and said so little. . . He gave us plenty of words, but no heart. His flowers of rhetoric were as beautiful and as scentless and as lifeless as wax flowers."

In his coverage of the Gettysburg ceremonies editor James Gordon Bennett seized on the stories and speeches most likely to sell papers, and glossed over the rest. By 1863 Edward Everett's reputation was on the decline, and Gordon risked little in lampooning the man, and no doubt entertained his readers in doing so. Lincoln certainly showed "heart" in his speech, but in Democratic New York, with its proslavery leanings, complimenting him, or even considering the depth of his words, would have cost Bennett readers.

The extensive reporting in the *New York Tribune* rivaled the *Herald*. The paper published a daily edition for distribution around New York, a semi-weekly version for those a bit farther out, and a weekly that circulated from California to Maine. All told, the paper boasted 300,000 subscribers, and probably a million readers. Republican editor Horace Greeley helped secure Lincoln's nomination in 1860.¹¹

On November 20 the *Tribune* carried the telegraphic report from the Associated Press with the explanation and promise, "We give, this morning, a telegraphic account of the dedication of the National Burial Ground at Gettysburg. To-morrow we shall have a more accurate account by our special reporters." As promised, the following day the *Tribune* carried a column from "Our Special Correspondent," consisting of letters dated November 17, 18, and 19. John Davenport, a *New York Tribune* field reporter, likely authored the letters, given the signature: "J.L.D." The first letter described the ceremony, and though it contained some new details it largely repeated old information. The November 18 letter reviewed a tour Davenport had taken of the town and battlefield.

¹¹ McKay, *The Civil War and New York City*, 24.

Davenport noted the arrival of various officials connected with the ceremonies, including Lincoln, and reported the text of Seward's November 18 speech. The order of procession and program of events for the 19th concluded the letter. The final letter consisted of Davenport's experiences and impressions of the ceremonies. In contrast to the harsh criticism leveled at Everett by the *Herald*, Davenport judged his speech "one of the gentleman's best efforts." And then, as it had the day earlier, the *Tribune* printed the complete text of Lincoln's address with applause markers, an unusual step that makes one wonder whether Greeley tried to emphasize Lincoln's words by printing them twice. After briefly discussing Lincoln's attendance at Major Anderson's speech, Davenport brought his letter to a close and caught the train to New York and hand-carried his reports to Greeley. Horace Greeley had long been a proponent of emancipation, and his plea with Lincoln the previous summer to do something towards this end remains one of the more famous editorials in history. In this light, Greeley's printing of the Gettysburg Address makes sense, but his failure to comment on the speech seems odd. Why would Greeley, after years of talking about the need to add equality to democracy, pass up the chance to comment on Lincoln doing just that?

The *New York Times*, edited by Henry J. Raymond, was less sensational than Bennett's *Herald* and a bit more politically moderate than Greeley's *Tribune*. The *Times*' initial coverage also came from the Associated Press account. Like the *Herald*, the *Times* offered an early evaluation of Everett's address, noting that his "narrative of the marches manoeuvres, skirmishes and strategy . . . will tend to confuse and repel those who are less familiar with the events than himself, and crowd out those 'glittering

generalities' which he or any other great orator might be expected mainly to deal in on such an occasion." The editor softened his criticism with the conclusion that, "After he gets through with this, however, Mr. Everett does justice to his subject and himself."

On November 21 the *Times* printed Seward's oration, a part of the Associated Press account that it had left out the previous day, along with a column penned by "our Special Correspondent." The writer admitted, "All the noteworthy incidents of the celebration here to-day have already been sent off to you by telegraph, and it would have gratified your correspondent exceedingly if he could also have got off, but fate, combined with the miserable railroad arrangements, has ordained that he should spend another night in this overcrowded village."

The correspondent noted the large number of visitors in town, and expressed the opinion that many came for reasons other than the speeches, for even while Everett spoke crowds roaming the battlefield equaled those listening to the dedication ceremonies. And in a line that reveals, perhaps, why the newspapers spent so much of their columns reviewing the battle and battlefield, the author observed of the crowd, "They seem to have considered, with President Lincoln, that it was not what was *said* here, but what was *done* here, that deserved their attention." Whether the writer intentionally paraphrased Lincoln, or if the observation was an original thought is unclear. While many of his colleagues wrote about the parts of Lincoln's speech dealing with democracy, this journalist focused on those dealing with freedom: "But little over four months have passed away since the champions of Slavery and Freedom met here in deadly strife."

Of all New York's daily papers, the *World* was the most ardently Democratic and harshest of Lincoln's critics. While the paper included the same initial Associated Press coverage of the ceremonies that appeared in most of the city's other papers, editorials on November 20 and 21 attacked both Everett's oratorical skills and his arguments, and one on November 27 did the same to Lincoln.

The editorial on November 20 identified Everett's eloquence as its subject, but added that the orator's faulty logic would be address in a future column. The editor noted that Everett had fallen short of expectations, and wondered if "the hand of age begins to lie heavy on his faculties, or whether the natural coldness of his temper never permitted him to stir the fountains of human feeling to their profound depths." The thrust of the complaint was that Everett's speech was a mere recitation of history that did not stand up to other great American orations such as Daniel Webster's at the laying of the Bunker Hill Monument cornerstone in 1825. Like the *Herald*, the *World* editor invoked a flower analogy: "His rhetorical flowers are artificial and elaborately finished, surprisingly like, no doubt, but fed by no life-giving sap and filling the air with no self-produced fragrance."

The following day the *World* ran a descriptive account of November 18 and 19 from their special correspondent, "Sidney." The reporter found much of the behavior of the crowd on the night of the 18 "in bad taste and out of place," provided an extensive overview of what John Forney had said and why, and described the cemetery and town.

But of more importance was the *World*'s editorial that day titled, "Mr. Everett on 'State Sovereignty' and 'Reserved Rights.'" Noting that "there are many points in his

speech at Gettysburg which call for criticism,” the editor made clear that his primary concern was Everett’s “attempt to make it appear that state sovereignty is peculiarly a southern doctrine, and furnishes the pretext for this atrocious rebellion.” To clarify his position, the editor continued, “That the rebels have proceeded on a perversion of the doctrine of state sovereignty, and have deduced from it consequences that do not legitimately follow, is no valid argument against the doctrine itself.” The ensuing paragraphs measured Everett’s words and the Constitution, with the purpose to “furnish positive proof that the states are sovereign.”

The *World* took up the theme of adherence to the Constitution again on November 27, this time in response to Lincoln’s privileging of the Declaration of Independence over that document. The column began by reciting Lincoln’s first sentence of the Gettysburg Address, and then accused him of “gross ignorance, or willful mis-statement, of the primary fact in our history by a President of the United States.” Why? Because “the Constitution not merely does not say one word about equal rights, but expressly admits the idea of the inequality of human rights.” The editor also took issue with Lincoln’s comment that “our fathers had brought forth a new nation,” stating instead that the Declaration declared the colonies “free, sovereign, independent states.” The *World* argued that slavery was not abolished by the Constitution because doing so would preclude any attempts at union, and in that sense nothing had changed in the ensuing decades.

As the only New York daily to protest the ideas in the Gettysburg Address, the *World* holds a unique position. In 1992 Gary Wills called Abraham Lincoln’s assertion

that the Declaration rather than the Constitution was the nation's founding document "one of the most daring acts of open-air sleight-of-hand ever witnessed by the unsuspecting." But it is clear that Lincoln had not fooled or convinced papers like the *World*. Rather, the editor felt that his readers would not agree with Lincoln's interpretations on democracy, equality, and slavery.¹²

The weekly journals in New York and the other cities reviewed tended to provide fewer news items but longer articles, giving each piece more substantial thought. They also typically included a great deal of literature and travel narratives. This shift in emphasis, as well as their less frequent publication, meant that the weeklies left out a great many news items covered by the dailies.

New York's weeklies usually covered the cemetery dedication and accompanying speeches in special dispatches or editorials rather than the blow-by-blow reporting offered by the dailies. The *Observer* deviated, and reprinted Gilbert's account including Lincoln's address a week after the ceremonies. The paper excluded Everett's oration, a pattern that persisted among the weeklies, and offered no further commentary on the event.

The *Ledger*, a journal declaring itself "Devoted to Choice Literature, Romance, the News, and Commerce," contained an extended editorial on the ceremonies covering Everett's oration. The journal left little doubt as to what it thought of the speech: "The discourse of Mr. Everett was marked by that fine sense of propriety, of fitness, which is

¹² Gary Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 38.

an unfailing characteristic of his public efforts.” The first half the column gushed over Everett’s oratorical skills; the second half touched more specifically on the context of his two-hour-long speech. The *Ledger*, unlike the *World*, believed Everett’s explanation of the political and legal factors of the war. “In the political exposition which forms an integral portion of the discourse Mr. Everett shows his usual temperance of statement, his keen sagacity of view, and his peculiar aptness in enforcing his argument by historical parallels.” Such a careful position was no surprise to the *Ledger*, for it noted Everett’s attempts to bring peace both through his spot on the Constitutional-Union ticket in 1860 and in his quest for British mediation of the conflict early in the war. But the speech at Gettysburg revealed Everett’s transformation, or so the *Ledger* surmised.

Haunted by a sad foreboding of the consequences of war between the North and the South, he has, as he gracefully expresses it, perhaps tried too long in the path of hopeless compromise . . . But now he has no terms to make with rebels. Eloquently does he insist on the first duty of the patriot to stand by the Union. Bravely does he urge the people of America to prosecute the war to a successful issue, to establish peace upon a permanent basis by victory over the armed hosts of revolt. . . . Never did Mr. Everett mutter a more generous, a more electric, a more thrilling word.

The *Ledger* commended Everett’s change of stance on the war, something for which both the Richmond and London papers condemned him. Taken with the *World*, the reporting in the *Ledger* supports the contention that editors viewed the ceremonies at Gettysburg, including the speeches, through the preexisting worldview, and found little to change their minds.

The two most famous weeklies during the war, *Harper’s Weekly* and *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, were both profusely illustrated New York-based

journals. On December 5 *Leslie's* offered two pages of illustrations from Gettysburg including scenes of Union graves, the town itself, Rebel graves, a large spread of the "Dedication Ceremony" taking up half the page, and finally depictions of Meade's headquarters, the Round Tops, and another picture of Union graves. Two pages later a column titled simply "The Gettysburg Celebration" covered the ceremonies with a fairly straightforward narrative and little commentary other than a favorable remark on the entire commemoration. *Leslie's* also included the text of Lincoln's address as reported in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* of November 20. That version differed from the Associated Press transcription in several places:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing the question whether this nation or any nation so conceived, so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on the great battle-field of that war. We are met to dedicate it, on a portion of the field set apart as the final resting place of those who gave their lives for the nation's life; but the nation must live, and it is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

In a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground in reality. The number of men, living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor attempts to add to its consecration. The world will little know and nothing remember of what we see here but we cannot forget what these brave men did here.

We owe this offering to our dead. We imbibe increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave their last full measure of devotion; we here might resolve that they shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that the Government of the people, for the people, and for all the people, shall not perish from the earth.

This account did not include the applause breaks Gilbert noted, and is generally viewed as less accurate. But that inaccuracy makes a significant point. The paper, *Republican*

in sympathies, reported Lincoln's final phrase as "for all the people," when most agree that Lincoln did not include "all." The final line is typically construed as emphasizing democracy, but the addition of "all" changes the tone and makes it the third statement about black equality and freedom rather than the first about democracy. In later years people focused on that final line if they wanted to talk about democracy, but in 1863 at least one reporter thought Lincoln meant something else.

Like *Frank Leslie's, Harper's Weekly* also printed its first account of the dedication ceremonies on December 5. These illustrated journals, having to plan the bulk of their content far in advance in order to secure the drawings and prepare them for the press, could not offer immediate responses to the Gettysburg ceremonies the way the dailies and non-illustrated weeklies could. On December 5 *Harper's* ran a brief account of the cemetery dedication of just five paragraphs, but included responses to the two major speeches. Of Everett, *Harper's* observed, "The oration by Mr. Everett was smooth and cold. Delivered, doubtless, with his accustomed graces, it yet wanted one stirring thought, one vivid picture, one thrilling appeal." The President came in for a better review: "The few words of the President were from the heart to the heart. They can not be read, even, without kindling emotion. 'The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.' It was as simple and felicitous and earnest a word as was ever spoken." Though *Harper's* did not reprint Lincoln's full oration, its respect for the speech is obvious. Nearly a month later, on January 9, 1864, *Harper's* again quoted that line in its column on "The New Year," but offered no substantial thoughts past what it had said in December.

In that initial report of December 5 *Harper's* skipped over William Seward, but two weeks later it rectified that omission. *Harper's* took issue with Seward's classification of the Confederates as "misguided brethren," and with the general idea that negotiations remained a possibility, "They are men to conquer or be conquered." For the most part Seward escaped criticism from his home-state papers, an omission that the Gettysburg journals rectified.

One of the more interesting weeklies to cover Gettysburg was the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*. On November 28 the journal printed an excerpt of Edward Everett's speech, the Associated Press version of Lincoln's address, the remarks by William Seward, and a brief explanation of the events following the dedication ceremonies excerpted from the *New York Times* of November 21. An editorial letter penned on November 22 by the journal's Washington correspondent, identified only as "Avon," considered what Seward's speech revealed about the administration's stance on abolition. Seward had recently made several comments that greatly concerned the antislavery elements in the North. However, his statements about the war mercifully ending slavery left the journalist to conclude, "It is very difficult to find out just what his real opinions are upon the slavery question," because Seward's carefully considered his thoughts before speaking, and thus his words "came from the lips of a shrewd political diplomatist, and not from an earnest man's heart." In the fall of 1863 abolitionists believed Lincoln's efforts to keep the border-states in the union would lead him to make concessions effectively nullifying emancipation. But declaring that "Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward are on the most intimate terms of friendship, and *they understand each*

other,” Avon concluded, “The Gettysburg speech from Mr. Seward is encouraging not only in reference to himself, but also in reference to the president.”

A week later Avon offered another letter reiterating his earlier missive. Noting the successes of the western armies, he concluded that militarily the cause of freedom rested on much sounder ground than now than earlier in the fall: “When Mr. Seward finds it necessary to come out, as he did at Gettysburg, and avow his opposition to slavery, Mr. Lincoln, who, ever since the war broke out, has at all times been in advance of his Secretary of State, may be relied upon.”

Most of the antislavery papers focused on Seward’s speech, not surprising given that man’s long history as a radical Republican and the context of his speech. William Lloyd Garrison’s *Liberator*, a Boston-based journal, highlighted Seward’s remarks by placing them at the beginning of the column. A brief introduction of just three sentences preceded Seward’s words. Gilbert’s version of Lincoln’s oration followed, along with an overview of the day’s other events.¹³

Some of the other weeklies had less coverage. The *New York Dispatch* printed a poem about the Battle of Gettysburg on November 29, but nothing else. On December 13 the paper ran a rave review of the President’s annual message to Congress, calling it “compact, simple, truthful, and sometimes even eloquent.” This positive review of Lincoln and his words make it curious that the journal had nothing to say of his Gettysburg speech. On the other hand, the *Irish American* had nothing on the Address.

¹³ *Liberator* (Boston), November 27, 1863.

Given the paper's Democratic sympathies and frequent tirades against Lincoln, the silence is not surprising.

The dedication ceremonies at Gettysburg received more coverage in New York City than anywhere else in the world, even in Gettysburg itself. But ironically, past a simple reprinting of what the President had said, the city's editors largely ignored Lincoln's words and instead focused on Edward Everett and William Seward. As lifelong politicians, Everett and Seward were attacked as much for their decades-old political stances as their words at Gettysburg. The various political and legal opinions by these statesmen paled in comparison to Lincoln's assertions about the primacy of the Declaration over the Constitution and the interconnectedness of democracy and equality, making it surprising that these editors (with the exception of the *World*) did not attack Lincoln in the same way they did the other speakers.

Gettysburg

Due to publishing frequency, New York papers had already reached Gettysburg carrying reports of the dedication ceremonies before the local papers put out their own accounts. This delay of four days certainly stole some of the thunder from the Gettysburg papers, but it also allowed them to include more material, and to excerpt and respond to outside articles. While all four of the cities discussed in this chapter were more interested in the events at Gettysburg than the speeches, the local papers were the most extreme in this regard.

The *Compiler* was the first local paper to report the events of November 19. The paper was staunchly Democratic (declaring itself “A Democratic and Family Journal”), and editor Henry Stahle had a strong dislike of the current administration and the chief executive. On August 13, 1860, Stahle referred to Lincoln as a “Fifth rate lawyer” with “no experience in legislation, no claims to Statesmanship.” In the months and days leading up to the election Stahle reprinted articles from Democratic papers proclaiming Lincoln’s supposed alliance with the abolitionists and predicting impending doom should the Republican triumph. While the editor offered the non-committal comment about Lincoln’s inaugural address that, “Some think it means peace, whilst others, with equal, if not more reason, assume that it means war,” his earlier evaluations of Lincoln’s various public speeches while en-route to Washington, D.C. were less restrained. On February 25 the *Compiler* ran a column clipped from the non-partisan *Philadelphia Ledger* voicing disappointment in Lincoln’s recent speeches because “he does not seem to have fully apprehended the difficulties he has to encounter.”¹⁴

When Lincoln proposed the permanent establishment of paper currency and also compensated emancipation in his second annual message to Congress, Stahle noted, “We cannot persuade ourselves that Mr. Lincoln really believes that either of them can be carried out. If he does, then he is weaker than we supposed him to be.” The issuance of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation two months earlier had left a sour taste in

¹⁴ *Gettysburg Compiler*, August 13, 1860, and March 11, 1861. Much of my thinking about Stahle and his view of Lincoln was informed by Kid Wongsrichanalai, “Mr. Stahle’s Lincoln: The *Gettysburg Compiler*’s reactions to the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln” (unpublished paper, Gettysburg College, 2001).

Stahle's mouth, a conclusion supported by Stahle's statement on September 12, 1864, that "McClellan is for Union and peace. Lincoln is for war and the nigger."¹⁵

Shortly after the battle Union authorities arrested Stahle for allegedly aiding the enemy, a spurious charge in every way. Stahle found himself incarcerated for weeks at Fort McHenry in Baltimore.¹⁶ After his release Stahle started attacking Lincoln's government for allowing the mistreatment of Pennsylvanians, both by the invading army and by their own government: "They merit our censure and should receive it from an injured and outraged people."¹⁷

On November 23 he proclaimed the 19th "a great day in the history of Gettysburg - - second only in interest to the eventful first, second and third days of July last." After a brief review of the hustle and bustle accompanying the ceremonies and the parade to the cemetery, Stahle noted that Everett's address "was an exceedingly elaborate and ornate production." The *Compiler* reprinted Everett's opening paragraphs and closing paragraphs in full, and summarized the middle part of his speech.¹⁸

When it came to Lincoln's role, Stahle commented simply, "The Chief Marshall then introduced the President of the United States, who, after the applause had subsided, spoke as follows." Unlike many of his fellow Democratic editors, Stahle printed Lincoln's address. However, rather than adopting the Associated Press version of the speech, the *Compiler* instead used that from the Republican *Philadelphia Inquirer* of

¹⁵ *Gettysburg Compiler*, December 8, 1862.

¹⁶ Robert Bloom, *A History of Adams County, Pennsylvania 1700-1990* (Gettysburg, PA: Adams County Historical Society, 1992), 220.

¹⁷ *Gettysburg Compiler*, August 10, 1863.

¹⁸ *Gettysburg Compiler*, November 23, 1863.

November 20, which latter appeared in the December 5 edition of *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*. Despite his earlier incarceration at the hands of Lincoln's government, Stahle did not denigrate the president's speech at Gettysburg, a restraint arguably suggestive of his respect for the words Lincoln spoke that day. His complete reprinting of the speech furthers that notion, and rules out the possibility that Stahle's editorial silence was prompted by fear of a backlash, for he could have safely ignored the President's remarks had he so chosen.¹⁹

One day later, the *Adams Sentinel* offered its evaluation of the ceremonies and Lincoln's speech. Editor Robert Harper, a Republican, lived next to David Wills. Seward stayed at Harper's, and there visited with Lincoln on the night of November 18 about what the President intended to say the following day. Like the *Compiler*, the *Sentinel* of November 24, 1863, carried the complete text of Lincoln's speech. Despite Harper's training as a newspaperman he did not furnish an original version of Lincoln's speech but instead utilized the Associated Press transcription! In contrast to Stahle, who gave no evaluation of Lincoln or his speeches, Harper noted, "The President was serenaded twice during the evening, and his appearance excited bursts of enthusiasm – showing the strong hold he has upon the affections of the people. He made but few remarks, but they were characteristic of the pure and honest President."

The *Star and Banner*, Gettysburg's third local paper, offered a report of the ceremonies on November 26. The first page covered Everett's oration. Then, after

¹⁹ Joseph George, Jr., "The World Will Little Note? The Philadelphia Press and the Gettysburg Address," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 114 (July 1990): 395.

printing the words Lincoln spoke on the night of November 18 (without the interruption from the audience), the *Star and Banner* said, “The President was most enthusiastically greeted, and when he retired, he did so amid prolonged applause.” The paper printed a long review of the procession to the cemetery before printing the Associated Press version of Lincoln’s speech. At the end the *Star and Banner* noted, “Long applause. Three cheers given for the President of the United States and Governors of the States.”²⁰

The *Star and Banner* also noted, “We regret that our paper is not as large as a barn-door this week. We are compelled to omit a great deal of matter relating to the Dedication.” One of the items the paper did find space to include supported the *Times*’ special correspondent’s statement that not everyone in town was there for the orations: “We heard of several gentlemen being robbed of considerable sums of money, by pickpockets on the occasion of the Dedication of the National Cemetery . . . Two or three of these long-fingered gentry were arrested by the Detective and lodged in jail.”²¹

Coverage of the ceremonies did not quickly pass from the local papers. On December 1 the *Adams Sentinel* carried the illustration of the cemetery’s layout that had first appeared in the *New York World* on November 20. Two days later the *Compiler* carried the same image and caption. The *Sentinel* of December 1 also carried two further items relating to the events of the 19th revealing the range of activities that had taken place. The first, a column from Philadelphia’s *Lutheran & Missionary*, noted the

²⁰ *Gettysburg Star and Banner*, November 26, 1863.

²¹ *Gettysburg Star and Banner*, November 26, 1863.

honorable performance of the town and its people both during the battle and the dedication ceremonies. The second was another article on the pickpockets.

On December 14 the *Compiler* reprinted an extensive column titled “Mr. Seward at Gettysburg,” clipped from Philadelphia’s *Age*, a Democratic paper that usually had little time for Lincoln or his administration. In a marked departure from its usual critiques of Lincoln, two days following the dedication ceremonies the *Age* declared “the speech of the President is the best he has ever made.” William Seward came in for harsher treatment: “Mr. Seward, after the fighting was over, went to Gettysburg to do what is more in his line than fighting – make a speech and have a ‘lively time.’” The editor condemned Seward for steadfastly denying during the antebellum years that a war would touch Pennsylvania, but then declaring in his Gettysburg speech that “he anticipated forty years ago that the battle of freedom would be fought upon this ground, and that slavery would die.” The writer concluded that Seward either lied at Gettysburg, or had for the better part of his life. The *New Yorker*’s statement infuriated the editor, who argued that Seward was unworthy of the war’s cost in lives and treasure.

With a devilish deceit were those our sons and brothers inveighed into an army to fight in the noblest and most exalted cause that man can give his life for; and when they have died in the glorious belief that it was their country – their Union – for which they offered up their lives – when they are cold in the ground and cannot resent the slander – comes the demon who had falsely entrapped them, and, standing on their bodies, denies their patriotism, denies them their life’s opinion, and degrades a triumphant sacrifice at the holiest of altars into a barbarous quarrel for a cause that the majority of these dead patriots hated and despised.

Though Stahle did not write this editorial, by reprinting it he acknowledged approval.

A week later, on December 21, Stahle reprinted another editorial attacking a speaker at Gettysburg. Decrying John “the dog” Forney’s assertion that Stephen Douglas had died at the right time, the *Allentown Democrat* steamed, “If Mr. Douglas had not died at the time he did, we should never have had this war.” The paper asserted that Forney had no loyalties and simply anyone with patronage to dispense. With this the *Compiler’s* coverage of the dedication ceremonies came to a close.

More conclusive (and perhaps less partisan) than the newspaper accounts is a letter written by Harvey Sweney to his brother on November 29. Sweney felt that Lincoln’s “modest appearance and dignified manners, to say nothing of the noble speeches he made here, has endeared him to the hearts of the people and added thousands of friends to him on that day.”²²

Another piece of evidence also leads one to believe that the citizens of Gettysburg came away impressed with the Address and with Lincoln in general: the election returns from 1860 and 1864. In 1860 the presidential race contained four contenders: the Reading Ticket, Abraham Lincoln, Stephen Douglas, and John Bell. The Reading Ticket was an anti-Lincoln, pro-Democratic ticket. The electors could vote for any Democrat so as to give them the best chance of defeating Lincoln.²³ In Gettysburg the Reading Ticket received 43.6% of the vote and Lincoln 54.4%.²⁴ Four years later Lincoln increased that margin, outpolling Democrat George McClellan 60% to 39.8%,

²² Harvey Sweney to Andrew Sweney November 29, 1863.

²³ William C. Wright, *The Secession Movement in the Middle Atlantic States* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1973), 127.

²⁴ *Gettysburg Compiler*, November 12, 1860

an overall increase of about ten percent. When one considers how poorly Republicans fared in Adams County the year before, these results take on added significance.²⁵ In the 1863 gubernatorial election Republican Andrew Curtin lost Adams County by 228 votes, three times more than in 1860. Curtin's weak polling reflected, the *Compiler* argued, the burdens placed on the county during the Gettysburg Campaign.²⁶ For Lincoln to dramatically increase his margin of victory says much about the reception of the Gettysburg Address. It is hard to believe Gettysburgians would vote for Lincoln if they found his speech disappointing.

In most other locales the news of the dedication ceremonies quickly passed after an initial report or two and maybe an editorial. In Gettysburg, on the other hand, the event was both of national *and* local importance, and thus the story had legs in south-central Pennsylvania that it lacked elsewhere. Most of the immediate response to the dedication ceremonies focused on the role the town played in hosting such a grand event rather than the words spoken by the various dignitaries. While the editors generally made clear they respected Lincoln and appreciated his presence, they offered no more evaluative comments on the President's words than had the New Yorkers.

Richmond

By the fall of 1863, Richmond, Virginia, housed the Confederate government, the South's most famous and successful army, and was economically the most important

²⁵ Ibid, November 14, 1864.

²⁶ Ibid, November 9, 1863

city in the seceded states. During the war the city's population swelled from 37,000 in 1860 to over 100,000 at the peak of the war. The newspapers of the city dominated those of the Confederacy, particularly when it came to reporting Northern events. The Richmond press used that dominance to censor reports of the dedication ceremonies at Gettysburg and Lincoln's speech. While early reports of the event confused Lincoln's role at Gettysburg, later pieces omitted the words that Lincoln spoke. An analysis of what the editors said, how they covered Lincoln's other major speeches, and the individual biographies of the editors and papers, indicates that the Richmond press disdained the Gettysburg Address because of the President's statements on equality and freedom. Examining the spread of reporting about the dedication ceremonies throughout the South shows that the rest of the Confederate press relied almost totally on the coverage in the Richmond papers, allowing those five editors to shape the reporting on the event throughout the entire region.

On November 24, 1863, the *Richmond Dispatch*, *Richmond Examiner*, *Richmond Sentinel*, and *Richmond Whig* all carried an identical account of the Gettysburg ceremonies.

Several columns of the *Herald* are occupied with a description of the "National Necropolis," or cemetery at Gettysburg. Lincoln, Seward, several foreign ministers, and other dignitaries were present. Lincoln was serenaded the night preceding the day on which the ceremony took place. He declined to make a speech on the ground that "in his position it was somewhat important that he should not say foolish things." A voice – "If you can help it." Lincoln – "It very often happens that the only way to help it is to say nothing at all." [Laughter.]

Seward was also serenaded and responded in an anti-slavery speech. He thanked God for the hope that when slavery is abolished the country will be again united.

The notorious Forney was also serenaded. In his speech he declared that he was in favor of Lincoln's election in 1860, but did not want it to appear so, that he might the better accomplish the breaking up of the Democracy.

Everett's oration is published at length in the *Herald*, occupying six columns of small type. He predicted the reconstruction of the Union.

Most likely John Graeme, Jr., the Richmond agent of the Confederate Press Association, wrote the account.²⁷

In 1860 the major Southern newspapers belonged to the Associated Press, but the inauguration of war, and the June 1, 1861, suspension of telegraphic service between Richmond and Washington, D.C., ended that affiliation. Shortly thereafter the Southern Associated Press came into existence, but high costs and poor reports led to its demise.

In the fall of 1862 the Richmond papers formed the Richmond Press Association. This organization provided cheaper reporting than the Southern Associated Press, but the quality remained poor. Finally, in the early spring of 1863, several major Southern dailies formed the Press Association of the Confederate States of America (also known as the Confederate Press Association). By May of that year 44 of the Confederacy's papers belonged, including all the Richmond newspapers except the *Sentinel*. Because of the importance of Richmond, the Confederate Press Association hired John Graeme, Jr., to facilitate news gathering in the Confederacy's most important city. The article in the Richmond papers on November 24 clearly came from the Confederate Press Association, making it likely Graeme wrote the piece.²⁸

²⁷ This account is from the November 24, 1863, editions of the *Richmond Examiner*, *Richmond Sentinel* and *Richmond Whig*. The *Richmond Dispatch* carried the same account except that it noted the year as 1864 instead of 1860. The only Richmond daily not to carry the account was the *Richmond Enquirer*.

²⁸ Ford Risley, "Confederate Press Association," *Civil War History* 47 (September 2001): 224-228.

But where did Graeme get his story? When the armies exchanged prisoners of war they also traded newspapers. Through this system, Richmond editors procured Northern papers. According to the *Richmond Dispatch* of November 24, 1863, the accounts of the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in the Richmond papers that day came from "Northern papers . . . through the courtesy of the officers of the Exchange Bureau." Richmond editors received Northern newspapers within three days of their publication, astonishingly fast considering that the papers had to pass through enemy lines. This exchange also worked in the opposite direction, and the *New York Times* and *Chicago Times* frequently reprinted items from the *Richmond Examiner* covering a range of issues.

Nearly all the information from Graeme's account came directly from the subheads at the top of the *New York Herald's* coverage, making it difficult to escape the impression that Graeme skimmed the report in the *New York Herald*, relied mainly on the subheads, and did not read the tenth page which discussed Abraham Lincoln's part in the ceremonies. Perhaps the sentence that Everett's oration consumed "six columns of small type" in the *New York Herald* explains how the writer missed the small column on Lincoln. The editor of the *Richmond Dispatch* commented that he found the news from the North, including Graeme's account, "Not of much interest."²⁹

²⁹ *Richmond Dispatch*, November 24, 1863. Graeme is not the only person to have missed the part of the *New York Herald* containing Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. In an editorial for the *Philadelphia Sunday Bulletin* on November 17, 1963, Herman Blum said that the *New York Herald* "mentioned the address as the 'dedicatory remarks of the President,' without reporting what he said." The following year Blum self-published his editorial as *The Beacon that Was Lit at Gettysburg: Words that Live and Grow* (Philadelphia, privately printed, 1964).

The *Richmond Examiner* of November 25, 1863, contained some of the most extensive reporting of the events accompanying the dedication ceremonies. Noting an abundance of coverage in the “Yankee papers,” the *Examiner* promised “to give only the portion of their accounts likely to interest our readers.” John Moncure Daniel, the paper’s editor, shaped the article.

Daniel was born on October 24, 1825, in Stafford County, Virginia. After stints reading the law in Fredericksburg and serving as a librarian in Richmond, he found his true calling as a journalist, first for *The Southern Planter* and then for the *Richmond Examiner*. Due to his staunchly Democratic editorials, Daniel fought several duels before and during the war.³⁰

In 1853 President Franklin Pierce appointed Daniel the minister to the court of Victor Emmanuel in Turin, Italy. At this time a New Yorker sued Daniel for libel on the basis of an editorial Daniel wrote before leaving Richmond. Daniel lost the case and paid several thousand dollars in damages. The outcome of the trial unfavorably disposed Daniel to the North and its citizens, a prejudice that frequently appeared in his writings. The Virginian returned home at the beginning of the Civil War and cast his lot with his native state. He served on General A. P. Hill’s staff until wounded in June 1862. His injury made it impossible for Daniel to continue to serve in the field, and he returned to the editor’s desk at the *Richmond Examiner*, a paper he owned. Daniel preferred to let others compose the paper’s editorials and then edited them so heavily their authors did

³⁰ Lyon G. Tyler, “John Moncure Daniel,” *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1915), 3:153.

not recognize them. Nothing made it into the *Examiner* that Daniel did not approve. A known racist and supporter of slavery, Daniel would have found Lincoln's assertion that "all men are created equal" repugnant.³¹

Daniel's biases appeared in the paper's November 25 editorial on the Gettysburg Address. The first part recounted the parade on the morning of November 19. The *Examiner* noted that Stockton's prayer, Everett's oration, and Lincoln's address had already appeared, but in fact no Richmond newspaper previously printed the speeches. In contrast to the lack of coverage of these three central speeches is the both the full reprinting of a dirge and the benediction that concluded the ceremonies. The following section had the promising title "LINCOLN'S RECEPTION AT GETTYSBURG – HE MAKES A SPEECH." Yet rather than the Gettysburg Address, the column discussed Lincoln's remarks of November 18. While complimenting the crowd for their respect and orderliness, Daniel chided Lincoln for behaving in a "humorous manner" despite the obvious "solemnity and reverence" that such an occasion required.

Three days later, the *Examiner* condemned the ceremonies as "the substitution of glittering foil and worthless paste for real brilliants and pure gold." In Daniel's opinion, The paper added, "The Yankees have an invincible conviction that they are the successors of the Romans in empire, and of the Athenians in genius." Edward Everett "took down his THUCYDIDES,' and fancied himself a PERICLES." A fifth century BCE Greek statesman and orator, Pericles remains famous today for his speech at the

³¹ Ibid; J. Cutler Andrews, *The South Reports the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 29-30; Peter Bridges, *Pen of Fire: John Moncure Daniel* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2002), 32, 100.

funeral of Athenian soldiers who died in the Peloponnesian War. Thucydides, Pericles' student, recorded his teacher's oration in his own history of the war.³²

The *Examiner* continued, "The play was strictly classic." But,

A vein of comedy was permitted to mingle with the deep pathos of the piece. This singular novelty, and the deviation from classic propriety, was heightened by assigning this part to the chief personage. Kings are usually made to speak in the magniloquent language supposed to be suited to their elevated position. On the present occasion Lincoln acted the clown.

However, the following line asserted that Lincoln "declined to speak for fear he should perpetrate a folly," revealing that the speech in question was that of November 18. The following sentences confirm that point by mentioning the disappointment of the crowd that Lincoln would not speak. The editorial also pointed out the comments of the heckler who joked that Lincoln "could only avoid talking nonsense by holding his tongue." What at first appeared an evaluation of the Gettysburg Address quickly revealed itself instead as a reference to Lincoln's November 18 remarks.³³

While the comments the *Examiner* made on the classical style of Everett's speech make it clear the editors read his speech, the portrayal of Lincoln's words as insignificant and inappropriate for the occasion suggest the paper referenced his November 18 speech, not that from November 19. On December 8 the *Chicago Times*, reprinted the *Examiner's* editorial of November 28 on the front page, giving it an

³² For an extended discussion on the ways Pericles influenced Lincoln see Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*.

³³ *Richmond Examiner*, November 28, 1863.

audience in the North.³⁴ The *Times* had steadfastly opposed Lincoln, and after Gettysburg had asked rhetorically, “Is Mr. Lincoln less refined than a savage?”³⁵

On November 25, the *Richmond Dispatch* published an account of “THE GETTYSBURG CEMETERY CELEBRATION – THE SPEECHES.” It appears that the *Dispatch* obtained a copy of the *New York Herald* the day after its initial report on the dedication. Derisively calling the ceremonies “entirely Yankeeish,” the paper gave a rundown of the speeches on November 18, including the text of Lincoln’s comments and a summary of Seward’s speech before reprinting parts of Everett’s oration.

Founded just a decade before the war, the *Dispatch* broke with the other Richmond papers in claiming no affiliation with a particular political party, vowing that news would stand superior to politics. The journal cost only a penny, and quickly attracted the younger crowd in the city and surrounding areas. By 1860 it had a circulation of 18,000, the largest of any paper in the state, and was probably the third largest daily in the South, just behind two of the New Orleans papers.³⁶

The *Richmond Dispatch* focused most of its editorial on “Edward Everett, of ‘Boasting,’ [Boston] that secondary and most disgusting edition and representative of the Pilgrim Fathers.” Everett had contended that he did not believe “there has been a day since the election of President Lincoln when, if an ordinance of secession could have been fairly submitted to the mass of the people, in any single Southern State a majority

³⁴ *Chicago Times*, December 8, 1863.

³⁵ *Chicago Times*, November 23, 1863.

³⁶ Marvin Evans, “The Richmond Press on the Eve of the Civil War,” *John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College* 1 (January 1951): 25-26.

of ballots would have been given in its favor.” This predictably drew fire from the editor of the *Dispatch*, who noted “the stiff corpses of one thousand two hundred and eight eighty [sic] men lying in a semi-circle around him, killed dead,” served the “purpose of giving the lie to all such statements.” The editor disingenuously asserted Virginia’s unity on the question of secession as the state did not secede until after the shooting war started, and the *Dispatch* did not fully support secession until 1861. Two years into the war, however, the past was glossed over in the name of unity and Confederate nationalism. The account ended after discussing Everett’s oration. It is unclear whether the editors even read page ten of the *New York Herald*, for they made no mention of Lincoln’s speech on November 19.

Many Virginians despised Edward Everett before his comments at Gettysburg. While serving in Congress in 1826 Everett declared that if a slave uprising similar to that in Haiti occurred in the United States he would gladly shoulder a musket to put it down.³⁷ Much like the man who followed him that day at Gettysburg, Everett opposed slavery, but feared the dissolution of the Union should steps be taken against the institution. As the president of Harvard University in 1847 Everett had acted to admit the institution’s first African American student. Beverly Williams, a former Alabama slave, had gained his freedom and studied at the Hopkins School in Cambridge, a preparatory to Harvard. When an Alabamian protested the possibility of Williams admission Everett responded, “If this boy passes the examinations, he will be admitted; and if the white students choose to withdraw, all the income of the College will be

³⁷ Fred Stripp, “The *Other* Gettysburg Address,” *Civil War History* 1 (June 1955): 163.

devoted to his education.” Williams died of consumption before he could enroll, delaying Harvard’s integration until after the Civil War. In 1860 Everett ran as the vice-presidential candidate on John Bell’s Constitutional-Union ticket that sought to decrease sectional tensions and avoid war by promoting a strict adherence to the Constitution. Seeing no better option, both Kentucky and Virginia pledged their electoral votes to Bell and Everett. However, once the war began Everett threw his support behind Lincoln and the government’s war policies. The man that many Virginians had voted for as their choice to hold the second highest office in the nation had turned his back on them. In short, Southern comments about Everett’s oration probably had as much to do with his past as his words at Gettysburg.³⁸

On November 27, the editor of the *Richmond Dispatch* devoted a whole column to Edward Everett. “Everett’s oration at Gettysburg is what might have been expected of that unreal, metaphorical, moonlight orator. It matters little to him what the facts . . .” In this case the facts Everett supposedly twisted revolved around the levels of support for secession. Much like the *Richmond Examiner*, the *Dispatch* censored any mention of Lincoln’s role in the dedication ceremonies and his speech. Interestingly, the *Liberator*, the famed abolitionist paper published in Everett’s hometown, picked up this editorial and reprinted it verbatim as “A Rebel View of Edward Everett’s Gettysburg Oration” on January 1, 1864.

³⁸ Irving H. Bartlett, “Edward Everett Reconsidered,” *New England Quarterly* 69 (September 1996): 453; Beverly Williams story from Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1936), 2:453.

Founded in 1804, the *Richmond Enquirer* was the oldest of Richmond's papers. In 1863 Democrats Nathaniel Tyler and William J. Dunnavant owned and edited the paper.³⁹ On November 27 the *Enquirer* reported that Lincoln had played a part in the dedication ceremonies, and offered Richmond's first direct reaction to Lincoln's speech of November 19. The paper identified Lincoln as the "stage manager and Edward Everett as the 'Orator of the day.'" It further commented that "Mr. Everett produced the expected allusions to Marathon and Waterloo, in the best style of the sophomores of Harvard." Edward Everett's affiliation with Harvard made the reference both personal and pointed. "After the Orator of the day, President Pericles, or rather Abe, made the dedicatory speech; but had to limit his observations within small compass, lest he should tell some funny story over the graves of the Immortals." In stating that Lincoln spoke after Edward Everett, the *Enquirer* demonstrated an understanding of Lincoln's role in the ceremonies on November 19. However, the *Enquirer* never explicitly discussed the words Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg, instead denigrating Lincoln for the brevity of his comments.

Two of Richmond's dailies, the *Whig* and the *Sentinel*, carried the Confederate Press Association account of the cemetery dedication on November 24 but offered no further reports. While the other three dailies all printed at least one other substantial article on the dedication ceremonies, none of the papers reprinted the words that Lincoln spoke at the dedication ceremonies. In marked contrast, in both 1861 and 1865, the *Richmond Dispatch* reprinted Lincoln's inaugural addresses. In 1861, the paper carried

³⁹ Evans, "Richmond Press," 17-18.

substantial commentary on the event, while the reporting in 1865 consisted more of a simple description. In both the inaugurals and the Gettysburg Address Lincoln advocated a strong national government and indicated his personal opposition to slavery, but only in the Gettysburg Address did Lincoln assert the equality of all men. Is it mere coincidence that Richmond's papers did not reprint the speech containing this assertion, even though the text was available to them? As is often the case, what the newspapers did not report is as important as what they did.⁴⁰

From Richmond, news of the events at Gettysburg spread to the rest of the state and the Confederacy. On November 27, 1863, the Lynchburg *Virginian* offered extensive reporting on "THE CEMETERY – SPEECH AND WIT OF LINCOLN." After a full column on the parade to the cemetery, the *Virginian* explained, "The dedication ceremonies were then performed, the oration being delivered by Edward Everett, after which the crowd dispersed." A description of the cemetery ensued. This account is full of details, making it remarkable that it contains nothing on the part played by President Lincoln. The reference in the headline to the speech by Lincoln was to an entirely different event that had taken place on November 18 in Hanover, Pennsylvania, before Lincoln even arrived in Gettysburg.

The *Virginian's* editor corrected his earlier omission on December 4 in a column titled "Old Abe's Last." Taking the account from the *New York World*, the editor quoted the opening sentence of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the only paper in the Old

⁴⁰ *Richmond Dispatch*, March 5, 1861, and March 8, 1865.

Dominion to quote any part of the speech. Despite reporting part of Lincoln's oration, the Lynchburg editor thought no more of Lincoln than his Richmond colleagues:

“Really, the ignorance and coarseness of this man would repel and disgust any other people than the Yankees . . . What a commentary is this on the character of our enemies.”⁴¹

The *Staunton Vindicator* of December 4 provided additional comments on Everett and his “unkind criticism” of the South based wholly on the reporting of the *Richmond Dispatch*. Noting that “many of our contemporaries are much disturbed at the consecration of the field at Gettysburg as a huge Yankee Necropolis and give vent to unkind criticism of the part taken by Edward Everett,” the *Vindicator* editor admitted that he had not read the oration of Everett or a report of it. Yet he indicated distaste for the man whom they had once admired. The paper sarcastically told Everett to come dedicate the final resting places of Union soldiers who had fallen in Virginia. There were a good many, the editor noted, and more would join them if the North persisted in its action. The entire column in the *Staunton Vindicator* centered on the role of Edward Everett in the dedication ceremonies; not once did Abraham Lincoln's name appear. The other Staunton paper, the *Staunton Spectator*, offered no comment on the dedication ceremonies or Lincoln's Address.

As the news of the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg made its way across the Confederacy, the Southern press followed Richmond's lead. The piece authored by Graeme appeared in many Confederate newspapers over the following ten days. On

⁴¹ *Virginian* (Lynchburg), December 4, 1863.

November 24, the *Atlanta Daily Constitutionalist*, *Atlanta Southern Confederacy*, *Augusta (Georgia) Daily Chronicle & Sentinel*, *Macon Telegraph*, *Memphis Appeal*, *Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register*, and *Savannah Daily Morning News* carried an abbreviated version of Graeme's account that stated:

Several columns in the Herald is occupied with the account of the dedication of the National Necropolis at Gettysburg.

Lincoln was serenaded on the night previous but declined to make a speech, saying that in his position it was important that he should not say any foolish things.

A voice – If you can help it.

Lincoln – It often happens that the only way to help it is to say nothing.⁴²

The November 24 *Wilmington (North Carolina) Daily Journal* carried substantially the same account with a few changes in wording. That same day the *Daily South Carolinian* carried an even more abbreviated version. "Several columns in the *Herald* is occupied with an account of the dedication of the National Necropolis at Gettysburg." The *Charleston Mercury*, *Atlanta Daily Intelligencer*, and *Atlanta Daily Constitutionalist* all printed Graeme's full account, the *Mercury* and *Daily Constitutionalist* on November 27 and the *Daily Intelligencer* on November 29.

A few days after the appearance of these telegraphic accounts, the other Southern newspapers began receiving copies of the Richmond papers, and quickly copied their Virginia brethren. This liberal borrowing was nothing new during the Civil War era. George Smalley's account of the Battle of Antietam originally appeared in the *New York*

⁴² *Macon Telegraph*, November 24, 1863.

Tribune but a reported 1,400 newspapers reprinted the story.⁴³ According to one authority, in order to put together the paper for each day's edition, the editor "would first select two important newspapers from each of the larger cities represented among his newspaper exchanges and clip a dozen or so small articles . . . then he would clip articles for solid matter, leaving just enough space for the lead editorial. When the printer told him enough material had been found for the day's edition, he would knock off the editorial rapidly . . ." Most editors saw no need to rewrite an article that had appeared in another paper.⁴⁴

In its edition of November 30, the *Memphis Appeal* reprinted the *Richmond Enquirer's* account of three days earlier. On December 2, the *Atlanta Daily Intelligencer* carried that same account. The *Macon Telegraph* reprinted the account from the November 25, 1863, *Richmond Dispatch*. The *Mobile Daily Advertiser & Register* reprinted another account from the *Richmond Dispatch* focusing entirely on Everett's oration, and did not mention either Lincoln or his speeches.

On December 2, the *Augusta Weekly Chronicle & Sentinel* printed the following brief excerpt: "Seward in a speech at Gettysburg, PA, thanked God for the hope that when slavery is abolished the country will be whole again. The notorious Forney, in a late speech, declared that he was in favor of Lincoln's election in 1860, but did not want it to appear so, that he might the better accomplish the breakup of the Democracy." A week earlier the daily version of that paper had printed a slightly reworked version of the

⁴³ Harris, *Blue & Gray*, 182.

⁴⁴ Andrews, *South Reports*, 25.

first half of the Confederate Press Association account; now they published the second half, also slight edited. Whether due to space constraints in the November 24 edition, a telegraphic mishap, or simply an editorial decision is unclear.

None of these papers wrote their own editorials about the events surrounding the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Instead, they simply reprinted articles written by the Richmond newspapers, revealing the influence the Richmond editors had, particularly over events originating in the North. Richmond therefore represents Southern reporting on the Gettysburg Address.

In many ways this is not surprising. Following the battle of Chancellorsville in May of 1863 the *Savannah Republican* and *Wilmington Daily Journal* both complained that the Richmond papers had not printed the casualty lists from out-of-state regiments or discussed their roles in the battle. It is clear these two papers thought the Richmond press should be national in scope, much like today's *New York Times* or *Washington Post*.⁴⁵

The New Orleans press alone among Southern papers did not follow Richmond's lead. By the fall of 1863 Union forces had occupied the city for a year and a half. Southern editors ran most of the city's papers, with one exception. When Union General Benjamin Butler took command of New Orleans, the editor of the *New Orleans Crescent*, J. O. Nixon, belonged to the Confederate Army. Butler confiscated the paper and had it sold to Unionists who rechristened the paper the *New-Orleans Times*.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Ibid, 299-300.

⁴⁶ Chester Hearn, *When the Devil Came Down to Dixie: Ben Butler in New Orleans* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 100.

Because of New Orleans' distance from Richmond and its occupation by the Union, New Orleans editors frequently received New York papers sooner than those from other places in the Confederacy. On December 3 the daily *New Orleans Bee* noted that it had received the *New York Herald* of November 21, probably courtesy of a Union ship. The editor, much like many of his counterparts in Virginia, ignored the role Lincoln had played in the dedication ceremonies and focused on Edward Everett. Calling Everett a "wet blanket," the paper echoed the *Herald's* assertion that Everett did not match up to Daniel Webster, and had not performed well during his dedicatory oration. The *Bee* did not comment on Lincoln's speech.⁴⁷ The *Daily True Delta* likewise had harsh words for Everett. "There are many points in his speech at Gettysburg which call for criticism," most importantly, "his arguments against State sovereignty and reserved rights." The *Daily True Delta* went so far as to reprint the actual words of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.⁴⁸ On December 2, 1863, the only Union paper in the city, the *New-Orleans Times*, noted, "The President's speech at the Gettysburg inauguration excites universal remark and commendation."⁴⁹ Memphis, Tennessee, had also fallen into Union hands during the fall of 1863, a fact clearly reflected by the extensive, positive coverage given to the ceremonies by the *Memphis Daily Bulletin*. Like the *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, the *Memphis Daily Bulletin* reprinted Lincoln's address.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ *New Orleans Bee*, December 3, 1863.

⁴⁸ *New Orleans Daily True Delta*, December 4, 1863.

⁴⁹ *New Orleans Times*, December 2, 1863.

⁵⁰ *Memphis Daily Bulletin*, November 26, 1863. The aforementioned *Memphis Appeal* was an itinerant paper at this point in the war, publishing outside of the city, and therefore not under Union influence.

While all the Richmond papers mentioned the events in Pennsylvania, it seems as though few people paid any attention to those stories. Jefferson Davis offered no comments on the Address. Nor did John B. Jones, the famous Confederate war diarist who wrote about nearly everything newsworthy. Josiah Gorgas, head of Confederate ordnance, also remained silent, as did famous diarists Mary Chesnut and Judith McGuire.⁵¹ Virginia newspapers mentioned Lincoln in nearly every issue, eventually desensitizing their readers to stories about the Union president. Such stories include a December 8, 1863, article from the *Richmond Dispatch* titled “Lincoln Sick.” The article noted, “Yankee papers say that ‘Lincoln has got the varioloid,’” and wondered, “What the varioloid has done that Lincoln should ‘get it,’ we cannot imagine, but it is just like Lincoln to seize some harmless object, and just like the Yankee papers to make a grand fuss over it.” With daily articles like this, it is little wonder that most readers found Southern reporting of the dedication ceremonies in line with their expectations.

One Virginia woman present at the dedication ceremonies recorded her thoughts. Josephine Forney Roedel, born in Gettysburg in 1825, spent the first thirty years of her life in Pennsylvania. In 1855 her husband, William D. Roedel, became president of the Wytheville Female Seminary in southwestern Virginia, and the couple relocated to the Old Dominion. In late October of 1863 Josephine Roedel returned to Gettysburg to

⁵¹ Jefferson Davis, *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, 12 vols., eds. Haskell M. Monroe, Jr., and James T. McIntosh (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971-); John B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capitol* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1866); Josiah Gorgas, *The Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas*, ed. Frank E. Vandiver (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1947); Mary Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, ed. C. Vann Woodward (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981); Judith W. McGuire, *Diary of a Southern Refugee During the War* (New York: E. J. Hale & Son, 1867).

spend time with her ailing mother. During her trip, Roedel kept a diary, and afterwards she commented, “The great day is over and I am so glad I have been here . . . everything passed off very pleasantly and scarcely one drunken man was to be seen . . . Such homage I never saw or imagined could be shown to any one person as the people bestow upon Lincoln . . . the very mention of his name brings forth shouts of applause . . . even his enemies acknowledge him to be an honest man.” Despite the circumstances, Roedel was happy to see the dedication ceremonies. “At first I wished my visit had occurred at any other time as my heart is so sad, but never in my life will I have the same opportunity of seeing so many of the great men of the nation.”⁵²

William Roedel died in December, 1865, and Josephine immediately returned to Gettysburg where she lived until her death in 1904. Though she resided in Virginia, the overall tone of her diary, specifically her obvious reverence for Abraham Lincoln and her return to Pennsylvania in 1865, make it clear that her heart remained with the Union.⁵³

In summary, as a result of the censorship by the Richmond editors, Southerners in 1863 had no idea what Lincoln said at the dedication of the cemetery in Gettysburg. While the Richmond papers reprinted Lincoln’s inaugurals in both 1861 and 1865, they never provided their readers with the text of Lincoln’s words at Gettysburg. Some northern papers, such as the *New York World*, also chastised Lincoln’s speech, but they at least printed his words so their readers could form their own judgments. Lincoln’s

⁵² Elsie Singmaster, “The Diary of Josephine Forney Roedel,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 67 (October 1943): 390, 397-398.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

affirmation “that all men are created equal” and call for “a new birth of freedom” linked his words at Gettysburg to the Emancipation Proclamation, and as a result, the Richmond editors lampooned Lincoln’s appearance and words without ever telling their readers what he said.

The editorials proffered south of the Mason-Dixon line focused wholly on Edward Everett’s speech, and his assertions about the legitimacy of secession. The Old Dominion had a special relationship with the Massachusetts man, having supported his bid for the vice-presidency in 1860, and his now supposed betrayal earned him the lion’s share of the editorial criticism. The domination of the Richmond press ensured that their version of the ceremonies disseminated throughout the Confederacy, and thus Confederates associated Edward Everett, not Lincoln or Seward, most closely with Gettysburg.

London

On December 2 a ship named the *Edinburgh* arrived in Queenstown, Ireland, carrying copies of the New York papers dated November 20 and 21 and at least one letter for the *Times* of London written by its special correspondent in New York. In 1858 the United States and Great Britain had jointly laid an underwater cable across the ocean floor to allow telegraphic communication between the two nations and continents. Unfortunately, after just a month in operation and a total of 400 messages sent and received, the cable stopped working. The year after the Civil War another cable once again linked the nations and enabled communication within hours rather than days. But

in 1863 news traveled no faster than the ships. Within hours of the *Edinburgh's* landing agents read those New York papers and sent a summary to London via telegraph.⁵⁴

After those living in North America, the people most concerned with the outcome of the Civil War lived in England. The focus here is specifically on England and not Great Britain, as both Scotland and Ireland had very different stances on the war than that commonly found in England.⁵⁵ The United States and England shared a bond that remained strong despite frequent animosities. The nations did more trade with each other than any one else, and in 1860 the English cotton industry employed five million people. But cotton did not grow naturally on the island, and 85% of it came from the southern United States. England's importation of cotton provided economic support for slavery, a great irony as it had abolished the peculiar institution throughout the empire a generation earlier, and took great pride in opposing slavery to the point that Englishmen purchased more copies of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* than their American cousins. When the Southern states seceded in 1860 and 1861, England believed in the legality of secession, but did not think those eleven states possessed a legitimate reason for the split.⁵⁶

But in terms of gaining English support, the North was its own biggest enemy.

In his first inaugural address Abraham Lincoln reaffirmed his earlier declaration during

⁵⁴ Bern Dibner, *The Atlantic Cable* (Norwalk, CT: Burndy Library, 1959), 36, 43, 78; *Times* (London), December 3, 1863.

⁵⁵ A colleague, William Collopy, examined four Irish papers for November and December 1863 but found no references to the Gettysburg Address, despite columns in each paper devoted to the war in America. The papers were: *Clare Journal and Ennis Advertiser*, *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (Dublin), *Galway Vindicator and Connaught Advertiser*, and *Limerick Reporter and Tipperary Vindicator*.

⁵⁶ Campbell, *English Public Opinion*, 17, 50; on circulation numbers of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, see Howard C. Westwood, "The Audience for the Gettysburg Address," *Lincoln Herald* 84 (Fall 1982): 137.

the Lincoln-Douglas debates, “I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.”⁵⁷ This may have reassured pro-Union slaveholders of Lincoln’s intentions, but it certainly did not help his cause overseas. On October 5, 1861, London’s *Saturday Review* commented, “England is slandered if it is said that she does not with her whole heart hate slavery and desire its extinction, or that she would not be cordially with the North if it were against slavery that the North was fighting. The North, however, vehemently disclaims any such imputation.”

English suspicions of Northern complicity in maintaining and perpetuating slavery had a long history. Despite officially ending its participation in the Atlantic slave trade in 1808, the United States made minimal efforts to prevent illegal trading. After 1842 the country provided no monies for the purpose of enforcement, and levied no significant punishments against offenders, turning a blind eye to the slave trade and infuriating the English. The Royal Navy took the lead in preventing the trade, patrolling the coast of Africa and stopping suspicious ships. After a time the Royal Navy started boarding American ships they suspected carried slaves. The Northern press protested most vehemently, not because they supported slavery but because Northerners owned and operated most of the maritime fleet. Thus, the English came to see the North as allowing the continuation of the slave trade, a conclusion supported by the fact that

⁵⁷ Abraham Lincoln, “First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861,” *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols., eds. Roy P. Basler, Marion Dolores Pratt, and Lloyd A. Dunlap (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953-1955), 4:263. Lincoln used that line in his first debate with Stephen Douglas at Ottawa, Illinois, on August 28, 1858, and reiterated it in a speech at Columbus, Ohio, on September 16, 1859.

between 1857 and 1861 over seventy slave trading expeditions left from New York City.⁵⁸

Lincoln's selection of William Seward as his secretary of state did little to ameliorate English feelings towards the North. In the 1850s Seward steadfastly opposed negotiating over the border of the Oregon Territory, while simultaneously agitating for the annexation of Canada, no small threat considering what the United States had done in Mexico less than a decade earlier. During the secession crisis Seward proposed declaring war on England in order to reunify the country, a suggestion that soon leaked.⁵⁹

Finally, just two days before Lincoln's inauguration, Congress adopted the Morrill Tariff, a protective measure that doubled the taxes collected on imported goods. At the time the United States imported 40% of its manufactured goods from England, and some saw the tariff as a direct attack on that country. Furthermore, as the tariff privileged the North's manufacturing over the South's export economy, it belied the notion that the government was working to bring the seceded states back into the fold.⁶⁰

Thus, when the war broke out, most English citizens were disgusted with both sides. Historian Duncan Andrew Campbell argues that, with some exceptions, Englishmen did not so much support a side as oppose one side more ardently than the

⁵⁸ Campbell, *English Public Opinion*, 21-22.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 28.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 41.

other. In a *National Review* editorial published in July 1861, editor William Rathbone

Greg wrote:

We cannot be very zealous for the North; for we do not like her ambition; we are irritated by her insolence; we are aggrieved by her tariffs; but we still have much feelings of kinship and esteem. We cannot be zealous at all for the South; for though she is friendly and free-trading, she is fanatically SLAVE, and Slavery is the object of our rooted detestation.⁶¹

As the war dragged on, events led the English to one side and then the other. In December 1861 the *U.S.S. San Jacinto* stopped the English mail steamer *Trent* and removed two Confederate diplomats, outraging Englishmen who viewed the action as an attack on their sovereignty. The two nations almost came to war for the third time in less than a century before Lincoln resolved the situation by releasing the two diplomats. While the nations avoided war, the affair hardened anti-Northern sentiments.⁶²

One would think the Emancipation Proclamation would sway English support to the North, but such did not happen. The *London Morning Post*, *London Morning Herald*, and *London Daily Telegraph* all attributed the Emancipation Proclamation to blatantly political motives that stripped it of any morality. Lincoln's own claims that the war was not about slavery and that he would gladly discuss the possibility of the seceded states returning to the Union with that institution intact left him open to such criticisms. Thus, while the Proclamation deprived the South of some of the sympathy it previously enjoyed, no immediate increase in support for the North ensued.⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid, 48.

⁶² Westwood, "The Audience," 137.

⁶³ Richard Allen Heckman, "British Press Reaction to the Emancipation Proclamation," *Lincoln Herald* 71 (Winter 1969): 150-151.

Thus, when Seward, Everett, and Lincoln spoke in Gettysburg, Englishmen were looking for one side to stake out a worthy position. The English press varied tremendously in publication frequency, content, and political stance, but during the four years of the Civil War most paid keen attention to the Americas. Much like New York in the United States, London was the center of news in England, particularly for foreign news. Foreign intelligence would first appear in the daily and semi-weekly papers aimed at the middle class. Typically, on the first day of coverage these papers would run the basic outlines, frequently excerpted from other papers. For important stories an editorial followed within a few days. The weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual journals popular in the country covered more important issues. This, combined with their calmer tone, gave these journals more political influence. As in America, papers passed among multiple readers, oftentimes at dens where people congregated to read and discuss the news.⁶⁴

Of the daily papers, the *Times* of London reached the widest audience, with a circulation as high as 65,000. On December 3 it printed a descriptive account of the ceremonies at Gettysburg which noted the presence of Lincoln, Seward, and Everett, and offered a full reprint of Lincoln's address. The Address did not include the six breaks for applause that most of the New York papers of November 20 included, a curious omission. In concluding, the columnist summarized Edward Everett's fifty-page speech in a single sentence: "Mr. Everett made a long speech recapitulating the events of the campaign which terminated with the battle of Gettysburg." The great battle, the subject

⁶⁴ Campbell, *English Public Opinion*, 14.

of Everett's speech, held appeal for American readers, but not as much for Englishmen 3,000 miles away, allowing this short recap Everett's very lengthy address.⁶⁵

The following day the *Times* carried two more columns about the dedication ceremonies. The first fell under the heading, "The Field of Gettysburg." After a two-sentence introduction that incorrectly noted the dedication day as November 16, the *Times* again printed Lincoln's oration from November 19. This time, however, the transcription was the Associated Press version with the applause markers. A two-sentence transition led into an excerpt from Everett's speech describing the location and geography of the cemetery. After noting that Lincoln declined to speak further to the crowd the night following the ceremony (in actuality the event occurred on the night of November 18), the column concluded with a full transcript of William Seward's speech of November 18, also dated incorrectly to the night after the dedication. Of the three speeches reprinted, at least in part, Lincoln's was the last delivered, yet the first in the column. The positioning of the speech is suggestive of the importance assigned to it by the columnist, a notion supported by the inclusion of applause markers in this version of the speech.

Three pages later followed a general article about "The Civil War in America" written by its New York correspondent. About a third of the article, or a full column, covered the activities at Gettysburg. The correspondent revealed his distinct lack of respect for both principal speakers, noting that the ceremony was "rendered somewhat flat by the nature of Mr. Everett's lecture, and ludicrous by some of the luckless sallies

⁶⁵ Ibid, 37.

of that poor President Lincoln . . .” The column briefly reviewed Lincoln’s arrival in Gettysburg on the night of November 18 and reprinted of his remarks to the serenaders outside the Wills house. The writer commented favorably on Seward’s remarks, noting that he, “spoke rather more to the purpose,” and ascribed the cause of the war to slavery.

Moving on to November 19, he called Stockton’s prayer “impressive” and noted that Lincoln’s dedicatory remarks followed, a jumbling of the order of ceremonies. The correspondent observed that Lincoln’s comments of November 19 were, “got up in a somewhat different style from his extempore effusion of the eve.” Then it came time for Edward Everett.

Not wasting any time, the writer opened with, “The Hon. Edward Everett is a lady’s orator.” His speech, “reads tame beyond belief, and is such a performance as would scarcely win the prize for composition over the common run of undergraduates.” Mainly, like a great number of the New York papers including the *Herald*, *Times*, and *World*, he complained that the speech recounted the battle in boring detail and offered an unsophisticated pontification on the causes of the war. “Anything more dull and commonplace, anything less calculated to call forth deep or lively or lasting emotions, it would not be easy by the most fastidious taste, the most unwearied industry, and the most consummate scholarship without a soul to it to produce.” In the land of Wellington, the exploits of Meade hardly justified a two-hour oration.

That the *Times* lambasted Edward Everett and left Lincoln alone except for one passing comment is perhaps indicative of its sentiment towards the Address. After the Emancipation Proclamation the *Times* noted that Lincoln had an “utterly inefficient,

though possibly well-meaning Administration,” one “that mismanages everything which it touches; that inspires few people with respect, and no one with confidence.”

Furthermore, the *Times* called the Emancipation Proclamation “hopelessly in his way.”⁶⁶

The *Times* rarely held back when it perceived a chance to denigrate Lincoln and what they viewed as his half-hearted strikes against slavery. That the editor had nothing negative or skeptical to say about Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address and its assertions about equality and freedom is suggestive of a growing acceptance of the man and an endorsement of the ideals he expressed at Gettysburg.

Perhaps it was Lincoln’s intention when drafting the Gettysburg Address to appeal to these sentiments. By referring to the Declaration of Independence Lincoln suggested that, like the Confederacy, the United States had seceded from their parent country. However, by choosing to employ the phrase that “all men are created equal” Lincoln implied that while natural law justified secession in 1776, Southern secession ran counter to those principles. Recognizing the strong tradition of natural law in England, it seems likely Lincoln sought to appeal to the international community not to recognize a people who so flagrantly violated such values. London’s editors did not address this specific issue, but by reprinting the words of the Address they allowed Englishmen to come to that conclusion on their own.

Despite correspondents in Richmond and New York the *London Daily Telegraph* offered only a short column on December 3 courtesy of Reuter’s that read, “Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Seward, and the Corps Diplomatique were present at the dedication of the

⁶⁶ *Times* (London), January 30, 1863.

Gettysburg cemetery. Edward Everett made an oration.” The following day the *Daily Telegraph* ran a substantial column from their New York correspondent dated November 21 reviewing the war in America but which made no mention of the dedication ceremonies, a curious omission considering that the New York papers covered the event extensively in their editions of November 20.

The *London Morning Post* had slightly meatier coverage than the *Daily Telegraph*. Like the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Morning Post* had a correspondent in the Americas covering the war, though theirs observed from Baltimore. On December 3, under a column entitled “America,” the *Morning Post* printed substantially the same Reuter’s account that appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* on the same day.⁶⁷ A day later the *Morning Post* carried another column, this one consisting of a paragraph-long overview of the ceremonies along with a full transcription of Lincoln’s address, though they did not include any marks for applause. The paper also printed a brief excerpt of William Seward’s impromptu remarks on the night of November 18, but nothing from Edward Everett’s oration. On December 19 the *Leeds Intelligencer* printed a column on the Gettysburg Address directly from the *Morning Post* account of December 4 with a few minor changes. When it came to reporting international events the smaller, outlying newspapers frequently excerpted the columns from the London papers rather than writing their own.

⁶⁷ *London Morning Post*, December 3, 1863. The formatting was slightly different than in the *Daily Telegraph*: “Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Seward, and the *corps diplomatique* were present at the dedication of the Gettysburg Cemetery. Edward Everett made an oration.”

On December 12, the *Morning Post* made up for its skimpy coverage of Edward Everett from the previous day. The New York correspondent began, “The tergiversation of the Northern politicians in this crisis has been much discussed.” Before the outbreak of the war Everett had vigorously opposed compelling the Southern states to remain in the Union against their will, demanding, “In the name of Heaven, let them go in peace.” But then, without any reason, according to the columnist, Everett, “coolly changed sides . . . [and] has been foremost among those who have encouraged the Administration to persist in its policy, and have stimulated the brutal passions of its soldiery.” And now Everett again showed his immorality: “He must have been more than ever satisfied, as he thought of the fruitless carnage of the two preceding years, that it was ‘preposterous’ to expect ‘to hold 15 States in the Union by force.’ But he nevertheless vehemently urged the further prosecution of this war . . .”

The columnist further lamented that Everett accused the Confederacy of “covering the sea with pirates,” responding that the world would not think less of the Confederacy simply because Everett “designates its cruisers as ‘pirates.’” In taking particular exception to this point the author brought the issue home. The Confederacy had contracted with English shipbuilders to build and outfit warships for them. As a neutral government England could not allow the construction and sale of warships to the Confederacy, but English r ambivalence towards the North made them less than diligent in preventing these deals.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Westwood, “Audience,” 138, 140.

The *Morning Post* columnist scoffed that Everett, “knew his audience. The North echoes his words with acclamation.” Herein lay the problem. “If Mr. Everett were but one of many prominent men who had pursued the same disgraceful course, his conduct would have called for no further comment than a disparaging remark or two upon his individual character. But when it is remembered that at least ninety-nine out of every hundred Northern politicians who opposed the election of Mr. Lincoln subsequently manifested as little sense of duty or of decency as Mr. Everett, the subjects suggest reflections of a general and serious nature. . . . Something must be rotten in a nation which presents so sad a spectacle to the world.”

The modest coverage of the dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery in the daily papers dwarfed that offered by the weeklies and monthlies. Most of these publications consistently dedicated space to the war in America, but among London’s weekly papers only three, the *Englishman*, *Reynold’s Newspaper*, and *Illustrated London News* covered the Gettysburg Address. On December 5, 1863, the *Englishman* carried the same brief Reuter’s account that had appeared in the *Daily Telegram* and *Morning Post* of December 3. On December 8 the *Illustrated London News* printed the same piece. On December 6 *Reynold’s* printed the first and last paragraphs of the Gettysburg Address.

Other papers did not offer even this limited coverage. The *Bee-Hive* frequently printed stories about pro-emancipation meetings in London, Bury, Manchester, and Liverpool, but ignored Lincoln’s speech. So too did the *Spectator*, which had commented on November 28, “It is not easy to be too thankful for the Providence which

substituted Lincoln for Seward in the Presidential chair.” The *Saturday Review* echoed those sentiments on December 12, noting, “Mr. Lincoln has personally abstained from the offensive language which has been recklessly used by many of his Ministers and political associates.” Here the *Review* intended to remind its readers of Seward’s 1861 proposition that the United States invade Canada as a way of reuniting the North and South. But neither these weeklies nor the *Albion*, *Athenaeum*, *Miner & Workman’s Advocate*, or *Punch*, mentioned the Address. The omission is a bit surprising given that many of these papers expressed pro-Northern sentiments, or at least anti-slavery ones, and theoretically agreed with Lincoln’s statements at Gettysburg.

The monthlies offered no more extensive coverage. *British Workwoman Out and at Home*, *Eclectic Review*, *Fraser’s Magazine*, *MacMillan’s Magazine*, and *New Monthly Magazine* contained largely the same mixture as the weeklies, and also ignored completely the events at Gettysburg. The *British Quarterly Review* and *Annual Register* also remained silent. Thus it seems the journals that published less frequently were more selective in which stories they covered, a practice necessitated no doubt by page limits and the need to trim coverage rather than bulk it up. When compared with the other news coming from America concerning the military situation in Tennessee and the annual messages of both Lincoln and Jefferson Davis in December, the Gettysburg Address simply did not rate as a particularly newsworthy item in the eyes of London’s editors.

Thus the coverage in the London papers was a hybrid of that offered in New York and Richmond. Like most of the New York papers, London editors printed the text

of the Gettysburg Address with some brief comments about the ceremony in Gettysburg. Like their counterparts in the United States cities, London editors breezed over Lincoln's words with a quick line or two, if at all, and focused most of their attention on Edward Everett. Like Richmond, London had more of a tie to Everett than to Lincoln, for Everett had been a foreign minister assigned to Britain in the 1840s and also proposed asking England to mediate the conflict in 1860 and 1861. Thus Everett's hawkish stance at Gettysburg shocked Englishmen. Further, his portrayal of the Confederacy as a rogue collection of states without legal standing implicitly scolded England for giving covert support to the South.

Conclusion

In many ways, all four cities covered the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery and the accompanying speeches similarly. In New York, Richmond, and London the initial accounts came from telegraphic dispatches and tended toward a neutral reporting of the actual occurrences and speeches with little editorial comment. The first day's reports in each city, November 20 for New York, November 23 for Richmond, and December 3 for London, all followed this pattern. In about half of the papers reviewed the editors of these daily papers offered further commentary within the next two days, and in some cases over a longer period of time. The weeklies in all places were less likely to cover the ceremonies, probably a result of having too much news and too little space.

Gettysburg is the obvious exception, as its journals printed significantly more articles, and articles of much greater length, than the papers of these other cities. New York, Richmond, and London soon turned their attention to other events in America, such as the raging debate over prisoner exchange and the condition of prisoners, the faltering economy, military actions in Tennessee, the speaking tour of Henry Ward Beecher, and finally the annual messages of both President Davis and President Lincoln. In Gettysburg, however, the event had local as well as national significance and so it remained of interest longer.

In the 1960s Ronald Reid examined reporting of the Gettysburg Address in 260 Northern newspapers, and found the same general patterns. 94 of the 96 dailies he read covered the event, typically with multiple articles, while just 88 of the 156 weeklies did so. Not surprisingly, Republican papers tended to publish five times as much (in column inches) as Democratic papers. Papers that devoted a small amount of space to the dedication excerpted Lincoln, while those papers with greater coverage devoted more space to Everett. Thus, while more people read Lincoln's words than Everett's, the Massachusetts man was the subject of most editorial comment.⁶⁹

Two striking observations emerge after examining reactions to the speech in these four cities. The first is the extent to which Joseph Gilbert of the Associated Press shaped how the nation and the world, in 1863 and even today, think about the Gettysburg Address. What if Gilbert had offered an inaccurate reporting of Lincoln's

⁶⁹ Ronald F. Reid, "Newspaper Responses to the Gettysburg Addresses," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 53 (February 1967): 51-53, 59.

words? Or what if he had completely ignored them, as Richmond's editors did? If Northern reports in 1863 ignored Lincoln's words, what would Americans think of them today? What we do know is that the account Gilbert penned that day formed the bulk of the story used in New York, Richmond, London, and even in Gettysburg.

Given the common origins of all these news items and editorials, the different responses to the speeches are notable. In all four locations, Gettysburg included, the editors reacted to the events at Gettysburg in ways that advanced their own agendas, and those of their cities, regions, and nations. In Gettysburg the editors sought to remind the wider readership of the important place of the town in the nation's history. It had borne the experience of battle, and birthed a commemoration of epic proportions. In a very real sense the editors sought to ensure the town's link to the deeds and words that had transpired there in July and November, 1863.

In the 1860s New York had only recently taken the role of leading city from Boston, and in many ways remained uneasy in that position. At any rate, a tremendous rivalry existed between the two cities. Republicans and abolitionists dominated Massachusetts, and Boston in particular, while the pro-slavery Tammany Hall Democrats ruled New York City. Edward Everett was a natural target for the New York editors, regardless of his words. Furthermore, the style of Everett's oration, a long explanation of the battle and its significance, was old hat to New Yorkers. With seventeen daily papers publishing during the war, people in the city saw numerous accounts of the great battle. In smaller towns with fewer papers, Everett's oration seemed new and fresh, but not so in New York. Further, while New Yorkers comprised

a major number of the common soldiers in the Army of the Potomac, Everett chose to focus his speech more on the generals. At the Battle of Gettysburg the high ranking officers who performed well did not come from New York, and thus Everett largely left the state out of his narration. In hindsight it must have seemed almost predictable to New York's editors that Everett would gloss over the deeds of their neighbors in his oration, and thus they sought to get even in their evaluations of his words. Having given no such offense, the editors virtually ignored Lincoln.

In Richmond the editors sought to do their bit in fostering and building Confederate nationalism by including the portion of the ceremonies sure to bring their constituents together in a common hatred of the Yankees, while downplaying and omitting the portions that may have urged a rethinking of the war's causes and purposes. Thus, these editors highlighted Edward Everett's comments about the divisions within the Confederacy in an attempt to rally support for the war. They suppressed Lincoln's words about equality and freedom, unable to find a way to disavow them without denigrating one of their own, Thomas Jefferson.

Londoners had much less at stake in the American Civil War than New York, Gettysburg, or Richmond, but there remained plenty in the Gettysburg ceremonies to catch their attention. Londoners could not ascertain the level of Lincoln's sincerity in his increasingly frequent antislavery statements, and thus the city's editors largely left his address alone. He had quoted the Declaration of Independence, a document aimed at their king less than a century earlier. But Everett's categorization of the Confederacy's ships as pirates caused greater concern. London built many of those ships, and British

ports outfitted and supplied many more over the preceding two years. Thus Everett's implication that England flaunted the rules of war and of the sea concerned Londoners. Further, Englishmen took offense that Everett, having tried unsuccessfully to drag their nation into mediating the conflict, had changed tact and now vigorously supported the war.

Thus, in New York, Gettysburg, Richmond, and London, editors evaluated the dedication ceremonies at Gettysburg, and specifically the speeches by Seward, Everett, and Lincoln, not on their own merits but on the basis of how the words affected the peoples in those cities. Not even London, a city 3,000 miles away and without a formal ally in the conflict, remained impartial enough to evaluate the speeches based on their messages. As a result, though many editors offered quick comments either lauding or condemning the Gettysburg Address, usually for its literary qualities, few offered any consideration of the controversial, even revolutionary, ideas that Lincoln proposed. The general nature of Lincoln's comments that gave it a relevance across both time and space meant that in 1863 readers found little that *demand*ed a response in the way that Seward's and Everett's orations did. The world in 1863 responded, Charles Baum later recalled, with "profound silence."⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Charles Baum, "President Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg, Pa., November 19th, 1863," Statement written December 17, 1935. Gettysburg College Library Special Collections.

CHAPTER IV

“A PROPHET WITH A VISION”: 1913-1922

“The gaze of the younger persons of the audience fastened on those silver heads and furrowed features, listening to the reminiscences of participants in the older scenes, enabled them without the aid of much imagination to consider themselves a part of, and witnesses to, the soul-stirring scene of fifty years ago.”

Star and Sentinel
November 26, 1913

In 1863 most editors passed over Abraham Lincoln’s words at Gettysburg rather quickly and gave more consideration to one of the other speakers. By 1913, however, questions of slavery and secession no longer reverberated, and thus readers had no time for William Seward, Edward Everett, and their 1863-specific speeches. But not everyone was ready to accept Lincoln, either. While most people, North and South, agreed that Lincoln’s words at Gettysburg possessed an eloquence rarely surpassed, that was the extent of a coherent national interpretation of the Gettysburg Address. From the end of the war until the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922 some, including Charles Sumner and Robert Morton, to name two, reminded Americans that Lincoln’s fundamental message connected democracy and equality. But most rejected this connection, either because they believed it wrong or because they knew others did and they wished to avoid reopening sectional divisions.

But a simpler reading of Lincoln’s words focused on just that final phrase (“government of the people, by the people, for the people”) and provided a tool to critique a number of problems in America, and thus gave currency to Lincoln’s speech in

the 1910s. This reflected the beginnings of a slow evolution in the memory of the Gettysburg event: in 1863 the speeches at the fore were those by Lincoln's colleagues; from 1913 to 1922 it was Lincoln's address that people focused on, but not the whole speech. By focusing on that final phrase many looked to use a national document to advance local interests, a tenuous proposition at best that perpetuated rather than dissipated regional tensions.

From Death to Rebirth, 1865-1890

After Lincoln's death on April 15, 1865, eulogies throughout the North frequently invoked the Gettysburg Address. They tended to note Lincoln's eloquence, but had little to say regarding the political and moral philosophy undergirding the speech. In Gettysburg, Reverend D. T. Carnahan of the Presbyterian Church reminded his audience of both Lincoln's first inaugural address and the Gettysburg Address:

And if the blood they shed in the holy cause of righteousness, humanity and God, shall serve to erase any stain of dishonor from our national escutcheon, and cement the Union in more indissoluble bonds than ever: - if every blood-stained battle-field and patriot-grave all over the land shall serve to inflame us with a deeper abhorrence of every spirit of lawlessness and insubordination, and inspire us with a purer and sublimer patriotism – a patriotism which, soaring toward heaven, shall rise above all mean, low, selfish, and party considerations, and make God and our country the great objects of life; and prompt to deeds of self-sacrifice, of valor, and of devotion even unto death itself for every high and noble principle which tends to the glory of God and our country – then, the mighty host of patriot-martyrs, headed by Abraham Lincoln, will not have died in vain.¹

¹ D. T. Carnahan, *Oration on the Death of Abraham Lincoln, Sixteenth President of the United States, Delivered Before the Citizens of Gettysburg, Pa., June 1, 1865* (Gettysburg: Aughinbaugh & Wible, 1865), 24.

In Philadelphia, Phillips Brooks quoted Lincoln's last paragraph,² while in New York John McClintock noted "the thrill with which I read it . . . he was enabled to pierce to the very core of a matter, while others, with their fine rhetoric, could only talk around it."³ In New London, Connecticut, Reverend Thomas Field claimed Lincoln's words "will live and be repeated as long, at least, as the great oration of the distinguished orator," and then quoted his closing paragraph. In a prophetic statement, Field concluded, "These were the words of a man who had great force of thought, power of eloquence, and whose words will arouse the hearts of his countrymen to purer patriotic purposes in generation[sic] to come."⁴

In June, Senator Charles Sumner eulogized Lincoln in Boston, titling his speech "Promises of the Declaration of Independence, and Abraham Lincoln." Sumner, the ardent abolitionist who did his best to tug Lincoln towards that position, predictably cast the war as one about "*the Liberty and Equality of all men.*" Sumner noted that at Gettysburg, "The President, with unconscious power, dealt another blow, second only to the Proclamation of Emancipation," and that "his few words will live long as Time." Like Field, Sumner offered a prophetic vision of the speech's importance and longevity:

² Phillips Brooks, *The Life and Death of Abraham Lincoln: A Sermon Preached at the Church of the Holy Trinity, Philadelphia, Sunday Morning, April 23, 1865* (Philadelphia: H. B. Ashmead, 1865), 24.

³ John McClintock, *Discourse Delivered on the Day of the Funeral of President Lincoln, Wednesday, April 19, 1865, In St. Paul's Church, New York* (New York: J. M. Bradstreet & Son, 1865), 14.

⁴ _____, *Funeral Observances at New London, Connecticut, in Honor of Abraham Lincoln, Sixteenth President of the United States, Wednesday, April 19, 1865, Including the Public Addresses of Rev. G. B. Willcox, and Rev. Thomas P. Field, D.D.* (New London: Star & Farnham, 1865), 28-29.

“That speech, uttered at the field of Gettysburg, and now sanctified by the martyrdom of its author, is a monumental act . . . The battle itself was less important than the speech.”⁵

In contrast Southerners and overseas papers did not use the Gettysburg Address to eulogize Lincoln. Richmond’s papers, noted Lincoln’s passing but did not mention his Gettysburg oration. George Bacon’s 1865 biography of Lincoln, published in London, reprinted a number of the columns run in English and French newspapers after Lincoln’s death, including those from most of London’s major papers, and yet none referenced Lincoln’s most famous speech. Bacon’s biography quoted the entire Address but offered little commentary.⁶

In his 1866 oration delivered to Congress on Lincoln’s birthday, George Bancroft also invoked the Gettysburg Address. Showing himself Edward Everett’s equal, Bancroft first mentioned Lincoln, the supposed subject of his discourse, on the sixteenth page of his oration. Titled *Memorial Address on the Life and Character of Abraham Lincoln*, Bancroft’s overarching theme was the sin of slavery, and Lincoln’s role as savior in ridding the nation of its great evil. An early mention that the Declaration’s phrase that “all men are created equal” was the “corner-stone of America” foreshadowed a later invocation of the Gettysburg Address. Under Lincoln, “The nation had its new birth of freedom, soon to be secured forever by an amendment of the Constitution.” Noting “not in vain has Lincoln lived,” and after acknowledging also the supreme

⁵ Charles Sumner, “Promises of the Declaration of Independence, and Abraham Lincoln: Eulogy on Abraham Lincoln, Before the Municipal Authorities of the City of Boston, June 1, 1865,” in *Charles Sumner His Complete Works*, 20 vols. (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1900), 12:248, 271-272.

⁶ G. W. Bacon, *The Life and Administration of Abraham Lincoln* (London: S. Low, Son, and Marston, 1865), 75.

sacrifice offered by many during the war, Bancroft asserted that they and “he, the chief martyr, gave up their lives willingly ‘that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.’”⁷

Funeral orations did not have a monopoly on invocations of the Gettysburg Address in the 1860s. On July 4, 1865, organizers laid the cornerstone for a monument in the center of the graves in the Soldiers’ National Cemetery at Gettysburg. The monument honored the soldiers, not Lincoln, and featured statues representing liberty, war, history, peace, and plenty.⁸ General Oliver Otis Howard, the general posted on Cemetery Hill during the battle, delivered the main oration at the dedication. While Howard performed unevenly in combat, his commitment to abolition and rights for African Americans never wavered. Thus, it is not surprising that Howard recited Lincoln’s entire Gettysburg Address that day.⁹

At the unveiling of the completed monument four years later, Oliver Morton, then a United States senator and formerly the wartime governor of Indiana, also invoked Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address. In his speech Morton reminded the audience of Lincoln’s commitment both to equality and democracy. He quoted Lincoln’s call for the nation to have a “new birth of freedom,” and reasserted that government “of the people,

⁷ George Bancroft, *Memorial Address of the Life and Character of Abraham Lincoln* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1866), 7, 16, 41-43.

⁸ _____, *Revised Report of the Select Committee Relative to the Soldiers’ National Cemetery Together with the House of Representatives and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, PA: Singerly & Myers, 1865), 153.

⁹ John Russell Bartlett, *The Soldiers’ National Cemetery at Gettysburg: With the Proceedings at Its Consecration, at the Laying of the Corner-Stone of the Monument, and at Its Dedication* (Providence, RI: Board of Commissioners of the Soldiers' National Cemetery, 1874), 63, 66.

by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” Much like the newspaper coverage of the original cemetery dedication six years earlier, the press skewered the main speaker.¹⁰ A *New York Times* editorial on July 2, 1869, noted disappointment with Morton’s oration. Not content to stop there, the *Times* continued, “We pronounce his speech of yesterday a great disappointment – a disappointment greater even than we experienced in listening to the speech of EDWARD EVERETT at the same place.” In 1863 the *Times* said little about Lincoln’s oration at Gettysburg, but in 1869 the editor noted, “Neither MORTON’s speech nor EVERETT’s, at Gettysburg, is worth much; but when we recall the brief and immortal speech delivered at the same place by President Lincoln, we are satisfied with the one supreme gem of eloquence which Gettysburg has called forth.” The paper also reprinted Lincoln’s entire address on the front page.¹¹

Sumner, Bancroft, Howard, and Morton stand in marked contrast to the editors from 1863 who refused to consider Lincoln’s comments about the center of equality in a democracy. They also represent a break with most commentators over the ensuing half century who also avoided the subject. But in the immediate aftermath of the war, when the new Constitutional amendments promised real change, and Reconstruction had not yet failed, Lincoln’s goal of democracy with equality came closer to fruition than it would again for nearly a century, prompting this outpouring of comments.

¹⁰ Bartlett, *Soldiers’ National Cemetery*, 101.

¹¹ “The Gettysburg Oration,” *New York Times*, July 2, 1869, p. 4.

Outside Gettysburg, the references to the Gettysburg Address remained few and far between until at least the 1890s. A *New York Times* search for articles including the keywords “Lincoln” and “Gettysburg” turns up just three results from the 1860s, five in the 1870s, fourteen in the 1880s, and then 105 in the 1890s. The first decade of the twentieth century saw 200 such articles, and the second 204.

Most who invoked the Address did so to point out the current problems with democracy, the form of government Lincoln referenced in that final line: “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” Corruption and disenfranchisement marked the era. On October 18, 1879, *Harper’s Weekly* ran an illustration by German-born Thomas Nast titled “Death at the Polls, and Free From All ‘Federal Interference.’” The image portrayed Southern efforts to overturn federal supervision of elections, and featured a skeleton holding a rifle in his hands and standing on top of African-American bodies. An inscription read, “Is ‘a government of the people, for the people, and by the people,’ to be shot to death?” A decade later Joseph Keppler of *Puck Magazine* drew a political cartoon bemoaning the control big business held over the Senate. The illustration contained a plaque reading, “This is a Senate of the monopolists, by the monopolists, and for the monopolists!”¹²

In the 1890s many used the Gettysburg Address to critique the government, no doubt in part due to the sudden proliferation of books on Lincoln that reminded the nation of the sixteenth president and his most famous speech. It is also assuredly related to the rise of the Populists. Dedicated to the common man, the Populists and likeminded

¹² *Puck Magazine*, January 23, 1889. Keppler titled the cartoon “Bosses of the Senate.”

reformers frequently quoted Lincoln's final line of the Address: "That government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth." In 1890 Mary Lease, famed for allegedly exhorting Kansas farmers to "raise more hell and less corn," categorized the United States as "a nation of inconsistencies," and noted, "It is no longer a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, but a government of Wall Street, by Wall Street, and for Wall Street."¹³ On July 4 of that same year Colonel L. L. Polk, a resident of North Carolina and the president of the Southern (Farmers') Alliance waxed, "When I mingle with the dark waters I want to cast one lingering look upon a country whose government is of the people, for the people, and by the people."¹⁴ In 1896 the *Denver News* carried an article, reprinted in the *Atlanta Constitution* on April 17, stating, "Lincoln ought to rise from the grave and make one more speech at Gettysburg in recognition of the fact that government by the bosses, for the bosses and of the bosses has pretty effectually supplanted government by the people."¹⁵

Though the reference came a bit later, William Jennings Bryan, famed Populist orator (though he always ran as a Democrat), declared on the centennial of Lincoln's birth: "His Gettysburg Address is not surpassed, if equaled, in simplicity, force, and appropriateness by any speech of the same length of any language. It is the world's model in eloquence, elegance, and condensation." That was high praise from the man

¹³ Mary Lease, "Wall Street Owns the Country," 1890 (widely available in anthologies and online).

¹⁴ *National Economist*, July 16, 1892, p. 281.

¹⁵ "Make Lincoln Rise From His Grave," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 17, 1896, p. 9.

who delivered arguably the nineteenth century's second greatest American oration, the "Cross of Gold" speech at the 1896 Democratic convention.¹⁶

Underlying this Populist rhetoric was the implication that the Gettysburg Address guaranteed the commoners supremacy over the elite. A letter to the editor of the *Literary Digest* in the July 1898 issue written by C. Birnie of Taneytown, Maryland, continued that theme. Noting his own presence at the dedication ceremonies, Birnie contended that while the "educated" men in the crowd did not grasp the significance of the Address, "The effect on the most of them, the plain people, was profound."

Though little discussed during most of the sordid Gilded Age with its dirty politics and triumph of the elite, the reemergence of the common man beginning with the Populists and carrying through to the Progressive reforms and New Deal era, brought Lincoln back into the limelight. The increased interest in Lincoln brought more fame to his greatest speech, in part because its vagueness and timelessness allowed application to events far distant from the cemetery dedication in November 1863.

50th Anniversary of the Battle

Off and on for nearly five years state and local officials, as well as the various veterans' organizations, planned a fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Battle of Gettysburg. Organizers invited veterans from states on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line. President Woodrow Wilson, a native Virginian elected to the nation's highest

¹⁶ William Jennings Bryan, "Lincoln as an Orator," in *Speeches of William Jennings Bryan*, vol. 2 (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1911), 423.

office in 1912, consented to speak at the reunion.¹⁷ The *Times* of London hailed this as a great sign of sectional reconciliation: “The celebrations are receiving an extreme amount of detailed attention from the Press, which hails the fraternizing of the North and South on the bloodiest and most important battlefield of the war as a signal sign of the disappearance of sectionalism.”¹⁸ Another editorial noted, “It is because the cause on both sides was such as good men may fight for and die for that the victors and vanquished have long since become brothers again.” The article suggested that Stonewall Jackson’s frequent comments about honor spoke for the South, while, “The voice of the North is heard in those wonderful words which Lincoln spoke on this same field of Gettysburg when, a few months after the battle, it was made sacred to the dead. They are amongst the simplest in modern oratory, and they are perhaps the most impressive.”¹⁹

Woodrow Wilson continued this reconciliationist theme on July 4, the last day of the reunion. In his 2001 work *Race and Reunion*, historian David Blight contends that in the early twentieth-century white Northerners and Southerners ignored the moral issues behind the war, namely slavery, in favor of sectional reconciliation.²⁰ Wilson’s oration at Gettysburg on that Independence Day supports Blight’s point. Rather than talk about the lynching of thousands of African-Americans in the preceding decades, or their

¹⁷ Gettysburg National Military Park Commission, *Annual Reports of the Gettysburg National Military Park Commission to the Secretary of War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1913), 190.

¹⁸ “Reunion on Gettysburg Battlefield,” *Times* (London), July 1, 1913, p. 7.

¹⁹ “Gettysburg,” *Times* (London), July 3, 1913, p. 9.

²⁰ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2001), dust jacket.

continued disenfranchisement, Wilson noted “how wholesome and healing the peace has been!” Wilson continued, “We have found one another again as brothers and comrades in arm, enemies no longer, generous friends rather, our battles long past, the quarrel forgotten.” Wilson did not mention the Gettysburg Address, an odd omission given both the location of his speech and his particular message.²¹ The following day the *Baltimore Afro-American* wrote in response to Wilson’s speech that it wondered “whether Mr. Lincoln had the slightest idea in his mind that the time would ever come when the people of this country would come to the conclusion that by the ‘People’ he meant only white people.” This might explain why Wilson left out any mention of the Gettysburg Address, but in fact most overstate the supposed sectional healing between the whites of the North and South.²²

It is ironic that the *Baltimore Afro-American* used the Gettysburg Address to critique Wilson’s comments and the status of black people in the United States, for the Virginian claimed a fondness for the speech. In addition to being a politician and the President of the United States, Wilson was a professionally trained historian who wrote a multi-volume history of the United States in 1902. In the section dealing with the Civil War he included a facsimile of the Gettysburg Address, but made no comment on the

²¹ Woodrow Wilson, “An Address at the Gettysburg Battlefield, July 4, 1913,” in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 69 vols., ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966-1994), 28: 23-26 (hereafter *Wilson Papers*).

²² “A Government of the People,” *Baltimore Afro-American Ledger*, July 5, 1913, p. 4.

speech.²³ However, Wilson unabashedly admired Lincoln, and once told a dinner guest that he rated the Gettysburg Address “*very very high*.”²⁴

As a Progressive, Wilson wanted to expand federal authority, and admired Lincoln’s ability to seize so much power for the presidency. In remarks at a 1916 dinner after he won a second presidential term Wilson noted, “This, then, to repeat that beautiful phrase of Lincoln’s in his Gettysburg Address, ‘is not a time of congratulation but a time of rededication.’” While botching the wording, his sentiment rang true.²⁵

Throughout his presidency the public frequently linked Wilson to Lincoln, sometimes in a complimentary fashion, other times as an insult. Wilson’s papers contain several letters from everyday people such as Lillian Walden and Edward Sheldon complimenting him by comparing various speeches he made with the Gettysburg Address. All of these comparisons came from Northerners, not Southerners. While Northerners considered comparisons to the Gettysburg Address as complimentary, it appears that Southerners did not, revealing the continued regional divide after it had supposedly dissipated.²⁶

²³ Woodrow Wilson, *History of the American People* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1918), 4:308-309.

²⁴ “From the Diary of Colonel House,” December 22, 1913, *Wilson Papers*, 29:55.

²⁵ “After-Dinner Remarks,” December 21, 1916, *Wilson Papers*, 40:121.

²⁶ Lillian D. Walden to Woodrow Wilson, January 24, 1917, in *Wilson Papers*, 41:7-8; Diary of Thomas W. Brahaney, April 6, 1917, in *Wilson Papers*, 41:558; Edward Wright Sheldon to Woodrow Wilson, March 9, 1917, in *Wilson Papers*, 41:38.

The View from England

Although Southerners had no time for the Gettysburg Address, Englishmen did. On November 6, 1913, less than two weeks before the semi-centennial of the Address, Earl George Nathaniel Curzon offered the Rede Lecture at the University of Cambridge. Then the Chancellor of Oxford University, Curzon had also served as the Viceroy of India (1899-1905), President of the Air Board (1916-1917), Leader of the House of Lords (1916-1924), Lord President of the Council (1916-1919), and Foreign Secretary (1919-1924). In addition to his distinguished career in government service, Curzon published a number of books, mostly dealing with his travels through regions in Asia with which Britain was particularly concerned in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Curzon's lecture on "Modern Parliamentary Eloquence," evaluated many orators and their finest efforts of the preceding decades. Curzon concluded, "In this long review of the Parliamentary achievements of the past, the question may be asked whether any speech or speeches appear to stand out as the best and most perfect examples of the art whose many phases I have examined." After qualifying his forthcoming response by indicating its difficulty, Earl Curzon admitted, "Three speeches, however, in the English language have always appeared to me to emerge with a superiority which if not indisputable, will perhaps not be seriously disputed – much in the same way as the Funeral Oration of Pericles was generally allowed to be the masterpiece of the ancient world."²⁷

²⁷ Earl George Curzon, *Modern Parliamentary Eloquence* (London: MacMillan, 1914), 72-73.

Curzon first discussed William Pitt's response following a toast to his health in November 1805 just three weeks after the British victory over Napoleon's navy at the battle of Trafalgar. In accepting the toast Pitt declared, "I return you many thanks for the honour you have done me. But Europe is not to be saved by any single man. England has saved herself by her exertions, and will, as I trust, save Europe by her example."²⁸

Curzon quickly moved past the British statesman, noting, "Abraham Lincoln was the author of both the other speeches. Everyone knows them, they are part of the intellectual patrimony of the English-speaking race." This particular phrasing reflects Britain's desire to cement its special relationship with the United States, fearing the eventual outbreak of war with Germany. Curzon's promotion of the Gettysburg Address as a transnational document linking the United States and Great Britain supports the argument that in this era locales defined and interpreted the Address in such a way to advance their own parochial interests.²⁹

Curzon quoted the entire Address, offering a version that closely but not exactly conformed to the final draft Lincoln had written in 1864. Comparing the Briton and American, Curzon asked, "Pitt's speech occupied only a few seconds in delivery, Lincoln's less than three minutes: and yet where are the world-famed pages, the crowded hours of rhetoric, compared with these?" Curzon deemed Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, specifically its phrase identifying slavery as the cause of the war, the other

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid, 73.

challenger. Curzon concluded by calling the two offerings “the purest gold of human eloquence” and noting that they belonged “among the glories and the treasures of mankind,” Curzon resisted ranking one over the other: “I escape the task of deciding which is the masterpiece of modern English eloquence by awarding the prize to an American.”³⁰

The next day the *Times* of London summarized Curzon’s speech, and soon the American papers did also. Both the *New York Herald* and *New York Evening Post* took note of Curzon’s speech, on November 19 and 24 respectively, thereby helping cement the fond feelings between England and the United States, or at least the Northern portions.

Most biographies of Lincoln published in England during this era seemed to accept the immortality of Lincoln’s Address so implicitly that they offered little commentary on the speech beyond a mere nod to its greatness and a reprinting of the text. In 1889 the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a mission of the Anglican Church founded in 1698, published a short biography of Lincoln written by George Barnett Smith and titled *Abraham Lincoln: Farmer’s Boy and President*. The book reprinted the complete text of the Gettysburg Address, the only speech fully covered. After quoting Everett’s comment that he would gladly trade his words for Lincoln’s the author moved on to other topics.

The biography of Lincoln penned by Lord Charnwood in 1916 offered similar coverage. Of the Gettysburg Address Charnwood simply noted, “The few words of

³⁰ Ibid, 73-75.

Abraham Lincoln were such as perhaps sank deep, but left his audience unaware that a classic had been spoken which would endure with the English language.” A printing of the Address concluded without offering any additional evaluation, but rather the beginning of a new section.³¹ The thirty-fifth printing of the book came out in 1940, a testament to its reach and influence.³²

Edith Elias’ 1916 biography offered barely more than had Charnwood. In a chapter titled “The End of Slavery,” Elias declared that Lincoln’s speech “has become immortal,” and offered the complete text of the Address. In conclusion Elias posited, “Lincoln felt a slight stir of disappointment among the listeners. . . . But Time has completely changed the verdict of the disappointed listeners. The little speech, so simple yet so nobly befitting the occasion, has been given a high place among the finest prose literature in the world, and as long as the English tongue is spoken it will never be forgotten.”³³

While Englishmen largely ignored the Gettysburg Address in 1863, instead focusing on the words of William Seward or Edward Everett, by 1913 they no longer mentioned Seward’s role at Gettysburg and only invoked Everett as a lesson against making long speeches. In 1863 the possibility of war between Britain and the United States existed, and as such the provocations offered by Seward and Everett interested Englishmen more than the non-specific language Lincoln employed in his brief speech.

³¹ Lord Charnwood, *Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Henry Holt, 1916), 362-363.

³² Jay Monaghan, “Lincoln’s Debt to the British,” *Lincoln Herald* 47 (June 1945): 37.

³³ Edith L. Elias, *Abraham Lincoln* (London: George G. Harrap, 1916), 164-165.

But by 1913 Britain sought to cement their understood alliance with the United States, necessitating a glossing over of past troubles such as those alluded to by the New Englanders at Gettysburg. On the other hand, by emphasizing the Gettysburg Address as one of the greatest in the *English* language, Englishmen implicitly offered the counterpart that Germans did not understand the speech either linguistically or politically, and thus would be unfit allies for the Americans. On the domestic front, England dealt with issues of secession and home rule in the 1910s with their “Irish Question,” and the Gettysburg Address argued in favor of unity and centralization. The preceding examples make clear that England and the Northern states shared a much closer conception of the significance of Lincoln’s words than did the two formerly warring and still-hostile sections of the United States.

An Official Version

The exact text of Lincoln’s speech remained a mystery of some interest, and fascination with identifying an official version intensified in the early 1900s. Congress printed many conflicting versions of the Address, and with more and more monuments, including the proposed Lincoln Memorial, looking to etch Lincoln’s words in marble and stone, it only made sense to agree on a single text. In supporting one version or another, Americans again revealed that local concerns dominated their responses to nearly all events, even those of national significance.³⁴

³⁴ ____, *Abraham Lincoln: First and Second Inaugural Addresses; Message July 5, 1861; Proclamation, January 1, 1863; Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909), 34-35. This pamphlet printed both the Bliss and Everett copies on adjoining pages. The version used for this paper is located at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, and an attached letter indicates

A 1909 proposal to place a marker containing the text of the Gettysburg Address in each of the country's national cemeteries prompted a major consideration of the various copies of the Address then circulating. The extent of this issue is clearly evidenced by the scrapbook on the matter kept by Colonel John P. Nicholson, the chairman of the Gettysburg National Park Commission, between 1909 and 1920. The scrapbook stretches almost 100 pages, many with multiple clippings.³⁵

Much of this confusion originated with Lincoln himself. In the four months after the ceremonies, Lincoln wrote out and distributed five different copies of the Gettysburg Address. Lincoln wrote the first draft partly on Executive Mansion stationery and partly on regular paper, and the second draft on the same type of paper as the second page of the first draft. The early histories of the first two copies are somewhat of a mystery, but it seems likely John Nicolay had both until 1901, when they passed from his estate to John Hay. In 1916 the Hay family donated both manuscripts to the Library of Congress where they continue to reside. In early 1864 Edward Everett asked Lincoln for a copy so that he might auction it off to raise money for the New York Sanitary Fair. The copy remained in private hands until the 1940s, at which time the estate of James Ames generously offered the document to the Illinois State Historical Society for the sum of \$60,000, much less than Ames' original purchase price. Schoolchildren raised the lion's share of the money by donating their pennies. When they fell short, Chicago millionaire

that only a limited number were printed, and were intended for the use of senators on the occasion of the Lincoln birth centennial on February 12, 1909.

³⁵ John P. Nicholson, "Scrapbook Containing Correspondence & Related Items Regarding the Movement for Placing Bronze Tablets of the Gettysburg Address, 1909-1920," Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, IL.

Marshall Field III stepped in and contributed the balance. This copy, frequently referenced as either the Everett or Illinois version, is now in the collection of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. In 1864 historian George Bancroft requested a copy for a collection to be bound and reproduced for sale at the Baltimore Sanitary Fair. The original version remained in the possession of Bancroft's family until 1929. In 1949 a benefactor purchased the speech and donated it to Cornell University, where it remains. The Bliss copy, the final version and the one now commonly accepted, came about as a result of an accident. When Lincoln produced the copy for George Bancroft he wrote on both sides of the sheet of paper, something that made reproducing the item in the desired format impossible. Thus, Bancroft's stepson, Alexander Bliss, requested another copy. The president complied, and the original remained in the hands of the Bliss family until 1949. The Bliss version was also a "mistake" in that it consists of three pages, not the desired two. Cuban Oscar Cinta purchased the draft in 1949, and willed that it pass on to the American people upon his death, which occurred in 1957. It is now located in the Lincoln Bedroom.³⁶

Unfortunately, each version differs. Lincoln continued to edit the Address in ways that did not greatly change the meaning of what he had to say but certainly changed the look. There are convincing arguments for each of the first three copies' being the closest to what Lincoln *actually* said, while the Bliss version is probably closest to what Lincoln *wanted* to say. Robert Todd Lincoln certainly thought so. In a

³⁶ Boritt, *Gettysburg Gospel*, 287-290. For a convincing argument that the second copy was the version Lincoln read at Gettysburg, see Robert Fortenbaugh, "Lincoln as Gettysburg Saw Him," *Pennsylvania History* 14 (January 1947): 6.

May 5, 1909, letter to the quartermaster general now located in the John Nicholson scrapbook Lincoln noted: “The Baltimore Fair version represents my father’s last and best thought as to the address, and the corrections in it were legitimate for the author, and I think there is no doubt they improve the version as written out for Col. Hay, - and as I said to you before, I earnestly hope that the Baltimore Fair version will be used.”³⁷

In addition to these texts, there were various transcriptions of the Address recorded by those present, most notably by Joseph Gilbert. However, the *Chicago Times*, *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, and *Philadelphia Inquirer*, among legions of others, all offered their own competing transcriptions. Some are fairly close to Gilbert’s transcription and the various copies in Lincoln’s hand, others seem almost a different speech. In 1917 Joseph Gilbert insisted that, “Before the dedication ceremonies closed the President’s manuscript was copied, with his permission; and as the press report was made from the copy no transcription from shorthand notes was necessary.” The version Gilbert submitted for the Associated Press does not correlate to any of the five in Lincoln’s hand, making it *possible* that a sixth copy exists, or at least existed.³⁸

On February 20, 1913, the United States Senate adopted a joint resolution which stated, “Protests having been made that there are many different versions of Lincoln’s Gettysburg speech, which it is proposed to inscribe on the Lincoln Memorial to be built [in Washington D.C.], the Senate adopted Senator Root’s joint resolution to-day,

³⁷ Nicholson, *Scrapbook*.

³⁸ Joseph I. Gilbert, “Lincoln in 1861,” *Proceedings of the National Shorthand Reporters’ Association Annual Meeting* 19 (1917): 137.

authorizing a committee to report the correct version.”³⁹ The plan to build a memorial to Abraham Lincoln in Washington D.C. finally showed some progress. The design submitted by Henry Bacon included a wall with the text of the Gettysburg Address. Before construction could start, however, the designers had to know which version of Lincoln’s speech to reproduce. By 1913 more than one hundred published versions of the Address existed, making the confusion understandable.⁴⁰

Following the lead of the national press, a local Gettysburg paper weighed in on the issue in 1913, urging the acceptance of the version printed in its pages in 1863. On November 19, 1913, the *Star and Sentinel* carried a two-column wide picture of Lincoln taken just eleven days before his speech at Gettysburg in 1863 and a transcript of the Address on the front page. The version featured was an “Exact Reprint From the ‘Adams Sentinel’ of November 24, 1863,” the precursor to the *Star and Sentinel*. On the second page the editor noted that the transcript from 1863 “varies somewhat from the version now in popular use,” but contended, “There are many reasons that incline us to the belief that the Sentinel reported this speech as it was spoken by Mr. Lincoln, and received by the audience.” Most importantly, the paper’s editor in 1863, Robert G. Harper, lived next to David Wills, Lincoln’s host on the night preceding the dedication ceremonies. Secretary of State William Seward lodged with Harper on November 18, and Lincoln visited the residence to meet with his most trusted cabinet member, making it “practically certain that Mr. Harper came in personal contact with Mr. Lincoln during

³⁹ “Seek Lincoln’s Own Words,” *New York Times*, February 21, 1913, p. 6.

⁴⁰ Christopher A. Thomas, *The Lincoln Memorial & American Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), xxvii, 37, 65, 100.

his staying in Gettysburg.” Given that likelihood, the *Star and Sentinel* contended that Harper “could with all propriety, have secured his original copy from the President or his secretary.” Furthermore, “We believe he did this; that the Lincoln speech printed on the first page is the Lincoln speech that was actually delivered, and that the inserted marks of applause were the observations of a trained newspaper man.” Having built a case for the acceptance of Harper’s version of the Gettysburg Address, the *Star and Sentinel* asked, “Is it not reasonable to conclude that the impression of the newspaper man, set down less than three days after the occurrences can be accepted as the record of what actually occurred that day?” But in fact, as the preceding chapter revealed, the account printed in the *Adams Sentinel* of November 24, 1863, came from Joseph Gilbert of the Associated Press, not Robert Harper.

Regardless of who authored the text of the Gettysburg Address appearing in the November 24, 1863, *Adams Sentinel*, the 1913 discussion in the *Star and Sentinel* reveals the way local considerations shaped responses to a national issue.

Gettysburgians supported the national call for a single, authoritative version of the Gettysburg Address, but showed their parochialism by calling for the adoption of a locally authored version of the speech, despite the multiple copies of the speech in Lincoln’s own hand. The blind allegiance the townspeople showed one of their own is illustrated by their lack of recognition that an out-of-state reporter working for the Associated Press penned the version appearing in the *Adams Sentinel*.

Applause?

In their call to accept Robert Harper's version of the Gettysburg Address the *Star and Sentinel* also referred to another national debate: whether the audience had applauded during and after Lincoln's address. Gettysburgians considered the issue very significant. In 1863 many newspapers implicitly or explicitly contended that the audience did not applaud and clearly thought little of Lincoln's effort. Gettysburg's own Democratic paper, the *Compiler*, reprinted the text of Lincoln's address on November 23, 1863, but did not note applause either during the speech or at its conclusion. By 1913, when most Americans proclaimed the greatness and immortality of the speech, battle lines formed around the applause issue. A simple reason explains this split: Gettysburgians feared that those who contended they had not applauded implied they lacked the intelligence or sophistication to recognize the greatness of Lincoln's words in 1863.

The publication of two works in 1906 heightened their feeling of persecution. Clark Carr's *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, previously discussed, noted of the crowd "They could not possibly, in so short a time, mentally grasp the ideas that were conveyed, nor even their substance. Time and again expressions of disappointment were made to me."⁴¹ Gettysburgians found the implicit statement that Lincoln's words soared over the heads of the audience highly offensive, and sought to prove Carr wrong.

The second work was even more inflammatory. In the July 1906 edition of *Scribner's Magazine* Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews penned a piece of fiction titled

⁴¹ Clark E. Carr, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: An Address* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1906), 59.

“The Perfect Tribute.” In Andrews’ story “there was no sound from the silent, vast assembly” when Lincoln finished his oration. “He stared at them a moment with sad eyes full of greatness, of resignation, and in the deep quiet they stared at him. Not a hand was lifted in applause. . . there was no sound of approval, of recognition from the audience.” In “The Perfect Tribute” Lincoln visits a prison hospital in Washington D.C. the day after the Address and talks with a Confederate captain wounded at the Battle of Gettysburg. The fictional captain, a Georgian named Carter Hampton Blair, did not know the identity of his visitor, believing him simply a kind humanitarian. In the course of conversation the Confederate captain told his visitor that Lincoln “yesterday made one of the greatest speeches of history . . . not six times since history began has a speech been made which was its equal.” Thinking about the future, Blair noted, “It will live, that speech. Fifty years from now American school-boys will be learning it as part of their education.” Blair insisted on reading the Address aloud, “And as the sentences slipped from the lad’s mouth, behold, a miracle happened, for the man who had written them knew that they were great.” Within minutes the suffering captain passed away.⁴²

Andrews’ powerful literary work quickly captured the country’s imagination. The piece was printed in book format later that year, and was soon an integral part of school curricula across the country. But to Gettysburgians the suggestion that their lack of understanding of the Address greatly saddened Lincoln and that it took a Confederate to heal the wound they created was a serious charge. The audience’s reception of the

⁴² Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, “The Perfect Tribute,” *Scribner’s Magazine* XL (July 1906): 19, 21, 23-24.

Address, and the related applause issue, occupied a central role in reminiscences of the Address in the early twentieth century. The *Star and Sentinel* clearly articulated the two sides of the applause controversy:

The recollections of men now living in Gettysburg are at variance. Some remember the liberal applause that the Sentinel's report indicates. Others with equal certainty deny that there was any outward expression of approval. They were all young men. Their presence on that occasion was prompted by curiosity alone, and their present recollection is clouded by a lapse of fifty years of time.

In this passage the *Star and Sentinel* referred to the applause in the original transcription of Lincoln's speech by Joseph Gilbert. That version contained four breaks for applause and a notation of sustained applause at the end. But in a speech delivered at the annual meeting of the National Shorthand Reporters' Association in 1917, Gilbert asserted, "It was not a demonstrative nor even an appreciative audience. Narratives of the scene have described tumultuous outbursts of enthusiasm accompanying the President's utterances. I heard none. There were no outward manifestations of feeling." This was a remarkable statement from the man who had convinced many in 1863 that audience enthusiastically and loudly received the President's speech. Like the controversy over which text should be accepted, the question of whether the audience applauded remains to this day.⁴³

Gettysburg, 1913

On November 19, "Gettysburg's citizens united with the county's teachers in an audience that filled Walter's Theatre to overflowing, to hear a special Lincoln program."

⁴³ Gilbert, "Lincoln in 1861," 135.

That program, on the fiftieth anniversary of the speech, was the first major public commemoration of the Gettysburg Address in its namesake town.⁴⁴

Locally the speech had remained a subject of importance. In 1877 a railroad company identified the spot where Lincoln gave his speech as the “greatest attraction in the town” and encouraged tourists to ride the rails to the cemetery. A number of guidebooks, such as Luther Minnigh’s 1892 *Gettysburg – What They Did Here*, featured the Address prominently. Minnigh reproduced a line from the Address (“The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here”) on both the front cover and first page, and offered the entire text in a section about the cemetery.⁴⁵ A 1919 publication of the Automobile Club of America, *Gettysburg for the Motorist*, featured over three pages detailing the cemetery and Lincoln’s speech. By the early 1900s a large percentage of the town made its living through the tourism industry, meaning that many of the townspeople literally owed their livelihoods to the Gettysburg Address and its subject, the great battle.⁴⁶

Safeguarding the legacy of the Address became critically important to the vitality of their town and personal futures. The increasingly frequent invocations of snippets of the Gettysburg Address that divorced Lincoln’s words from their town caused concern, and led to local attempts to reassert authority over the remembrances and uses of the Gettysburg Address. While the issues Gettysburgians dealt with in their reminiscences

⁴⁴ “Lincoln Celebration,” *Star and Sentinel*, November 19, 1913, p. 3.

⁴⁵ Luther W. Minnigh, *Gettysburg: “What They Did Here ...” Historical Guide Book* (Mount Holly Springs, PA: Mount Holly Stationery and Printing Company, 1892), 56.

⁴⁶ Robert Bruce, *Gettysburg for the Motorist* (New York: Automobile Club of America, 1919), 23-26.

were determined at the national level, their individual thoughts and positions on the issues reflected local considerations.⁴⁷

The commemorative event came during the 59th Annual Adams County Teachers' Institute scheduled for November 17-21. On the opening day of the Institute the *Gettysburg Times* outlined the upcoming program:

William McSherry Esq. will tell the history of the Soldiers' National Cemetery; four short addresses will be made by Prof. Calvin Hamilton, Hon. Wm. McClean, Dr. T.C. Bilheimer and Dr. P. M. Bikle, telling of their memories of Lincoln's visit to Gettysburg; Judge S. McC. Swope will read the Lincoln Speech and the oration will be delivered by Rev. J.B. Baker. Dr. A.E. Wagner will make the prayer and there will be special music.

The selection of four educators to share their reminiscences of the Address indicates the important role the Adams County Teachers' Institute played in organizing the celebration. As for those who heard Lincoln speak but did not have a spot on the program, the newspaper noted, "Chairs will be provided on the stage for all those who were present in Gettysburg on November 19, 1863."⁴⁸

One of those likely on stage that day was Hugh Paxton Bigham, a local man who served in the 21st Pennsylvania Cavalry during the war and stood guard outside Lincoln's room at the David Wills home the night before he gave his speech. The *Star and Sentinel* wrote, "Mr. Bigham recalls that during the evening Mr. Lincoln desired to visit Secretary Seward at his stopping place and that he made way through the crowd for the party." Lincoln frequently asked Seward to read and recommend changes to his

⁴⁷ "Lincoln's Speech," *Star and Sentinel*, November 19, 1913, p. 2.

⁴⁸ "59th Annual Institute," *Gettysburg Times*, November 17, 1913, pp. 1-2.

public addresses (the First Inaugural. For example), and it seems likely he visited Seward with this end in mind. By illustrating the role of a local man in this drama, the Gettysburg papers of 1913 tightened the connections between the town and the Address.⁴⁹

All three of the local papers then publishing, the *Star and Sentinel* (1867-1961), *Compiler* (1818-1953), and *Gettysburg Times* (1909-), extensively covered the event. The daily *Gettysburg Times* carried its account on November 20, while the *Star and Sentinel* and *Compiler*, both weeklies, had to wait until November 26. The *Compiler* also published the proceedings in a pamphlet titled *Lincoln Anniversary Souvenir*. The text offered in the *Souvenir* and *Compiler* is the same as that appearing in the *Star and Sentinel* of November 26, indicating some sort of cooperative effort. While both the *Star and Sentinel* and the *Compiler*'s pamphlet published the speakers' full orations, the *Gettysburg Times* summarized the speeches more briefly. Additionally, the *Star and Sentinel* reprinted the entire coverage of the original 1863 dedication ceremonies that had appeared in the November 24, 1863, edition of the *Adams Sentinel*.

In reviewing the day's events, the *Gettysburg Times* noted that the ceremony "was one of the most successful events of the kind which the town has ever enjoyed . . . on the platform were a hundred men and women who heard Lincoln."⁵⁰ In the words of the *Star and Sentinel*, "The gaze of the younger persons of the audience fastened on

⁴⁹ Untitled piece in editor's column, *Star and Sentinel*, November 19, 1913, p. 2. For a discussion of the literary partnership between Lincoln and Seward in authoring Lincoln's First Inaugural see David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 282-284.

⁵⁰ "Anniversary of Lincoln Oration at Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Times*, November 20, 1913, p. 1.

those silver heads and furrowed features, listening to the reminiscences of participants in the older scenes, enabled them without the aid of much imagination to consider themselves a part of, and witnesses to, the soul-stirring scene of fifty years ago.” Those on stage linked the greatness of the Gettysburg Address and the man who had authored it to the present day, ensuring their own place in the town’s history.⁵¹

After a musical selection from local teachers and an invocation from Dr. A. E. Wagner, William McSherry, a local lawyer, offered a history of the National Cemetery beginning with the battle and continuing up to the moment of his address. McSherry affirmed local pride in the cemetery, calling it “the most beautiful national cemetery in all the civilized world.” For the most part McSherry’s address recounted the various important dates and people involved in establishing and maintaining the cemetery. The one exception was in his categorization of the Gettysburg Address as, “That wonderful address of about twenty lines, which is recognized as one of the literary gems of the world, and is remembered and known and admired wherever the English language is spoken.” While the *Star and Sentinel* reprinted McSherry’s comments about the Address, the brief summary of his remarks in the *Gettysburg Times* ignored that part of his speech. The omission is puzzling as the title of the column indicated that it was about Lincoln’s speech, but could reflect the fact that McSherry did not hear Lincoln’s Address, while those who followed him did. The dismissal of his comments suggests a

⁵¹ “Pay Tribute to Lincoln,” *Star and Sentinel*, November 26, 1913, p. 1.

safeguarding of the legacy of the Address: only those present in 1863 could express an opinion on Lincoln's words.⁵²

Calvin Hamilton followed McSherry, the first of four to speak that day present at the 1863 dedication. Hamilton served with Company K of the 30th Pennsylvania (a company from Gettysburg) during the Civil War, and suffered a wound during the battle in his hometown. Left behind to recover, he was still in Gettysburg in November and "present that day on crutches, with an open wound" when Lincoln gave his Address. An 1862 graduate of Pennsylvania (now Gettysburg) College, Hamilton served as the president of the local school board for some time, and as the fifth superintendent of the National Cemetery, a position he held in 1913. All the local papers merely summarized Hamilton's speech, suggesting that it was given extemporaneously. The *Gettysburg Times* reported that Hamilton "could scarcely give an unbiased account of what occurred here on the day of dedication" as "4000 dead, many of them killed by his side and one of them a school mate" surrounded him. His encounter with Lincoln at Gettysburg was Hamilton's third, following encounters at the White House in 1861 and during the president's review of the army after Antietam in 1862. "I was thrilled each time and at Gettysburg possibly more by his presence than by anything he said."⁵³

⁵² Ibid, p. 4.

⁵³ "Anniversary of Lincoln Oration at Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Times*, November 20, 1913, p. 1; H. C. Bradsby, *1886 History of Adams County, Pennsylvania: Containing History of Their Counties, Their Townships, Towns, Villages, Schools, Churches, Industries, etc.; Portraits of Early Settlers and Prominent Men; Biographies* (Chicago: Warner, Beers & Co., 1886), 355; Undated obituary of Calvin Hamilton located in the files of the Gettysburg National Military Park Library.

The coverage in the *Star and Sentinel* and *Compiler* focused on Hamilton's personal experiences that day, noting that he had been on crutches and identified William McGrew as his deceased friend. Like the coverage in the *Gettysburg Times*, this pamphlet recorded Hamilton's assertion that he had not formed an impression of the Gettysburg Address, but the *Star and Sentinel* offered an explanation as to why:

As he stood there that day the memories of the fields of [c]arnage of the previous two years covering his service and particularly the impressive thought that the preparation of a last rest of the martyred dead of Gettysburg would provide an everlasting memorial for his bosom friend, so filled his mind that he received little impression from the spoken words.

Hamilton's implication is that the overwhelming emotion the ceremonies brought forth rendered him incapable of properly evaluating Lincoln's speech, something others likely felt as well. In this it is a complete rebuttal of the assertions by Clark Carr and Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews that Gettysburgians did not applaud because they neither understood nor appreciated Lincoln's words.⁵⁴

However, in a letter to New York collector John E. Boos just nine days later Hamilton offered almost a complete refutation of his reminiscences at the fiftieth anniversary celebration: "I remember how his presence and words thrilled me, but do not recall applause, though there may have been." The contradictions Hamilton authored are not easily sorted out. It is possible that he opened up more with fellow Gettysburgians than with strangers.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ "Pay Tribute to Lincoln," *Star and Sentinel*, November 26, 1913, p. 4.

⁵⁵ John E. Boos, *A Speech that Became Immortal* (Albany: privately printed, 1936), 23. This book is at the Library of Congress.

Calvin Hamilton's ambiguous remarks contrast sharply with the praise of Judge William McClean, who noted that Lincoln, "Stood in the gravity of his mien and manner as a seer with a message, as a prophet with a vision." Like McSherry, McClean offered substantial background information on the invitation of both Edward Everett and Abraham Lincoln to speak at the dedication ceremonies. McClean cited James A. Rebert, a local man serving in the 21st Pennsylvania Cavalry and assigned guard duty at the Wills house, who said told him at 9 a.m. on the morning of November 19 that he had just then wrapped up his remarks. While the date and place where Lincoln penned the Gettysburg Address may seem trivial, it mattered a great deal to these Gettysburgians. If Lincoln wrote the Address while actually in Gettysburg it linked the town even more closely to his speech than if he had composed it in Washington D.C. or on the train en route to Gettysburg. McClean's mention of this incident reveals, again, the interpretation of a national issue through a local lens.⁵⁶

Whereas the account in the *Gettysburg Times* implied that McClean had said little about Lincoln's actual speech, the *Star and Sentinel* rectified that misconception. McClean noted that Lincoln's speech consisted of a mere 267 words while Edward Everett's oration exceeded twenty-seven and a half printed pages. McClean took as his source for comparison the transcriptions of the speeches offered in the state of Pennsylvania's official report of the dedication ceremonies. McClean claimed to have stood "about eight feet from and facing Mr. Lincoln" and noted having "very little

⁵⁶ "Pay Tribute to Lincoln," *Star and Sentinel*, November 26, 1913, p. 4.

recollection of the President meeting with applause” other than that due to a man in his high position regardless of the occasion or performance.⁵⁷

McClellan broke Lincoln’s Address into three distinct parts and offered his opinion on each. In the opening paragraph McClellan noted that Lincoln affirmed that “all men are created equal, a principle that was heard and accepted and acted upon, not only by the thirteen colonies, but elsewhere throughout the world, by a Lafayette, a Kosciusko, Baron Steuben and others.” Lincoln used the word “nation” five times in the speech, McClellan observed, though he attributed no significance to that choice in words other than Lincoln’s love for his country. In concluding McClellan noted that Lincoln’s call for “a new birth of freedom” garnered an audience “in our own country, in France, Cuba, Philippines, Portugal, and on the other side of the world in China.”⁵⁸

In his speech McClellan discussed all three of the major issues then surrounding the Gettysburg Address: which version to accept, the reception by the audience, and the meaning of the speech. First, he urged the adoption of the version of the Address that appeared in the local *Adams Sentinel*, and a host of other places. His comment that he remembered little applause is enigmatic as McClellan offered no thoughts as to what that signified. The third issue, the meaning of the Address, provoked considerable debate.

In their writings in the late 1800s the Populists asserted that the Gettysburg Address affirmed the principle of democratic governance: “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” But in his speech at the fiftieth anniversary ceremonies,

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

William McClean offered the counterpoint: the Address remained significant due to its discussion of equality and freedom, not proper forms of government. The differences between the two viewpoints offered are substantial: an interpretation without equality left room for segregation and Jim Crow laws, which were then taking hold. In McClean's world, where a new birth of freedom meant equality for all, there was no space or justification for the racial apartheid then governing the South. This fundamental difference in interpretations of the Gettysburg Address grew increasingly evident over the ensuing half-century.

T.C. Billheimer followed McClean that day, and also spoke extemporaneously. He noted that Edward Everett's oration tired him out, and that the people did not anticipate much of Lincoln as his only other public speech on the East Coast, that at the Cooper Institute in 1860, "was a failure." According to Billheimer, "There was tremendous applause when [Lincoln] appeared, but with the conclusion came a feeling of awe that was not dispelled until the time for applause had passed."⁵⁹ Billheimer concluded, "There will never be another Lincoln – such a scene, such a speech, such a cause! It was an occasion of a man's lifetime. I have seen it. I am proud of it."⁶⁰

Like Hamilton, Billheimer attributed the lack of applause to the overwhelming emotion of both the occasion and the oration. Billheimer's explanation differs, though, in that it implies that the crowd had expected a poor performance out of the president and that his eloquence shocked them. Billheimer sent a copy of his remarks to a friend

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ "Anniversary of Lincoln Oration at Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Times*, November 20, 1913, p. 1.

of Boston, John Bruce McPherson, who contributed a column to the December 10, 1913, edition of the *Star and Sentinel* titled, “Was Lincoln’s Cooper Institute Speech a Failure? Dr. Billheimer’s Statement Refuted.” McPherson noted that Lincoln’s speech at the Cooper Institute “made an immense impression upon thinking people everywhere, and I am at a loss to imagine where Dr. Billheimer heard it was a failure or who his authority is for the statement.” McPherson offered a column and a half of evidence that the Cooper Institute speech significantly furthered Lincoln’s presidential ambitions. While the casual reference to the Cooper Institute speech bears little on the subject at hand, the interplay of a local comment (Billheimer’s address) on a national issue (the reception of the Gettysburg Address) that was then discussed and refuted in geographically dispersed centers of opinion (Boston) evidences widespread interest in the Address throughout much of the country. While Gettysburgians carefully protected the legacy of the Lincoln speech given in their town, they quickly called one of his speeches given in far away New York a failure.

Two weeks later Billheimer wrote to John Boos and completely contradicted what he had said at the fiftieth anniversary ceremonies. In that letter Billheimer contended, “There was applause when he finished.” As with Hamilton one can only speculate as to why Billheimer offered divergent opinions on the issue, though the earlier speculations of presenting a rosy picture to outsiders may explain this case as well.⁶¹

⁶¹ Boos, *A Speech*, n.p.

Philip Biklé, a former schoolmate of Billheimer's, took the podium next. Of all those who spoke on the fiftieth anniversary, Biklé alone admitted he did not fully appreciate Lincoln's speech at the time. "His short speech impressed me, a mere school boy, as very simple and very appropriate but nothing remarkable . . . but I have long since seen why it has been regarded also as a most remarkable speech." Unfortunately Biklé did not explain why his impression of the speech changed over the years. While the *Star and Sentinel* provided Biklé's full oration, the *Gettysburg Times* contained just a summary, leaving out entirely his evaluation of the speech and subsequent change of heart. As with the McSherry portion of the article, the *Gettysburg Times* ignored the aspect of the reminiscence dealing with the Gettysburg Address, possibly because Biklé had not offered a positive review.⁶²

Reverend Joseph B. Baker gave the main oration, the text of which the *Star and Sentinel* fully reprinted. After a long prelude on the souls and immortality of those who had fallen in the battle, and that of Lincoln himself, Baker began his commentary on the Gettysburg Address by incorporating some of its very lines into an evaluation: "While the world will little note nor long remember what we do here it can never forget what he said here." Ironically, we *do* remember what they said at that anniversary celebration in 1913, much as they remembered what Lincoln said at the original ceremony in 1863. Baker made especially clear the town's connection to Lincoln: "It is not given to many towns to be visited by the immortals; fewer yet have the privilege of entertaining them

⁶² "Pay Tribute to Lincoln," *Star and Sentinel*, November 26, 1913, p. 4; "Anniversary of Lincoln Oration at Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Times*, November 20, 1913, p. 1.

while they make themselves immortal.” Indirectly, Baker also offered his thoughts on the audience’s reception of Lincoln, “When Lincoln arose in Gettysburg the multitude saw him transfigured,” suggesting that the crowd understood they witnessed a masterpiece. The bulk of Baker’s speech put Lincoln in the context of his Greek, Roman, and Biblical predecessors, and finally into the American narrative. Despite his long soliloquy, Baker offered little evaluation of the speech’s meaning, instead choosing to state its greatness and focus his attention on placing the man, rather than his speech, in historical perspective.⁶³

Former Indiana Governor J. Frank Hanley offered the final thoughts of the day. Neither a witness to the speech, nor a resident of the town, Hanley had little to say about Lincoln’s oration, focusing instead on the cemetery itself. At the end Hanley noted it was a privilege to be on stage with men present fifty years earlier, and grasped Philip Biklé’s hand before returning to his seat.⁶⁴

Judge Samuel McC. Swope, a local man present at the dedication ceremonies as a thirteen-year-old boy, recited the Gettysburg Address for the audience. It is likely he used the Associated Press/*Adams Sentinel* transcription, Gettysburg’s favored choice at the time. The crowd sang “America” and then following a benediction by Dr. Wagner they dispersed.⁶⁵ While the day had all the makings of a joyous celebration, at least a

⁶³ “Pay Tribute to Lincoln,” *Star and Sentinel*, November 26, 1913, p. 4.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

few people found their wallets missing. In this sense little had changed since 1863, for pickpockets worked that crowd, too.⁶⁶

When the speakers at the fiftieth anniversary celebration of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address took center stage they were clearly aware of several national controversies surrounding the great speech: the selection of a correct version of the Address, the debate over whether applause followed the oration – or in other words, whether those present instantly recognized the speech as immortal – and finally the greater meaning of the speech. A reading of the reminiscences presented in Gettysburg on the fiftieth anniversary reveal how local considerations shaped that the answers each participant offered to these national questions.

The Gettysburg Address came from Abraham Lincoln, but it discussed events that occurred in *their* town, and was delivered (even partially written) *in* their town, and thus belonged to them. Furthermore, the importance of the Address to the local tourism industry, which employed a great many, gave Gettysburgians a vested interest in any public debate surrounding Lincoln's speech. To those who wrote from New York or Richmond proclaiming a particular viewpoint on the correct version of the speech or the applause issue or what exactly Lincoln had meant with his few lines, Gettysburgians pulled the ultimate trump card: they had attended the ceremonies, not these latter-day, out-of-state commentators, and they knew what really happened. When asked for their recollections of the events by outsiders they presented a rosy picture of applause and acceptance, while privately acknowledging a different story. While some considered the

⁶⁶ *Star and Sentinel*, December 3, 1913.

larger meaning of the Address, most Gettysburgians avoided it in their reminiscences for fear of alienating some listeners. Though impossible to foresee in 1913, the Gettysburg Address grew even more popular in the coming years. On the other hand, it also slipped the bonds of the local town that had once been its home, eventually becoming the property of the world.

National and International Coverage

As in 1863, the Gettysburg Address received much more attention and coverage locally than nationally or internationally. A brief examination of the responses to the anniversary of the speech and the commemorative ceremonies held in Gettysburg reveals that coverage patterns in 1913 did not differ dramatically from those in 1863.

In New York, *The Masses*, and the *New York Call*, both socialist or workers' journals, ignored the speech, as did the *New York Evening Telegram* and the *New York World*. The *New York Times* printed the Bliss version of the speech and a very short introduction noting that Lincoln "strengthened the foundations of the 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' to which he was devoted." The *New York Herald* of November 19, 1913, also reprinted the Bliss version, a picture of a bust of Lincoln, and an excerpt from Earl Curzon's speech. The *New York Sun* and *New York Tribune* of November 20 both offered brief accounts, likely from the Associated Press, of the commemoration activities in Gettysburg. The *New York Evening Post* of November 24 carried a long review of Curzon's speech.

The *New York Evening Mail* offered by far the most extensive coverage of the fiftieth anniversary of the Gettysburg Address. The paper's November 19, 1913, edition carried an account of the commemoration as well as a brief article noting that students throughout Illinois had memorized the Gettysburg Address and recited it at the same time of day that Lincoln had offered the original fifty years earlier. There also appeared a long column titled "Lincoln's Masterpieces: Which is the Greatest?" Lastly, the paper printed the full text of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, his letter to Mrs. Bixby consoling her on the loss of her sons in the war, and his Second Inaugural. Similar to columns in several other New York papers, this one mentioned Earl Curzon's remarks about the Address, and it seems probable they may have inspired this article.

The *Post*'s final column on the Address came on November 21. Titled "Unappreciated in Its Day," the article noted that a popular collection of Lincoln's works in the 1860s had left out the Address, and that the speech had only recently come to hold such an exalted place. The writer concluded that the Bixby letter and Second Inaugural were in fact superior to the Gettysburg Address in literary terms.

Thus, New York's coverage of the Gettysburg Address in 1913 mirrored that of 1863. Editors often reprinted the speech, but while most evaluations asserted the immortality and magnificence of the speech, they did not say what made it so. By 1913 most had completely forgotten the other speeches delivered at Gettysburg, namely those by William Seward and Edward Everett. The specific issues related to the war that these men discussed no longer mattered to average readers, and several book-length works on

the Battle of Gettysburg made Edward Everett's oration obsolete. The very factors that made their speeches noteworthy in 1863 now condemned them to obscurity.

Richmond offered far less coverage. On November 25, 1913, under a section titled "Fifty Years Ago," the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reprinted its account from the November 24, 1863, *Richmond Dispatch*. By reprinting this article without commenting on the mistakes and omissions from the 1863 piece the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* clung to that flawed report long after they knew of its inaccuracies. Just as in 1863, the editors omitted the actual text of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. The paper had no additional coverage on the Gettysburg Address during its fiftieth anniversary, but it did run a story on November 23 in "Our Confederate Column," titled, "The Faithful Slave of the Older South: Some Memories of Negroes Who Cared for Their Master and Their Master's Family – A Tribute to those Who Served 'Little Massie.'" The following day, in a flashback to news from fifty years ago, the *Times-Dispatch* reminded readers that in 1863 "Wendell Phillips said that Lincoln admitted to him that the greatest folly of his life was in issuing his emancipation proclamation." The dearth of coverage of the Gettysburg Address contrasts sharply with these two other pieces.

On the other hand, Richmond's African-American paper, the *Richmond Planet*, carried a large picture of Lincoln with the caption "Fiftieth Anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address." The paper also reprinted the speech and offered a short explanation of the cemetery dedication in 1863. Black papers in 1913 ran a number of articles on the Address. The *Chicago Defender* of November 22 offered an admonishment to the Appomattox Club, a group of prominent African-Americans from

Chicago, for not properly marking the semi-centennial of Lincoln's address. The paper noted, "There is nothing in the life of Lincoln that we should overlook." But not all papers carried such stories. The NAACP's magazine, *The Crisis*, had nothing to say about Lincoln or Gettysburg in November or December of 1913.⁶⁷

Many of London's papers ignored the Address on its actual anniversary. The *London Spectator*, a weekly journal, offered no stories on the Address, instead focusing on the two major events of the day, the problems with Ireland and the issues in Mexico. Perhaps they felt their comment on Curzon's speech a fortnight earlier made further articles superfluous. And perhaps, like the biographies of Lincoln published around this time in London, they accepted the Address as magnificent but had little prolonged thought on its significance.

The Lincoln Memorial

During World War I many on both sides of the Atlantic found cause to invoke Lincoln's speech. However, responses to the Address in that era differed from those that came before, during the semi-centennial in 1913, and after, with the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922.

The dedication of the Lincoln Memorial on May 30, 1922, culminated a twenty-one year project. In 1901 the Senate Park Commission, or McMillan Commission, proposed placing a statue of Lincoln at the end of the Mall in Washington D.C. Even before that an 1867 plan called for a statue of Lincoln on the grounds of the Capitol. In

⁶⁷ "Fiftieth Anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address," *Richmond Planet*, November 15, 1913, p. 4.

the interim a number of smaller statues to Lincoln were erected throughout the city, but many believed that none exhibited the majesty that a man of Lincoln's stature warranted.⁶⁸

A mixture of factors came together in 1902 to urge reconsideration of a Lincoln monument. American victory over Spain in the War of 1898 reduced North-South sectionalism, making such a monument more palpable to Southerners. Then again, the origination of the Monument Avenue project in Richmond, and the construction of a major statue to Robert E. Lee in 1890, soon to be followed by similarly grand memorials to J.E.B. Stuart, Jefferson Davis, Stonewall Jackson, and Matthew Maury, threw down the commemorating gauntlet. Northerners could not allow the exaltation of Southern heroes while ignoring their own. Finally, after a series of weak presidents, William McKinley had returned the presidency to a position of power and reminded his fellow Americans of the last man to exhibit such leadership.⁶⁹

Despite the plan in 1902, it was a torturous road before a Lincoln Memorial became a reality in Washington, D.C. For one, no general agreement existed regarding what form a memorial should take. This decade saw the rise of the automobile and the inauguration of "Good Roads" projects around the country, and many thought a Lincoln memorial highway the most fitting tribute, linking the nation's past and future while also advancing the country's infrastructure, something Lincoln had always championed.

⁶⁸ Thomas, *Lincoln Memorial*, 5, 13.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 13, 19, 22.

Others who accepted the desirability of a monument or statue debated the location. For nearly a decade there was little real progress toward the memorial.⁷⁰

The 1910 Congressional elections turned the tide. Since 1896 the Republicans had controlled Congress, but in 1910 they lost major ground, making it apparent that the 1912 elections would sweep them from power. Partisanship surrounded the Lincoln memorial project from the start, and now those most concerned with it had great motivation to get something agreed upon and done while they still could. Thus, just three days before Lincoln's birthday in 1911 Congress passed a bill to create a commission "to procure and determine upon a location, plan, and design for a monument or memorial." A competition between architects Henry Bacon and Charles McKim, resulted in the eventual approval of Bacon's design in January 1913. Building began immediately but marshy conditions and the outbreak of World War I slowed construction.⁷¹

As Christopher Thomas argues in his excellent overview of the subject, "Lincoln's Memorial was built to foster consensus and reconciliation." Its location, symbolically linking the Capitol in Washington, D.C. with Arlington, proved that. So did the inscription above Lincoln's head:

IN THIS TEMPLE
AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE
FOR WHOM HE SAVED THE UNION
THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
IS ENSHRINED FOREVER

⁷⁰ Ibid, 16, 26, 31, 33.

⁷¹ Ibid, 37, 89, 108.

Thus Lincoln's saving the Union, not his emancipation of the slaves, justified the memorial. But the memorial featured Lincoln's two most famous speeches, the Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural, both of which suggested that Lincoln's legacy centered on his ending of slavery.⁷²

On May 30, 1922, an estimated 35,000 citizens came to the ceremonies dedicating the Lincoln Memorial. The program emphasized unity, and in a sign of how far sectional relations had come, former Confederate soldiers, dressed in gray, attended the ceremony. Sociologist Barry Schwartz contends that their attendance should not surprise us as the memorial purposely appealed to Southerners: "On the Southern wall, [is the] Gettysburg Address, which Southerners took to refer to Southern as well as Northern soldiers." This seems ludicrous, but a strong contingent of Southerners did show up for the dedication, and many clearly felt that Lincoln had meant his words in 1863 to be universal.

But at the same time, Robert Morton, the President of Tuskegee Institute and president of the National Negro Business League, was invited to speak at the dedication. Morton subscribed to Booker T. Washington's plan that African Americans should downplay social progress in favor of economic gain. But even so, the event planners feared what he might say, and positioned him early in the program so that William Howard Taft and Warren G. Harding, both slated to speak, could counter or downplay any controversial statements Morton might make.⁷³

⁷² Ibid, xix.

⁷³ Thomas, *Lincoln Memorial*, 156.

After an invocation and the presentation of the colors, Morton rose to speak. The following day the *New York Times* titled their coverage of the speech “Morton Says Negroes Are Loyal,” and picked out three short paragraphs to reprint. In those paragraphs Morton mused, “Upon us, more perhaps than upon any group of the nation, rests the immediate obligation to justify so dear a price for our emancipation.” After quoting Morton’s review of the loyalty and sensibility shown by African Americans since emancipation, the paper included Morton’s assertion that “A race that produced a Frederick Douglass, in the midst of slavery, and a Booker Washington, in the aftermath of reconstruction, has gone far to justify its emancipation.” From the coverage in the *New York Times* one would think that Morton’s speech played into the larger theme of unity and downplayed any continuing problems regarding racial progress.

In reality, Morton began his speech with the story of the Mayflower sailing for Massachusetts at the same time the first ship bringing slaves to Jamestown made its way to that port. Eventually, Morton continued, the forces that brought the Pilgrims to Plymouth and those that brought slavery to Virginia met on the battlefield. In explaining his race’s devotion to Lincoln, Morton acknowledged, “There is no question that Abraham Lincoln died to save the Union.” But continuing, Morton invoked the Gettysburg Address to explain Lincoln’s greatest achievement:

The claim of greatness for Abraham Lincoln lies in this, that amid doubt and distrust, against the counsel of chosen advisors, in the hour of the Nation’s utter peril, he put his trust in God and spoke the word that gave freedom to a race and vindicated the honor of a Nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Morton reminded listeners again of Lincoln's words at Gettysburg, noting, "Lincoln has not died in vain . . . to-day are found black men and white in increasing numbers who are working together in the spirit of Abraham Lincoln to establish . . . that a nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal can endure and prosper and serve mankind."⁷⁴

In an indication that he believed the nation still had more to do, Morton concluded, "I somehow believe that all of us, black and white, both North and South, are going to strive on to finish the work which he so nobly began to make America an example for the world of equal justice and equal opportunity for all who strive and are willing to serve under the flag that makes men free." This passage included Morton's fourth explicit invocation of the Gettysburg Address, and reminded his listeners that in 1922, as in 1863, much work remained to insure equality for all.⁷⁵ Indeed, for in 1922 the Second Ku Klux Klan was in its ascendancy, and around fifty African-Americans were lynched each year. A variety of laws made it impossible for African-Americans to vote, and Congress had no black members. Jim Crow laws made many wonder if slavery had really ended. In this environment Morton comments were as forthright as he could make, and represent a truly courageous appeal to those present, including the current president, to make good on Lincoln's promise.

Morton was followed by William Howard Taft, who, in his role as a member of the Lincoln Memorial Commission since 1902, conveyed the memorial from the

⁷⁴ Edward F. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial, Washington* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1927), 78-81.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

commission to President Warren G. Harding as the representative of the American people. Noting that the location of the memorial bridged the North and South, Taft asserted, “It marks the restoration of the brotherly love of the two sections in this memorial of one who is as dear to the hearts of the South as to those of the North . . . here a sacred religious refuge in which those who love country and love God can find inspiration and repose.” Taft’s triumphant comments about the status of the nation contrasted with the theme offered by Morton.⁷⁶

President Warren G. Harding’s speech in accepting the memorial for the American people further played up reconciliation while simultaneously downplaying emancipation. Harding noted, “The supreme chapter in history is not emancipation, though that achievement would have exalted Lincoln throughout all the ages . . . Emancipation was a means to the great end – maintained union and nationality. Here was the great purpose, here the towering hope, here the supreme faith.” These are the words of a man who actually understood Lincoln’s purpose at Gettysburg – and rejected it. The rejection came less from personal bias than political experience: in 1921 Harding proposed a variety of Civil Rights measures only to see them blocked by a powerful block of Southern Democrats. Having learned his lesson, the affable Harding sought to give Southerners no further offense, and thus disavowed the Republican narrative of the Civil War. Harding further admitted that building the monument to Lincoln continued

⁷⁶ Ibid.

fostering the union: “This monument, matchless tribute that it is, is less for Abraham Lincoln than for those of us today, and for those who follow after.”⁷⁷

Newspaper coverage of the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial varied tremendously. Gettysburg virtually ignored the ceremonies. The *Gettysburg Times*, town’s dominant paper in 1922, provided no coverage of the impending ceremonies in the several days before May 30, and only a one-column article on the dedication in the ensuing days.⁷⁸ The *Compiler* offered a very brief account of just two paragraphs a few days following the dedication, while the *Star and Sentinel* completely ignored the event.⁷⁹

This scarcity contrasted with the coverage of local Memorial Day celebrations. The *Gettysburg Times* ran three lengthy articles in the days before Memorial Day outlining the various planned activities and parades both in the town and surrounding county. In the two days after Memorial Day another three articles recapped those events, and printed the entire address given in the Soldiers’ National Cemetery by Judge T. Dimmer Beeber, “Drift of Politics is Toward Overthrow of State Government.”⁸⁰ The *Compiler* also offered an article laying out the plans for Memorial Day celebrations, and then a subsequent one reviewing the activities of the day.⁸¹ The *Star and Sentinel*

⁷⁷ “Harding Dedicates Lincoln Memorial; Blue and Gray Join,” *New York Times*, May 31, 1922, p. 3.

⁷⁸ “Nation He Saved Honors Lincoln,” *Gettysburg Times*, May 31, 1922, p. 2.

⁷⁹ Untitled, *Gettysburg Compiler*, June 3, 1922, p. 1.

⁸⁰ “Drift of Politics is Toward Overthrow of State Government,” *Gettysburg Times*, May 30, 1922, p. 1.

⁸¹ “Memorial Day Plans,” *Gettysburg Compiler*, May 27, 1922, p. 1; “Memorial Day Celebration,” *Gettysburg Compiler*, June 3, 1922, p. 1.

provided their readers with a review of the parades and speeches and a full reprinting of Beeber's speech.⁸²

On May 27 the *Gettysburg Times* printed an article titled "Nationalism vs. Provincialism" from a speech by Senator James Wadsworth of New York before the Republican National Convention on May 20. The *Times* reported that Wadsworth contended, "Members of Congress . . . are more and more appealing to public opinion as it exists within their own immediate constituencies, regardless of the effect of the policies thus espoused upon the party or the public good." Ironically, this approach mirrored that Gettysburg was taking with the Lincoln Memorial. As they had shown in 1913, Gettysburgians vigilantly tried to keep their town tied to the Gettysburg Address. The inscription of Lincoln's words on the walls of the Lincoln Memorial further eroded any control Gettysburgians once had over the speech, and as such made them uneasy. In this context, the number of articles printed in Gettysburg papers after Memorial Day bemoaning the small turnout that year carried an implicit warning of what the Lincoln Memorial might mean for the future of the town and its connection to Lincoln's speech. That a large percentage of the Memorial Day celebrations around Gettysburg featured recitations of Lincoln's Address furthers the notion that Gettysburgians sought to remind anyone who would listen of their town's role in the birth of the nation's greatest speech.

New York offered more extensive coverage of the Lincoln Memorial dedication. The *New York World* carried a massive front-page article on the event that ran onto the second. On the fourth page an editor endorsed Harding's focus on unity: "Lincoln

⁸² "Many Visitors Came By Auto," *Gettysburg Star and Sentinel*, June 3, 1922, p. 1.

realized so clearly how much more important in the long run is the maintenance of union to the abolition of any particular evil.”⁸³

In Richmond, both of the major papers, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and *Richmond News Leader* offered fairly scant coverage of the Lincoln Memorial dedication and more extensive coverage of the local Memorial Day affairs held in Richmond and its environs, particularly the big commemoration at Hollywood Cemetery where many Civil War dead rested. In all of the programs these local papers printed, not one mentioned the inclusion of a recitation of the Gettysburg Address.

Richmond’s African American paper, *The Planet*, ran a brief editorial on the Memorial dedication and specifically focused on the segregated seating at the ceremony, a great irony given the bent of the words in the Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural staring down at those in attendance. African-Americans had to sit nearly a block away, and among the weeds. Furthermore, a contingent of hostile Marines made the experience far from pleasant. *The Crisis*, the NAACP monthly magazine then edited by W.E.B. DuBois, carried the complete letter but offered no further commentary.⁸⁴

Thus the Lincoln Memorial dedication was bittersweet. While Taft, Harding, and others such as the editors from the *New York World* and *New York Times* all played up the theme of unity and reconciliation, other saw the monument as problematic. For one, historian and literary critic Lewis Mumford wondered just what that unity would mean for the rest of the world:

⁸³ “Text of President’s Address,” *New York World*, May 31, 1922, p. 1.

⁸⁴ “Segregation at the Lincoln Memorial Dedication,” *Richmond Planet*, June 10, 1922, p. 1.

The America that Lincoln was bred in, the homespun and humane and humorous America that he wished to preserve, has nothing in common with the sedulously classic monument that was erected to his memory. Who lives in that shrine, I wonder – Lincoln, or the men who conceived it: the leader who beheld the mournful victory of the Civil War, or the generation that took pleasure in the mean triumph of the Spanish-American exploit, and laced the imperial standard in the Philippines and the Caribbean?⁸⁵

Indeed Americans in 1922 had constructed a Lincoln that advanced their agendas, their worldview, and now commemorated that iconic man as if he had been real. From Gettysburg to Richmond, New York to London, people saw in Lincoln what they wanted to see in him, discarded the rest, and cited the great man's words to support their every action, justified or not.

Conclusion

In 1863 each of the cities and peoples under study herein focused not on Lincoln's now immortal words but on one of the other speeches at Gettysburg, feeling that the latter held more immediacy than Lincoln's non-specific Gettysburg Address. But by 1922 those speeches had faded away, with no one remembering Seward's brief comments and only a few recalling that Edward Everett had spoken. But the same thing that had made the Gettysburg Address so easy to pass over in 1863 now made it impossible to ignore. Questions of liberty, equality, and democracy still reverberated, whereas the specifics of secession and the question of piracy versus privateers had long since faded. With each passing year more people proclaimed the Gettysburg Address as

⁸⁵ Lewis Mumford, *Sticks and Stones: A Study of American Architecture* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924), 141-142.

one of the world's greatest speeches, though often the reason given was more its eloquence than its political philosophy.

Again in 1922, these same cities and people interpreted and reacted to the Gettysburg Address in ways that best advanced their parochial interests. Those seeking to strengthen the bonds of national unity emphasized the universal qualities of Lincoln's Address and its emphasis on the endurance of democracy. Those who found the country's recent progress troubling, whether due to its continuing adoption of imperialist aspirations or because of the second-class citizenship forced upon minorities, sought to remind their countrymen that Lincoln's greatness came from the fact that he saw all men as created equal. David Armitage's conclusion that every generation gets the Declaration of Independence it deserves also holds true of the Gettysburg Address.⁸⁶

In the end the national fame that accrued to the Gettysburg Address both blessed and cursed Gettysburgians. The rise in interest stimulated tourism, which benefited the town, but as more people became interested in the speech and began to write about it the town lost control over the memory of its greatest moment. In 1913 the town attempted to reassert local control over the memory of what was becoming a national – even international – celebration. Curzon's speech, widely excerpted and commented upon, used the Gettysburg Address to emphasize the link between America and Britain, an alliance that would become crucial in the World War of 1914-1918. If any doubt remained over the scope of the Gettysburg Address and the town's continued ability to

⁸⁶ David Armitage, *The Declaration of Independence: A Global History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 11.

control its memory, reactions to the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922 reveal the loss of any semblance of local control.

Charles Baum's recollection of the Gettysburg Address, cited to close the preceding chapter, did comment that the audience met Lincoln's speech with profound silence. But there was more. Baum remembered "profound silence, followed by hearty applause." Whether that description fits 1863 is debatable, but it certainly describes the evolution of the reaction to the Gettysburg Address from the 1860s until the 1910s. In the 1910s the scant newspaper coverage of the preceding years gave way to hearty applause on both sides of the Atlantic for Lincoln's greatest speech. Unfortunately, no two people applauded for the same reason.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Charles Baum, "President Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg, Pa., November 19th, 1863," Statement written December 17, 1935. Gettysburg College Library Special Collections.

CHAPTER V

“FOR THAT CAUSE THEY WILL FIGHT TO THE DEATH”:

WARTIME USAGES OF THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS*

“The whole world subscribes to Lincoln’s ideals now.”

Stars and Stripes, February 14, 1919

When war broke out in Europe in 1914 Americans asked themselves which side they should support. Answering that question required a great deal of thinking about what America itself stood for. Though the nation partially reunited during the War of 1898, it remained a largely regionally distinct and divided country, with little agreement on the values that defined America. The recent reform movements battling over the soul of America, including Populism and Progressivism, made that clear.

Many Northerners thought the Gettysburg Address summed up the idea of America: the United States was a “government of the people, by the people, for the people,” and should support likeminded nations around the world. But in urging the United States to disavow Germany these Northerners made two mistakes. First, by suggesting that the Gettysburg Address represented the country’s ideals they overstepped, for the South refused to agree that a document with racial equality at its center defined the nation. Second, the comparison of the Germany of 1914 to the South of 1861-1865 with articles carrying titles like “The Hohenzollerns and the Slave Power” or “The South and Germany,” further increased regional divides.

For nearly fifty years the South quietly put aside the Gettysburg Address rather than trying to explain why Lincoln erred in connecting democracy and equality. But the increasingly frequent invocations of the Address in the 1910s and the North's use of familiar tropes about slavery and secession opened the old regional divides once again meant Southerners could no longer simply remain silent.

The international acclaim that accrued to the Address both before and during the war further exacerbated this problem. During a time when Earl George Curzon called the Gettysburg Address "part of the intellectual patrimony of the English-speaking race,"¹ Southerners felt increasingly isolated. Continued silence proved insufficient, so some rose to the challenge and sought to disprove the philosophies underlying Lincoln's words at Gettysburg.

Twenty years later, the World War II generation invoked the Gettysburg Address in much the same way, despite the tremendous differences between the wars and all of the domestic changes during the interwar years. In 1943, a short article in *Lincoln Lore* noted, "The Gettysburg Address has been given a new emphasis in view of the war effort. Its timely phrases spoken on a famous battlefield find a sympathetic response during a contest where liberty again seems to be a motivating factor."² But only in the North did this hold true. Hitler's persecution of entire races made it no longer possible to disavow the necessity of equality within a democracy, but that does not mean that

* The title comes from the "The Americans in France," *Times* (London), June 28, 1917, p. 7.

¹ Earl George Curzon, *Modern Parliamentary Eloquence* (London: Macmillan, 1914), 73.

² "Applause at Gettysburg," *Lincoln Lore* No. 762 (November 15, 1943): 1.

Lincoln's concepts and speech suddenly gained a nationwide acceptance. Rather, much of the South reverted to their pre-1914 responses to the Gettysburg Address, and ignored it. This regional dichotomy stands out even more in the 1940s, when nations around the globe invoked the speech and Lincoln's principles in forming new governments. In many ways, then, the North's political philosophy during this era stood much closer to that of some of these foreign countries than the South.

Ironically, then, whereas wars typically bring nation's closer together, an examination of sectional and international responses to the Gettysburg Address during the world wars reveal that invocations of the speech awakened and deepened regional divides.

An Isolated, Sleeping Giant

On April 1, 1861, Secretary of State William Seward wrote a memorandum to Lincoln titled "Some thoughts for the President's consideration." The letter smacked of insubordination, opening with the comment, "We are at the end of a month's administration and yet without a policy either domestic or foreign." Seward recommended that Lincoln abandon Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, and that he abdicate the major decision making to Seward. But perhaps most outrageous was his recommendation concerning the European powers whose philandering in the Americas violated the Monroe Doctrine: "If satisfactory explanations are not received from Spain and France, Would convene Congress and declare war against them." Seward felt this course would reunite North and South against a common foe, bringing the seven seceded states back into the fold. Lincoln's response (which he likely did not send) addressed

most of Seward's comments, but ignored the suggestion to declare war on Spain and France, likely feeling it too ridiculous to even merit comment. For the sake of Seward's reputation one would like to think the letter was an April Fool's Day joke.³

In the generation after the Civil War the United States avoided any serious foreign entanglements. The war with Spain in 1898 was relatively brief and incurred modest casualties. During the war former Confederate and Union officers became brothers-in-arms once again, and feelings of sectionalism began to ebb ever so slightly. While some prominent anti-imperialists such as Mark Twain and William Jennings Bryan questioned what a democracy was doing inaugurating such wars, a full war-time consideration of democracy was still two decades in the future.

When the European powers mobilized their armies in late July and early August of 1914 following the assassination of Austria's Archduke Ferdinand, the United States attempted to stay out of the war. In fact, in 1914 it was not a foregone conclusion that the U.S. would support the Allies over the Central powers. Though the United States was culturally closest to Great Britain, German-Americans comprised a considerable slice of the population, and roughly 200,000 Germans fought for the North during the Civil War. Lincoln fascinated Germans, evidenced by the nine German-language biographies of the American president published between 1865 and 1914, a number even greater than that available in Britain. Lincoln's popularity likely came from his role in preserving the Union at the same time that Otto von Bismarck unified the German states

³ William H. Seward to Abraham Lincoln, April 1, 1861, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols., eds. Roy P. Basler, Marion Dolores Pratt, and Lloyd A. Dunlap, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953-1955), 4:316-318.

into a coherent country, and from Lincoln's own kind treatment of Germans in America, as evidenced by his relationship with and patronage of German-born political and Civil War general Carl Schurz.⁴

The shift toward considering the Gettysburg Address as relating to foreign forms of government and their appropriateness did not take place overnight. During the first three years of the war, before America officially entered, most responded to the Gettysburg Address in the same old ways. In 1914 Gettysburg again held a substantial commemorative ceremony. Whereas the event in 1913 addressed questions such as an official version of the speech and whether or not there was applause, issues of national interest, the 1914 observation was more overtly local. In the words of the *Gettysburg Times*, "The special event of the evening was the unveiling of three tablets of bronze on the pew occupied by Lincoln and John Burns at the service in the church which followed the cemetery dedication." John White Johnston of Rochester, New York, a man who dealt in memorabilia related to the battle, donated the tablets.⁵

As in 1913, somewhere around fifty people who attended the original ceremony in 1863 found their way back to the cemetery again. Several men delivered their reminiscences both of John Burns' actions during the battle and his visit with Lincoln on the evening of November 19, 1863.⁶ The local newspapers all covered the event, and the *Compiler* published a pamphlet of the day's speeches. Demonstrating the continued

⁴ Jörg Nagler, "Abraham Lincoln's Image and Reception in Germany," (paper presentation, Lincoln Bicentennial Conference, American University of Paris, October 18, 2009). Professor Nagler based his information on a Worldcat search.

⁵ "Honor Memory of Lincoln's Speech," *Gettysburg Times*, November 20, 1914, p. 1.

⁶ *Ibid.*

impact of the Civil War on Gettysburg, the November 21 edition of the *Star and Sentinel* that reported the celebration also carried a story about the unearthing of two Civil War skeletons on the southern side of town.

The following year the celebration was more subdued, consisting of a brief speech by Dr. O.T. Corson, the Ohio State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the recitation of the Address by those present.⁷ In November of 1917 John White Johnston went to work again, this time asking those who heard Lincoln's famous speech to congregate around the monument in the cemetery where he then made a photograph of all those present. Forty-two people appear in the photograph, and Johnson soon mailed them a letter asking for their recollections of that fateful day fifty-four years earlier.⁸ Thus, ironically, Gettysburg's interest in the Address seemed to grow more parochial, not less, during the war years.

Richmond's primary paper, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, offered not a single thought on the Address during its various anniversaries in November 1914 through November 1918. The city's black paper, the *Richmond Planet*, did not provide coverage on these dates either. The *Dallas Morning News* ran one article commenting at considerable length on the Address during those years, a January 10, 1915, story about a funeral oration in Scarborough, England, by the Archbishop of York that was so eloquent as to match up to Lincoln's famous address.

⁷ "Exercises at Monument," *Gettysburg Times*, November 20, 1915, p. 1.

⁸ John White Johnston to Samuel Reck, May 10, 1918, Adams County Historical Society, Vertical Files, "Gettysburg Address, Anniversaries."

Even the *New York Times* offered little real analysis of the speech. One exception was a September 19, 1915, article which called Lincoln's oration "the noblest monument of American literature, a classic of the world." After alleging that the speech "produced nothing like the impression which might have been expected," the author considered a recent assertion that Lincoln's final line, which most agreed was plucked from Theodore Parker who himself lifted it from Daniel Webster, in fact originated with Robespierre. The anonymous writer concluded that no matter who first uttered the phrase, or some form of it, that it was Lincoln who said it best, and therefore was its true originator. That the first assertion of the theory was printed in the *Church Family Newspaper* of London categorizes it as another attempt, like Curzon's, to link America to the Allies.⁹

In February of 1916, Nicholas Murray Butler, the president of Columbia University, told 700 members of the American Bankers' Association that "Hamilton's writings in the *Federalist*, Webster's reply to Hayne, and Lincoln's Gettysburg address and second inaugural . . . [were] the crystallization of the essential ideals of Americanism of the past, a message which Americans could give to the world in the present crisis, and a foundation for the foreign policy of the republic."¹⁰ Hayne's comment was one of the first by an American that began to situate the Gettysburg Address as an American gift to the world, and one with continued significance, but it differed little from comments typically made in the nineteenth century in that it did not

⁹ "From Arras to Gettysburg," *New York Times*, September 19, 1915, p. 14.

¹⁰ "Crisis, Says Butler Divides Americans," *New York Times*, February 26, 1916, p. 9.

explain the “message” of the “American past.” Did Hayne refer to democracy, equality, a combination of the two, or the Declaration of Independence? Readers of Hayne’s comments could interpret them to mean that the Gettysburg Address was about everything, or nothing, with equal ease. While this type of general statement probably offended no one, it also failed to accomplish its author’s goals of building a more united nation, for Hayne’s evaluation offered nothing to unite around.

Commemorations of Lincoln’s birthday in 1917 were more widespread than in previous years, and more explicitly tied to the conflict in Europe. Congress did not adjourn for the day, but rather listened to a variety of speeches. Illinois Senator J. Hamilton Lewis noted “Today in the crisis pending between the United States and the lands of Europe, the issue before the world is the issue which Lincoln gave to America – the right of man to exercise liberty of action, freedom of intercourse, and to enjoy justice from all.”¹¹ In both 1918 and 1919 Congress held similar observations, and always featured a recitation of Lincoln’s speech.

The actions of the German Kaiser and military soon shifted any popular sentiment away from the Central powers and firmly towards the Allies. Former President Theodore Roosevelt reflected the views of many when he wrote:

As things actually are at this moment, it is Germany which has offended against civilization and humanity – some of the offences, of a very grave kind, being at our own expense. It is the Allies who are dedicated to the cause and are fighting for the principles set forth as fundamental in the speech of Abraham Lincoln at Gettysburg. It is they who have highly resolved that their dead shall not have died in vain, and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from

¹¹ “Congress Honors Memory of Lincoln,” *New York Times*, February 13, 1917, p. 6.

the face of the earth. And we have stood aside and, as a nation, have not ventured even to say one word, far less to take any action, for the right or against the wrong.¹²

Interestingly, while Roosevelt identified the Allies' practice of democracy as the reason for American support, he said nothing of the powers' various stances on equality, thus making clear his opinion that such considerations should not determine the nation's path in picking a side.

For almost three years, the United States maintained its neutrality. In 1916 President Woodrow Wilson, himself a great admirer of Lincoln, campaigned for reelection on the slogan "he kept us out of war." But when the Zimmerman Telegram became public, the United States could no longer stay neutral, declaring war on Germany on April 6, 1917.

World War I

While the outbreak of war united the country, it also led to a rash of anti-German literature, which in some cases linked the cause of Germany to the cause of the Confederacy, particularly in comparing militant Germans to Southern slaveowners. Not surprisingly, these analogies brought about a backlash. The most virulent of these was authored by Virginia's Lyon Gardiner Tyler, the son of President John Tyler and one of the most outspoken critics of Abraham Lincoln in the early twentieth century. The former president died less than a year into the Civil War, and young Lyon spent the war years in exile with his mother, Julia, on Staten Island. The origins of Tyler's hatred of

¹² Theodore Roosevelt, *Fear God and Take Your Own Part* (New York: George H. Doran, 1916), 47.

Abraham Lincoln likely dated to this period. At different times during the war Lincoln refused to issue passes to some of the Tylers who wished to travel between New York and Virginia, and in 1864 federal authorities seized some of the Tylers' employees and property in Virginia. Lincoln pointedly refused to act expeditiously in restoring these things to the Tylers, and in the interim the family estate was sacked by former slaves in the region. Moreover, Julia Tyler's difficulties obtaining a pension further increased Lyon Tyler's enmity toward Lincoln.¹³

When the Civil War ended Lyon Tyler returned to his native state, and in 1870 began studying at the University of Virginia. He graduated with a Masters of Arts in history in 1875. A year as a professor at William & Mary was followed by four years as a high school principal in Memphis, and then six as a lawyer in Richmond before Tyler returned to William & Mary as the university's president in 1888. In 1892 he began publication of the *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine*, underscoring his interest in American History.¹⁴

In 1880 Julia Tyler, Lyon's mother, began lobbying for a pension as the widow of an ex-President. Mrs. Lincoln, who struggled for five years after her husband's death before receiving a pension, was incensed, writing to a confidant:

I observed a little paragraph recently in the papers that Mrs John Tyler, was applying very vigorously for a Pension, from OUR Government. A woman, who was so bitter against our cause during the War, with much Northern property & money – as well

¹³ Robert Seager II, *and Tyler too: A Biography of John & Julia Gardiner Tyler* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), 481-482, 490.

¹⁴ Lyon G. Tyler, ed., *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1915), 5:859-861.

as the South – but so *fearful* a Secessionist – Our Republican leaders will, I am sure, remember ALL THIS - & the Country will not have fallen upon such “evil times,” as to grant her impudent request.¹⁵

Though Mrs. Tyler was eventually awarded a pension, the vote was far from unanimous, and it seems likely both the Congressmen considering the issue and the Tylers knew Mrs. Lincoln’s position on the matter.

One of Lyon Tyler’s first notable attacks on Lincoln came in July 1917, in response to several recent articles comparing the South of 1861 with the Germany of 1917. Most of Tyler’s attention was devoted to rebutting an anonymous piece in the *New York Times* of April 22, 1917, titled, “The Hohenzollerns and the Slave Power.” That piece declared, “There is an essential analogy between the spirit of the Hohenzollerns and that of the slave power with which the nation came to grips in 1861. The slave power was arbitrary, aggressive, and oppressive . . . The Hohenzollern leaders are fighting in the same way, equally obstinate and more savage.”¹⁶ Responding in the *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine*, the journal he edited, Tyler lashed out, “At a moment when union and cooperation on all lines of action are highly expedient, there seems to be a concerted effort by Northern writers and speakers to cast slurs upon the old South by drawing analogies between it and Germany.” While a number of Tyler’s ensuing defenses of the South stretched credibility, like his comment

¹⁵ Mary Todd Lincoln to Edward Lewis Baker, Jr., January 16, 1880, in Justin G. Turner and Linda Levitt Turner, *Mary Todd Lincoln: Her Life and Letters* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 694. Catherine Clinton brought this letter to my attention during a conference at Gettysburg College in June 2009. She discusses the letter in *Mrs. Lincoln: A Life* (New York: Harper, 2009).

¹⁶ “The Hohenzollerns and the Slave Power,” *New York Times*, April 22, 1917, p. E2.

that the South did not desire to extend slavery in 1861, this observation hit the mark, for surely such columns increased sectional hostility.¹⁷

More relevant to the topic at hand than the “Hozenhollerns” article, Tyler also critiqued another piece, this one titled “America in the Battle Line of Democracy,” which he cited to the February 1917 edition of *World’s Work*. Unfortunately, the citation is bad, forcing one to rely on Tyler’s description:

The writer in pointing the moral to his story quotes Lincoln’s Gettysburg address and states that these last words of his speech, “That the nation shall under God have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth,” described the great cause for which Lincoln sent armies into the field. Here is the same lack of logical and historical accuracy. The North had been antagonistic to the South from the first days of union, but it was really the jealousy of a rival nation.¹⁸

Throughout his writing career Tyler defended secession and called Lincoln’s efforts to preserve the Union unconstitutional. The subject of Northern jealousy occupied Tyler quite often, most notably in a 1920 pamphlet titled *Propaganda in History* in which Tyler discussed the ongoing debate over whether the nation originated in Jamestown or Plymouth.

In the following paragraph Tyler tried to pick the Gettysburg Address apart, contending that if Lincoln announced in 1861 that he was raising an army to fight “for a ‘new birth of freedom’ and to keep popular government ‘from perishing from the earth,’ he would have been laughed at.” Moreover,

¹⁷ [Lyon G. Tyler], “The South and Germany,” *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* 26 (July 1917): 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

In his Gettysburg speech Lincoln talked about popular rule, but this was a kind of oratory in which South and North had both indulged for one hundred years, and we are told that the speech made no particular impression at the time. It was not until long afterwards that its literary merits were recognized, and from praise for its sentiments the Northerners have passed to regarding it as presenting a historical concept of the war.

Tyler's tacit admission that the "literary merits" of the speech were "recognized" made clear that he himself did not recognize those merits, a conclusion supported by a footnote in which he commented, "In his work, 'Some Information Respecting America,' published in 1794, Thomas Cooper, the celebrated philosopher, writes on page 53, referring to the United States: 'The government is the government *of* the people and *for* the people.'"¹⁹ In this implicit charge of unoriginality Tyler had many cohorts, then and now, but most others paint this borrowing in benign terms.²⁰

Tyler's other contention, that at Gettysburg Lincoln asserted a number of false things as true, was more serious. So was his contention that the demise of the Union would have increased popular governments by creating two nations based on that notion instead of one. Lastly, Tyler's explicit assertion that the nation was *not* dedicated to "a new birth of freedom" made clear his feelings on that matter. During a dispute over textbooks in 1932 Tyler more explicitly outlined his complaints about the Gettysburg Address, which we will see in Chapter VII.

Thus, according to Tyler the Gettysburg Address was a complete sham, for despite what Lincoln said, the war was not about "a new birth of freedom" and its result

¹⁹ Ibid, 11.

²⁰ Dan Monroe, "Lincoln the Dwarf: Lyon Gardiner Tyler's War on the Mythical Lincoln," *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 24 (Winter 2003): 38.

would not affect the notion of popular government. The article was reprinted in the popular magazine *Confederate Veteran*, giving it a wide circulation.

Tyler's hatred extended to Lincoln supporters. In the 1920s Lincoln scholar William E. Barton (who in 1930 wrote *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, probably the best book on the subject until Louis Warren's 1964 study), began arguing that Lincoln and Robert E. Lee descended from the same family lineage. Predictably, Tyler responded with a pamphlet titled *Barton and the Lineage of Lincoln* that sought to refute the claims. Barton was offended by the tone of the pamphlet, and wrote to Tyler on Valentine's Day 1930. Barton's letter was equal parts accusatory and conciliatory, alternating between statements like "A man must feel very insecure in his own position who argues as you argue and you discusses a question of this character with such vehement prejudice," and "I should like very much to meet you at some time and I shall be glad if, after we meet, you are moved to a less contemptuous tone with regard to me." Barton even requested a half-dozen of Tyler's pamphlets.²¹

Tyler's response, which the stationary indicated was composed in the "Lion's Den," was far less cordial: "I have nothing but contempt for a man who when his errors are called to his attention seeks to find his defense in the errors of other people. My errors are immaterial and inconsequential as far as they relate to the issue in controversy. But yours go to the very essence. You ought to be ashamed of yourself to impose upon the public such a rotten statement of Lincoln's descent." Tyler noted that he was

²¹ William E. Barton to Lyon G. Tyler, February 14, 1930, Box 10, Folder 6, William E. Barton Papers, Lincoln Collection, University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center.

preparing a second edition of his brochure, and when that version was complete he would send Barton four or five copies, not the requested six.²²

Barton responded, “My correspondents mainly use the language which gentlemen employ in addressing each other. I am at a disadvantage in answering a man whose abuse is so virulent and unprovoked. I implore you, sir, in sheer self-respect, to exercise some degree of self-control.” After asking Tyler to clarify some of his statements regarding the supposed shared ancestors of Lee and Lincoln, Barton closed, “And let me remind you, sir, that abusive language on your part in addressing me, proves nothing good or bad about me, but can hardly be creditable to you. You are an old man and have not many years to live; do not saturate your soul in intemperate language and thereby harm yourself. I will make no reply in kind, but try to teach you a more excellent way.”²³ Tyler’s attacks against Lincoln continued until the end of his life in 1935. In perhaps the greatest irony of all, Tyler died on February 12, Lincoln’s birthday.

A *Saturday Evening Post* article written by George Pepper that appeared on May 5, 1917, prompted another attack by a Virginian. Pepper was a Pennsylvanian who eventually served in the United States Senate. In the *Post* Pepper suggested, “In the Gettysburg Speech Lincoln expressed our idea of popular government in words that may become immortal. Every schoolchild can now speak glibly about ‘government of the

²² Lyon G. Tyler to William E. Barton, February 19, 1930, Box 10, Folder 6, William E. Barton Papers, Lincoln Collection, University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center.

²³ William E. Barton to Lyon G. Tyler, February 22, 1930, Box 10, Folder 6, William E. Barton Papers, Lincoln Collection, University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center.

people, by the people, and for the people.’ Possibly the words are so familiar that we forget to consider their meaning.”²⁴

Lloyd T. Everett, of Ballston, Virginia, took exception with this comparison between the Civil War era and World War I, and responded with an article in the *Confederate Veteran*. In Everett’s estimation, both Lincoln and Pepper got it wrong:

The true meaning of this phrase is not so easily grasped and retained, especially as applied to a “confederated republic,” as Washington termed the United States under the Constitution of 1789. . . all powers not granted to the newly formed central government . . . necessarily belonged to these several free, creating States.

It is difficult to say with certainty whether Everett blamed the misinterpretation of the phrase “government of the people, by the people, and for the people” on twentieth-century Northerners who sought to twist the martyred president’s words for their own gain, or on Lincoln himself. The tone of Everett’s response, however, indicates his condemnation of the man who originally uttered the phrase and those who sought to interpret it in a way that increased federal power at the expense of state power. Like Lyon Tyler, Everett focused solely on the aspects of the Gettysburg Address dealing with government, not those concerning equality.²⁵

George Pepper’s comment that few considered the meaning of Lincoln’s words got to the heart of the matter, for in the 1910s most people focused on the eloquence of Lincoln’s words rather than the martyred president’s message. Ironically, some of the

²⁴ George Wharton Pepper, “Abraham Lincoln and the Issues of the World War,” *Saturday Evening Post*, May 5, 1917, p. 19.

²⁵ Lloyd T. Everett, “Davis, Lincoln, and the Kaiser,” *Confederate Veteran* 25 (September 1917): 405-406.

fullest considerations of the speech's significance came from the South. Men like Lyon Tyler and Lloyd Everett understood that the Gettysburg Address was a powerful argument for equality, and thus they rejected and tried to suppress it. In the North George Pepper and his contemporaries bemoaned the lack of full consideration most gave the Gettysburg Address, while missing its main point themselves.

Despite all of this, after the United States entered the war references to the Gettysburg Address became even more common. In a January 27, 1918, *New York Times* article, the former wife of President Grover Cleveland, Mrs. Frances Preston, discussed her efforts as a member of the Patriotism Through Education Committee:

We are planning a nation-wide Lincoln celebration. In this we are getting the co-operation of the schools, neighborhood clubs, and other educational institutions. The program of the day will consist of the study of Lincoln's work and its bearing upon present-day needs and problems. One of the features of the celebration will be the pledging of every individual to the spirit embodied in the closing lines of Lincoln's Gettysburg address: "We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, and that this Government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth."²⁶

This was a safe line to chose, for it left out both lines that demanded a reconsideration of equality, and thus gave little offense to Southerners. At the same time, by including the first part of the phrase, "We here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain," Mrs. Preston related the words specifically to the context of the ongoing war, and to honoring the memory of the Great War's fallen soldiers. No patriotic American, North or South, could disavow this selection from Lincoln's address.

²⁶ "Former Mrs. Cleveland Teaches Patriotism," *New York Times*, January 27, 1918, p. 38.

On Lincoln's birthday in 1918 the *Dallas Morning News* ran the entire text of the Gettysburg Address for just the second time in its history. Two months later that same paper reported that a five-county essay contest for rural school boys was won by a young man named Lonnie White who wrote on the "Gettysburg Address." In Texas, at least, it appears the war made the Gettysburg Address more acceptable.²⁷

The Gettysburg Address as Wartime Propaganda

Before April of 1917 references to the Gettysburg Address in the context of the world war took a private, unofficial tone. But once the war machine cranked up in the spring of 1917, the federal government added its voice to those invoking Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. President Woodrow Wilson held a Ph.D. in history from Johns Hopkins University, and understood history's potential as a wartime tool. In an 1885 letter Wilson wrote, "I should be complete if I could inspire a great movement of opinion, if I could read the experiences of the past into the practical life of men today."²⁸ In 1875 the United States possessed no institutions that granted history Ph.D.'s, but the following year Johns Hopkins became the first, and by the outbreak of World War I five hundred Americans held an advanced degree in history. The managing editor of the *American Historical Review* was Wilson's former professor, J. Franklin Jameson, and he

²⁷ "Lincoln's Gettysburg Address," *Dallas Morning News*, February 12, 1918, p. 2; "District Scholastic Meet is Held at Hillsboro," *Dallas Morning News*, April 14, 1918, p. 3. The five counties were Falls, McLennan, Bosque, Johnson, and Hill. This contest was open only to boys, another one only allowed girls.

²⁸ Woodrow Wilson to Ellen Axson, February 24, 1885, in *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 69 vols., ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966-1994), 4:287.

used his position to encourage historians to contribute to the cause of democracy during World War I.²⁹

Perhaps the most pervasive outreach programs were the various recruiting and propaganda posters that soon cropped up around the nation. In his 2000 book *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, sociologist Barry Schwartz shows how leaders invoked the image and memory of Abraham Lincoln to give America strength. Schwartz notes that, “All belligerent nations convened their past heroes to mobilize wartime motivation, but not as often as America convened Lincoln,” a result both of the chronological closeness of Lincoln to the 1910s, and also due to the similarity of the issues in the 1860s and 1910s. Patriotic posters featured a woman asking Lincoln, “What would you do?” as well as Lincoln steadying Wilson’s hand as he signed the declaration of war, Lincoln and Wilson facing the proverbial storm together, a comparison between Lincoln’s famous letter to the suffering widow Lydia Bixby who lost three sons in the war and a similar, though obviously much worse, letter by Kaiser Wilhem, and many more.³⁰

On several occasions, posters urging Americans to purchase Liberty Bonds invoked Lincoln’s words. An advertisement for the second Liberty Loan featured Lincoln’s speech, with the caption “The Hand of Abraham Lincoln” and the phrase, “It is . . . for us here to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us . . . that

²⁹ George T. Blakey, *Historians on the Homefront: American Propagandists for the Great War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1970), 1-3.

³⁰ Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 227-228, 232, 242.

government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

The poster encouraged the purchase of Liberty Bonds with the promise, “Yours is the most wonderful privilege that has been reserved for any man – for, as your hand signs the application for one of these Bonds, *it becomes the hand of Abraham Lincoln*, helping to guard your own hearthstone, to wipe away the agonies of Nations, and to preserve for all time the liberties of the Peoples of the World” (Figure 5.1).

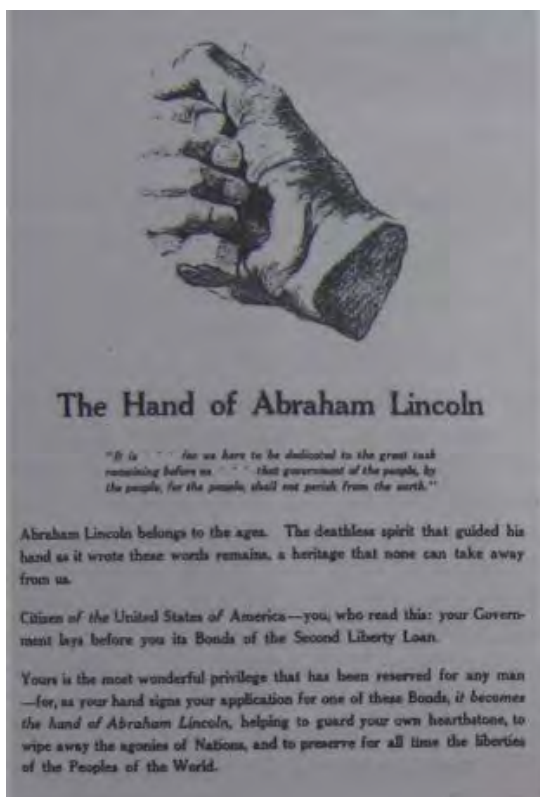


Figure 5.1 Second Liberty Loan. Reproduced from Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 239.

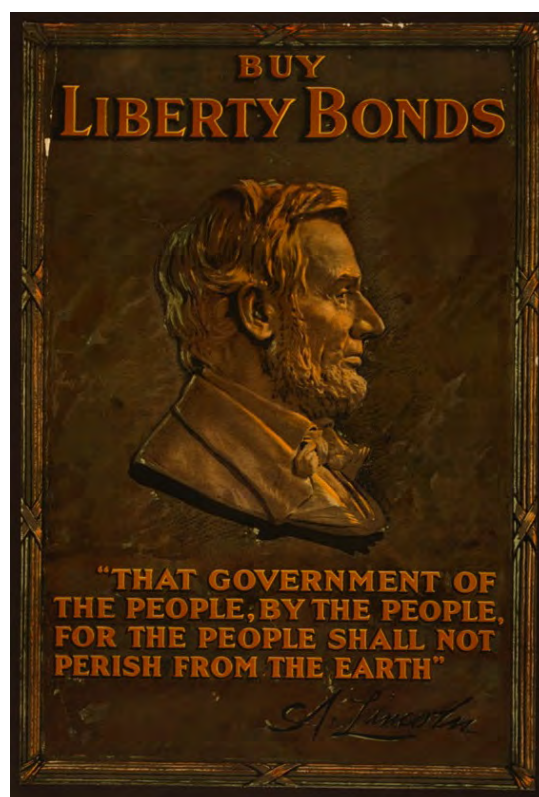


Figure 5.2 Third Liberty Loan. Created by the American Lithographic Company. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

A *New York Times* article on March 10, 1918, announced the issuance of nine million posters advertising the third Liberty Loan. In particular, “The Lincoln poster has attracted much attention in advance of its general publication.” Produced by the American Lithographic Company, the poster featured a bust of Lincoln with “Buy Liberty Bonds” above, and “That government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth” below (Figure 5.2). The poster’s popularity led Joseph Pennell to create another one featuring Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address for the issuance of the fourth Liberty Loan later in 1918. That poster featured the Statue of Liberty and the phrase “That liberty shall not perish from the earth” (Figure 5.3).



Figure 5.3 Fourth Liberty Loan. Created by Joseph Pennell. *Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.*



Figure 5.4 True Sons of Freedom. Created by Charles Gustrine, 1918. *Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

In 1918 the Havoline Oil Company encouraged the purchase of Liberty Bonds, urging Americans to be “Warriors All!” and featuring Lincoln’s final line from the Gettysburg Address, “That government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”³¹ In all these posters the common theme was twofold: first, that the value of America was that it was a government of, by, and for the people, and secondly that it must not perish. The posters ignored Lincoln’s other assertions about equality and freedom, clearly choosing to fight one war at a time.

But not completely. In 1918 Charles Gustrine produced a beautifully illustrated poster captioned “True Sons of Freedom” which featured a unit of African American soldiers fighting in Germany. An explanatory phrase on the poster reads, “Colored Men – The First Americans Who Planted Our Flag on the Firing Line.” Looking down on the men, is Abraham Lincoln, resting on one of the memorable phrases of the Address, “Liberty and Freedom Shall not Perish” (Figure 5.4).

Gustrine was a white man in his late twenties who worked as a printer for a publishing company in Chicago.³² This image stands out when compared with the others, for Gustrine’s is the only suggesting that equality, or the lack of, was a major issue. In a not so subtle image, Gustrine reminded viewers that fighting for an abstract notion of democracy alone was not enough, equality needed its defenders too, and that the African-American soldiers in France more than held up their end of the bargain.

³¹ Ibid, 236.

³² U.S. Bureau of the Census, “1920 Federal Population Census,” available through ancestry.com. Accessed November 12, 2009.

Overseas, American soldiers saw a steady stream of material on the Gettysburg Address. For example, *Stars and Stripes*, a magazine printed for the American forces in France from February 8, 1918, to June 13, 1919, invoked the Gettysburg Address on several occasions. In its very first issue, a *Stars and Stripes* column considered “Father Abraham,” and explained Lincoln’s success in terms of his great personal patience. In concluding, the author admonished,

To-day a united nation, united because he made it possible to be so, stands in battle array to vindicate the principle which he held most dear: “That government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.” It is our privilege, and our glory, as members of American’s vanguard of liberty, so to fight, so to strive, that we may right be called the fellow countrymen of Father Abraham.³³

Three months later the Memorial Day edition featured a cartoon of Lincoln standing over Uncle Sam and Lady Liberty who together held a wreath with the dates 1861-65 on one side and 1917-18 on the other. Beneath the cartoon was the entire text of the Gettysburg Address.³⁴

Reflections on the larger purpose of the war, and of the future of the country, often centered around the Gettysburg Address. In the issue published before Christmas in 1918, a writer penned a letter to “America,” explaining some of the changes to the soldiers. For one, “The war has mixed us all together. Alabama and Iowa have joined to form in a single brigade, and what a brigade!” The war made them all better citizens, the soldier continued, a change they must maintain:

³³ “Father Abraham,” *Stars and Stripes*, February 8, 1918, p. 4.

³⁴ “In France – Memorial Day, 1918,” *Stars and Stripes*, May 24, 1918, p. 1.

We of this generation had come to take our country for granted. We had come to take our liberty as a matter of course, like the air we breathed and the unfailing sun. It was not so with the generation that wrung the first homesteads from the wilderness. It was not so with the generation that conceived the nation in liberty and dedicated it to the proposition that all men are created equal. It was not so with the generation that fought a civil war to prove whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, could long endure. But we – we of the easy spring of 1917 – were like the idle sons of some rich man, inheritors of a fortune which only he could value who had by toil and sacrifice amassed it. Now we have done more than inherit the treasure. We have earned it. We were children of a great estate. We have added to it.³⁵

The refrain was a common one. During the War of 1898 those supporting the conflict frequently decried their generation's easy upbringing, and openly hoped that a war would literally toughen them up, create a set of leaders for the new century, and remind Americans what the country stood for.³⁶ In this passage the author holds up the Civil War generation as the best example of dedication to a cause, and the Gettysburg Address as the perfect summation of that dedication. What is lacking from this conception of the relationship of the regions to one another is where African-Americans fit in. Unlike Gustrine, who made clear that his vision of democracy included equality, this column harkens back to David Blight's contention that regional reconciliation was secured by whites at the expense of blacks.

Perhaps the best illustration of the pervasiveness of the Gettysburg Address appeared in an advertisement in the *Stars and Stripes*. On Valentine's Day in 1919 the paper ran an ad from Society Brand Clothes, a store with branches in Chicago, New

³⁵ "A Christmas Letter From the A.E.F. to America," *Stars and Stripes*, December 20, 1918, p. 4.

³⁶ See particularly Kristin Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

York, and Montreal. The spread featured the image of two dapper young men standing in front of the Augustus St. Gaudens statue of Lincoln in Chicago. Below the image was the line, "That Government of the People Shall Not Perish from the Earth." The advertisers proclaimed, "The whole world subscribes to Lincoln's ideals now." While the connections between the speech and the wartime effort are fairly obvious, that advertisers believed the speech so well-known and meaningful as to help sell their clothes indicates a more popular dispersion of the speech than in previous eras.

If the response in London was any measure, the Society Brand Clothes advertisement in the *Star and Stripes* was correct in proclaiming the whole world was aware of and subscribed to Lincoln's message in the Gettysburg Address. The praise that Earl George Curzon offered the Address in 1913 was echoed many times over by his countrymen during the First World War.

On April 16, 1915, the day after the fiftieth anniversary of Lincoln's death, the *Times* of London ran a column titled, "A Great Example." The piece began, "In the throes of the fiercest and the most fateful struggle the English people have every fought for liberty and for right, they cannot but recall the day, now fifty years ago, when the greatest and noblest leader whom democracy has yet given the world perished by the knife of an assassin." The article was another attempt, much like Curzon's, to bind the fates of Britain and America together by recognizing Abraham Lincoln as a common hero. Making sure the connection between past and present was firmly entrenched, the editorial continued, "The struggle in which the greatness of LINCOLN was gradually revealed to others, and perhaps to himself, resembled in other respects as well as in its

righteousness that in which we are engaged to-day.” After quoting the final sentence of the Gettysburg Address, the writer reflected, “His words are familiar to us all, but they are so noble and they seem so apt to our present circumstances that all Englishmen, and, as we believe, all true Americans, will thank us for repeating them. . . We are firmly convinced that we ourselves are fighting for this same cause to-day.”³⁷

Once the United States formally entered the war, Londoners continued to invoke the Gettysburg Address to honor the United States. During a May 7, 1917, ceremony to commemorate U.S. entry into the war, Reverend Frederick Meyer of London’s Christ Church quoted from the Gettysburg Address, and contended that Wilson reiterated Lincoln’s ideals when he brought the United States into the war.³⁸ A month later, when the first of the U.S. soldiers began landing in France, the *Times* told its readers,

The men in these ships, and the millions they left behind them, know well what is the cause for which they are ready to sacrifice their all. It was defined for them and for the kindred democracies of the world once for all in the cemetery of Gettysburg. They are fighting that this world ‘under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.’ And for that cause they will fight to the death.³⁹

World War I, Conclusion

During the First World War Americans began to see the Gettysburg Address in the context of a world document. It did not just provide a tool to critique domestic issues, but in fact was a charge to ally with democracy and its supporters across the

³⁷ “A Great Example,” *Times* (London), April 16, 1915, p. 9.

³⁸ “Welcome America as England’s Ally,” *New York Times*, May 8, 1917, p. 4.

³⁹ *Times* (London), June 28, 1917.

globe, to do all that one could to promote free government. With rare exceptions, such as the one patriotic poster featuring African-American soldiers, the Gettysburg Address of World War I was a speech whose significance was in that final line: “that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” Americans cherished and sought to spread democracy, but there remained the awkward question of who exactly Lincoln was referring to when he used the term “people.”

Interwar Years

When the Treaty of Versailles brought World War I to a close in 1919, Ferdinand Foch, France’s great military hero, prophesized, “This is not a peace. It is an armistice for twenty years.” While Foch would ultimately be proved correct to the very year, in the immediate aftermath of World War I it was not so obvious that the United States would again find itself allied with the British and French against the Germans, with a host of other powers joining both sides.

In 1919 and 1920 Britain erected two Lincoln statues. The first was presented to the city of Manchester and unveiled on September 15, 1919. The sculptor was George Barnard, and the original casting went up in Cincinnati in 1917. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Phelps Taft, the half-brother and sister-in-law of former President William Howard Taft, commissioned Barnard to make a second casting, and intended to present it to Britain as a gift for Parliament Square to celebrate the century of peace between the United States and Great Britain since the Treaty of Ghent ending the War of 1812. Barnard’s lifelike depiction of Lincoln’s features and stature was considered grotesque by some, including

Robert Todd Lincoln, who opposed the placing of such a monument in London. Eventually, another statue was commissioned for the city. Manchester, one of the centers of Britain's pro-Emancipation meetings in 1862 and 1863, requested the Barnard statue, and thus it found a home in that city in May 1919.⁴⁰

London instead received an Augustus St. Gaudens statue of Lincoln in 1920. Like the Barnard statue, this too was a recast, with the original residing in Chicago's Lincoln Park.⁴¹ Elihu Root, the former Secretary of State and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, gave the dedicatory address. Root emphasized the links between Britain and the United States, noting that the Lincoln who composed the Gettysburg Address learned to write such beautiful language by reading "the English Bible and English Shakespeare."⁴²

It was not just Britain that celebrated Lincoln during the interwar period. Germany also rediscovered the Great Emancipator. During the years of the Weimar Republic from 1919 to 1933 six German-language biographies of Lincoln came out. In 1930 the author of one of those biographies, Emil Ludwig, wrote a piece for the *New York Times* titled "A New Lincoln: A World Figure" comparing the American to Germany's unifier, Otto von Bismarck. While noting that Bismarck possessed superior "genius," Ludwig determined that it was Lincoln who possessed the greater character. Observing that many in Europe knew little of Lincoln, Ludwig believed that this was

⁴⁰ "Lincoln Statue Unveiled," *Times* (London), September 16, 1919, p. 5.

⁴¹ "The Lincoln Statue at Manchester," *Times* (London), May 6, 1919, p. 7.

⁴² Elihu Root, "Address in Parliament Square, London, Presenting Saint Gaudens's Statue of Lincoln to the British People, July 28, 1920," in *Men and Policies; Addresses by Elihu Root*, eds. Robert Bacon and James Brown Scott (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 65.

because in the nineteenth century Europe was mostly concerned with power, whereas Lincoln promoted democracy, two notions often in conflict with each other. But in the 1930s, with Europe becoming more democratic, Ludwig believed Lincoln's reputation would rise. If Lincoln lived, Ludwig contended, he would have expended his energies on internal projects such as the railroad and shipping improvements on the Great Lakes, a path that Ludwig felt proper: "This is the road which today leads to enduring fame, as neither the winning of battles nor the conquering of provinces does." But the Weimar Republic was not to last, and when Adolph Hitler and the Nazi party rose to power, one of the books they banned was Ludwig's biography of Lincoln. The ban was no doubt due to Ludwig's Jewish ancestry, but the Lincoln he presented also concerned Nazi leaders, who completely disavowed any notion of racial equality. Fortunately, Ludwig left Germany for Switzerland in 1932, and was not caught up in the Holocaust.⁴³

As the Nazis concentrated their power in Germany in the 1930s, an anxious world looked on. The German invasion of Poland in September 1939 insured that should the United States again enter a war on the European continent, it would do so on the side of the Allies, including old brethren Britain and France. As in World War I, Americans generally wished to avoid war, and the president, this time Franklin Delano Roosevelt, tried to steer a path of neutrality while supporting the Allies. Such a plan was workable until December 7, 1941.

⁴³ Nagler, "Lincoln in Germany."; Emile Ludwig, "A New Lincoln: A World Figure," *New York Times*, February 9, 1930, p. SM1.

World War II⁴⁴

When the Japanese attacked the American base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on December 7, 1941, the United States government quickly put the lessons from World War I to work. The government used notions of American character and fulfilling the ideals of American's past to get Americans to support the government, to buy bonds to fund the war, and to offer up themselves as soldiers in 1917 and 1918. That blueprint remained valid in the 1940s; the ways the Gettysburg Address was invoked during World War II was in keeping with its uses twenty years earlier, just on a broader scale. The major difference between World War I and World War II was the speed with which the government incorporated the Gettysburg Address into the "arsenal of democracy." In 1917 the United States was thinking about Lincoln's speech as an example for other nations for the first time, and accordingly references to it on the international stage remained few at first. But by 1941 Americans were accustomed to thinking about the Address as an internationally significant document. From the very beginning Americans invoked it to recommend to the Allies the proper form of government and to chastise the Axis Powers for not adhering to Lincoln's ideals. The other major change was the growing worldwide acceptance of the Gettysburg Address as articulating a preferable plan of government.

⁴⁴ The best work considering the place of Abraham Lincoln during World War II is by Barry Schwartz. See "Memory as a Cultural System: Abraham Lincoln in World War II," *American Sociological Review* 61 (October 1996): 908-927; and *Abraham Lincoln in the Post-Heroic Era: History and Memory in Late Twentieth-Century America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 59-90.

Rally Round the Flag

Not surprisingly, the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, outraged Americans. The following week the *New York Times Magazine* ran a two page spread featuring photographs of America's shrines, including the Lincoln Memorial, Independence Hall, Valley Forge, Monticello, Fort McHenry, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Beneath the photograph of the Lincoln Memorial was the final sentence of the Gettysburg Address, while across the top of the pages was the phrase "...Shall Not Perish From the Earth."⁴⁵ Soon thereafter artist Allen Saalburg created a poster for the Office of War Information commemorating the attack, imploring Americans to "Remember Dec. 7th," and featuring the phrase, "...we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain..." (Figure 5.5). Another poster, this one created by John Falter, encouraged Americans to "Remember Last December!" and enlist in the Navy so "that free peoples may not perish from this earth" (Figure 5.6). This phrase, irrelevant during peacetime, now took on great significance.

Robert Penn Warren wrote in 1961, "We can remember that during World War II, the Civil War, not the Revolution, was characteristically used in our propaganda, and that it was the image of Lincoln, not that of Washington or Jefferson, that flashed ritualistically on the silver screen after the double feature." At the height of that war *Lincoln Lore*, a magazine devoted to the sixteenth president, wrote, "The Gettysburg Address has been given a new emphasis in view of the war effort. Its timely phrases spoken on a famous battlefield find a sympathetic response during a contest where

⁴⁵ "Shall Not Perish," *New York Times Magazine*, December 14, 1941, p. SM4.



Figure 5.5, Remember Dec. 7th! Poster by Allen Saalburg. *Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.*



Figure 5.6, Remember Last December! Poster by John Falter. *Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.*

liberty again seems to be a motivating factor.” After the attack on Pearl Harbor the Library of Congress dispatched nearly 5,000 cases of materials to five secret locations for safekeeping, including its copies of Lincoln’s Address. In October 1944 the pieces finally returned to Washington, where Marines guarded them for the rest of the war.⁴⁶

As the war continued, references to the Address became almost ubiquitous. The parades, concerts, and funeral ceremonies that invoked the Address defy enumeration. Similarly, the number of casual references to the Address in newspaper stories was

⁴⁶ Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War: Meditations in the Centennial* (New York: Random House, 1961), 79; ____, “Applause at Gettysburg,” *Lincoln Lore* No. 762 (November 15, 1943): 1; “Constitution Put on View,” *New York Times*, October 2, 1944, p. 21.

overwhelming. The assertion in a *New York Times* editorial on April 16, 1942, that Americans “have never strayed far or long from the principles of the Declaration, the Bill of Rights and the Gettysburg Address” is notable for its similarity to dozens of other statements, not for its uniqueness.⁴⁷ Indeed, the Address was becoming so pervasive that Wendell Wilkie even proposed part of the speech as a key component of the Republican platform for the 1944 elections.⁴⁸ During dark hours when the war was not going well columnists reminded their readers that simply because Lincoln proclaimed the value of a democratic government did not mean one would prevail in a contest of arms, and that Allied victory required redoubled effort.⁴⁹ But others thought that the Gettysburg Address in fact would help them win the war. During New York’s celebration of Lincoln’s birthday in 1943, Henry Williams, the oldest alumnus of New York University, touted the Gettysburg Address as “combating foreign propaganda endeavoring to poison the minds of our people.”⁵⁰

The government needed funds in order to fight the war, and as in World War I, it turned to the Gettysburg Address to help sell bonds. A 1943 poster featured Daniel Chester French’s statue from the Lincoln Memorial above the corpse of a dead World War II soldier, with the line “That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain,” on the side.⁵¹ A defense bond and savings stamps advertisement featuring

⁴⁷ “The Case of ‘Social Justice,’” *New York Times*, April 16, 1942, p. 20.

⁴⁸ “Text of Platform Draft Prepared by Wilkie,” *New York Times*, July 11, 1944, p. 10.

⁴⁹ “Mail-Bag Excerpts,” *New York Times*, February 15, 1942, p. E7.

⁵⁰ “Lincoln’s Memory is Revered by City,” *New York Times*, February 13, 1943, p. 7.

⁵¹ Schwartz, “Memory as a Cultural System,” 919.

the bust of Lincoln and the line “That government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth,” appeared in the *New York Times* three days before Lincoln’s birthday in 1942, and ostensibly sold well because another poster, again featuring a bust of Lincoln and that same line ran almost exactly two years later.⁵² If that hint was too subtle, a three page article admonishing Americans to purchase the bonds less than a week after the invasion of Normandy concluded, “War bonds remain on a voluntary basis. The program is of the people, by the people, for the people.” Despite his protestations to the contrary, it is clear the writer wanted the readers to believe the program was anything but voluntary, and indeed was necessary in order to preserve and promote democracy at home and abroad.⁵³

Local Commemorations

In 1938 a group of seventy people meeting in Gettysburg to commemorate the Address formed the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania. In the words of the fellowship’s history, it “developed from the growing interest of many Lincoln students throughout the state and the nation in the life and the character of Abraham Lincoln.” Upon its inception the organization took the lead in planning the events surrounding the annual commemorations of Lincoln’s speech, and continues to do so to this day. In 1942 the anniversary ceremony was highlighted by the presence of three men who heard Lincoln deliver the Address. In both 1943 and 1944 two of these three, William C.

⁵² Advertisement, *New York Times*, February 10, 1942, p. 5.

⁵³ “60,000,000 Americans Can’t Be Wrong,” *New York Times*, June 11, 1944, p. SM20.

Storrick and Edward Trostle, attended the ceremonies. Storrick made somewhat of a career as a professional “rememberer” of the Gettysburg Address, as did a number of his townsmen in the early part of the twentieth century. Wartime rationing of gasoline curtailed these celebrations and precluded the Lincoln Fellowship’s organizing large events, ensuring that the ceremonies resembled the local affairs of the 1910s.⁵⁴

A ceremony at Gettysburg on Memorial Day in 1944 reveals the ways in which fighting a common enemy allowed Americans from all sections to proclaim a shared vision of the Gettysburg Address. The two main speakers that day, Governor Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts and Governor J. Melville Broughton of North Carolina, represented states that opposed each other on the battlefield eight years earlier. Broughton noted that, “Evil forces – Nazi, fascist and pagan – tauntingly have flouted democracy in all the earth and plotted its destruction,” and that Gettysburg “is a memorial to American ideals as symbolized by two of the Greatest Americans of all time – Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee. . . . North and South stand united today.”⁵⁵

North Carolinians felt the North and South had reunited, and that Abraham Lincoln and Robert E. Lee deserved mention in the same sentence, but it does not seem that Virginians, regardless of race, made that leap. From 1939 to 1945, none of Richmond’s three major papers, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, *Richmond News Leader*,

⁵⁴ Frederic Klein, *History of the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania: Organized in 1938 to Commemorate the Anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, November 19, 1863* (Gettysburg, PA: The Fellowship, 1963), 15, 22.

⁵⁵“Address Delivered at Gettysburg Memorial Day Exercises May 30, 1944,” program at Gettysburg National Military Park Library, Vertical Files Folder 10-32 “Memorial Day Exercises;” an account also ran in the *New York Times*, May 31, 1944, p. 10.

or the *Richmond Afro-American* made any mention of the Address during the week surrounding its anniversary. The *Richmond News Leader* did make two allusions to the Address during the war, both merely in passing. The first came on December 21, 1943, noting “Churchill knows what Lincoln never learned – that his supreme words have stirred and strengthened the soul of a generation.” A few months later the paper ran a short piece titled “Too Short to Be Taken Seriously” which referenced a story in a recent issue of *Lincoln Lore* that noted tremendous applause during Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, and thus “It begins to look as if unappreciated authors will have to abandon their reference to Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address as an example of the public’s failure to accept great literary art.”⁵⁶ But Richmond papers offered no additional references. Other Southern papers, in Norfolk, Atlanta, and Dallas for example, regularly cited the Address during the war, making Richmond’s omission curious.

During the first year of the war Alexander Woollcott published a brief pamphlet titled “For Us The Living: A Footnote to the Gettysburg Address,” that posited a Southern connection to Lincoln’s most famous speech. Woollcott claimed that a friend of his, Colonel John W. Thomason of the U.S. Marine Corps, recently found a letter written by a young Confederate Captain wounded at Gettysburg. The soldier wrote to his father, “Pop, we’ve got to stop fighting that man,” Woollcott claimed, making it clear that Lincoln’s true audience was South of the Mason-Dixon line.⁵⁷ But Union authorities removed the Confederate prisoners from Gettysburg long before November

⁵⁶ “Too Short to be Taken Seriously,” *Richmond News Leader*, February 9, 1944.

⁵⁷ Alexander Woollcott, *For Us the Living* (Radio City, NY: Linguaphone Institute, 1941), 9.

1863, making his story a work of fiction along the lines of Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews' *Perfect Tribute*, a piece Woollcott criticized for its inaccuracies! But if the scanty coverage in the Richmond papers is any indication, Woollcott likely invented a positive Southern reaction to the Address because he could not find an authentic one.

The View From Abroad

While the Address was ignored in large parts of the old Confederacy, such was far from the case in Britain. Winston Churchill, himself a writer of note, was a great admirer of Abraham Lincoln and his Gettysburg Address. On December 26, 1941, less than three weeks after Pearl Harbor, Churchill addressed the United States Congress inside the Senate chamber, seeking to strengthen the Anglo-American alliance. Noting his past service in the House of Commons, not the House of Lords, Churchill painted himself as democratically-minded, noting "I have been in full harmony all my life with the tides which have flowed on both sides of the Atlantic against privilege and monopoly, and I have steered confidently towards the Gettysburg ideal of 'government of the people by the people for the people.'"⁵⁸ In January 1945, Churchill addressed the House of Commons regarding Britain's responsibilities as the war ended, particularly in regards to the uncertain nature of the Eastern European countries, and announced his attention to reorganize those governments on the principle of "government of the people, by the people, and for the people, set up on the basis of free universal suffrage, election

⁵⁸ Winston Churchill, "Joint Session of Congress," December 26, 1941, in *The Churchill War Papers: The Ever-Widening War, 1941*, vol. 3, ed. Martin Gilbert (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), 1685.

with secrecy of the ballot, and no intimidation.”⁵⁹ On August 17, 1945, shortly after the Japanese surrender, Churchill reiterated, “Our idea is government of the people, by the people, for the people.”⁶⁰ Much as Earl George Curzon tried to cement the Anglo-American alliance in the years leading up to World War I by praising the Gettysburg Address and linking it to Britain, throughout World War II Churchill repeatedly invoked the speech to reinforce this alliance. The tactic was effective; in 1941 the *New York World-Telegram* noted that many in America compared Churchill’s speeches to the Gettysburg Address.⁶¹

Churchill was not the only Briton to draw on the Gettysburg Address during the war. In September of 1941 the Duke and Duchess of Windsor came to Washington D.C., primarily to discuss the defense of the Bahamas, the islands the Duke governed. After visiting the War and Navy departments, the Duke visited the Lincoln Memorial, where he read the Gettysburg Address aloud.⁶² Two years later the Duke was bested when Lord Lytton declared that the Gettysburg Address “has an appeal all the greater today because its application is wider,” and noted, “If the world is to have a new birth of freedom after this war it must be secured by nations that are good neighbors.”⁶³ In a final sign of Britons’ respect for Lincoln, on his birthday in 1944 his ancestral home in

⁵⁹ “Text of Churchill’s Address Proclaiming Solidarity of Three Great Powers,” *New York Times*, January 19, 1945, p. 12

⁶⁰ “Churchill and Attlee Addresses in House of Commons on Britain and Her Role in Foreign Affairs,” *New York Times*, August 17, 1945, p. 4.

⁶¹ “Mr. Churchill’s Broadcast,” *Times* (London), August 26, 1941, p. 3.

⁶² “Windsor Visits Military Chiefs,” *New York Times*, September 27, 1941, p. 9.

⁶³ “Vision of Lincoln Held Needed Now,” *New York Times*, March 19, 1943, p. 22.

Norfolk, England was made a historic memorial. The move, yet one more step cementing the Anglo-American alliance, was also the final step toward appropriating Lincoln as an international figure no longer the citizen of just one country.⁶⁴

Government of the People



Figure 5.7 U.S./China Stamp, 1942. Produced by the United States Postal Service. *Photo by the author.*

Churchill was far from alone in seeing the Gettysburg Address' democratic principles as transcendent. In 1912 Sun Yat-sen based the new government of the Republic of China on the *Three Principles of the People* or nationalism (government of the people), democracy (government by the people), and populism (government for the people). In his writings Yat-sen explicitly acknowledged Lincoln as his inspiration. In 1942 the United States and China jointly issued stamps to commemorate both the fifth year of Chinese resistance to Japanese aggression, and the founding of China's government on Lincoln's principles (Figure 5.7). As World War II drew to a close and

⁶⁴ Jay Monaghan, "Lincoln's Debt to the British," *Lincoln Herald* 47 (June 1945): 39.

now-liberated peoples sought to develop democratic governments, an astounding number cited the Gettysburg Address as their guiding principle, following the path China took thirty years earlier.

Greece was one of the first countries to take this path. From 1936 until 1942 a dictatorship ruled the country. Greece's secret police, trained by Hitler's Germans, suppressed the Boy Scouts, persecuted Jews, and forbid school children from learning Pericles' funeral oration or the Gettysburg Address. Pericles' oration, which Gary Wills convincingly argues inspired Lincoln, identified Athens freedom of government and opportunity for advancement as its central trait, two characteristics the Greek government of the 1940s specifically disavowed. But with the end of the dictatorship in 1942, Greece sought to return to the glory days of Athens, and lifted the bans on Lincoln and Pericles.⁶⁵

In the U.S., famed author Upton Sinclair wrote a 1943 editorial titled "To Solve the German Problem – A Free State?" He contended that the war brought much destruction to Europe, and that he was afraid the post-World War II Germany would resemble the post-World War I Germany, and that another Hitler would rise if that happened. Sinclair proposed a comprehensive plan to guard against this possibility, centered around the idea of a "Freestate" cooperative that would replace Germany, an area without tariffs that sold goods at cost. The Allies would establish and initially administer the area, but eventually turn it back over to the native inhabitants. Sinclair

⁶⁵ "Greece's Monarch Ends Dictatorship," *New York Times*, February 8, 1942, p. 31; Gary Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

cautioned, “But if Freestate is to endure it must become a government of the people, by the people and for the people.”⁶⁶ At least one European agreed with Sinclair. Just three days after the appearance of Sinclair’s editorial in the *New York Times*, Eugene Reffi, formerly of San Marino, wrote a letter to the editor in which he claimed that his country, “Has no arms and no warriors, but has survived because of a government of the people, by the people, and from a past lived honestly and Christianlike.”⁶⁷

In late 1943 correspondent Joseph Levy cabled a story to the *New York Times* titled “Balkan Sentiment Seen Cool to Kings,” which noted, “All the peoples of south, east and central Europe are staunchly republican and vehemently opposed to royalty. They are aiming for government of the people, by the people and for the people – government that will endeavor to raise the standards of living of workers and peasants.”⁶⁸ A year later Bulgaria’s Communist Minister of Interior Anton Yugoff asserted, “The Government’s aim is to help the people and establish a Government of the people, by the people, for the people.”⁶⁹ Yugoff saw nothing in the Gettysburg Address that opposed communism.

The calls for a Lincoln-style democracy stretched past Europe to South America. In 1945 Brazilian officials called for general elections, the first since 1937. In response former Foreign Minister Oswaldo Aranha noted that he hoped the country’s politicians would “end by governing itself under a system of government of the people, by the

⁶⁶ “To Solve the German Problem – A Free State?” *New York Times*, August 15, 1943, p. SM6.

⁶⁷ “Letters to the Times,” *New York Times*, August 21, 1943, p. 10.

⁶⁸ “Balkan Sentiment Seen Cool to Kings,” *New York Times*, December 20, 1943, p. 4.

⁶⁹ “Bulgars Announce 3 Social Reforms,” *New York Times*, September 22, 1944, p. 9.

people and for the people.”⁷⁰ Peru followed suit, and in 1945 allowed all political parties to participate in the presidential election of 1945 for the first time in fourteen years. The *New York Times* reported that the leftist candidate, Dr. Luis Bustamante Rivero, “promises a government founded on the late President Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms and on Abraham Lincoln’s rule of the people, by the people and for the people.”⁷¹

As the war came to a conclusion and the rebuilding process began, citizens throughout the world found inspiration in the Gettysburg Address. Whether it was by reciting the Address over the graves of the millions of fallen, or by pointing to the democratic ideals Lincoln spelled out as offering a better system for the future, peoples throughout the world kept Lincoln’s most famous words near to their hearts as they stood in 1945 and looked both at their past and future.

Conclusion

The America of 1945 was a very different place than that of 1917. The country that refused to join World War I until conflict on its own soil seemed imminent, and at the end of that conflict refused to join the League of Nations for fear it would lead the country into future wars, now was a founding member of the United Nations, one of the world’s two superpowers, and the most internationally engaged nation on the planet.

⁷⁰ Frank M. Garcia, “Brazil to Set Poll Day in 90 Days; To Pick President by Direct Vote,” *New York Times*, March 1, 1945, p. 1.

⁷¹ “All Parties Vote on Peru President,” *New York Times*, June 10, 1945, p. 16.

The U.S.'s assistance in the reconstruction of Japan and in Europe with the Marshall Plan of 1947 would have been unthinkable a generation earlier.

The status of the Gettysburg Address changed tremendously during this time as well. In 1917 the Address was just starting to become internationally recognized; by 1945 it was literally on the tips of people's tongues the world over. From China to Bulgaria to Brazil, countries wishing to become more democratic looked to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address for their inspiration. Eighteen years later U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk would declare that more foreign people understood what America stood for through the Gettysburg Address than through the Declaration of Independence (not to mention the Constitution), an assertion that seems to hold for the World War II period as well as that of the Cold War.

But despite this tremendous change on the international front, it was more of the same domestically. Within the United States the Gettysburg Address remained a regional document. Despite the explosion of references to Lincoln's speech during the world wars, almost all of those invocations came from Northern sources. The Richmond papers were even more silent on the Gettysburg Address in 1945 than in 1913 or in 1863, when they at least mentioned the speech, even if only to ridicule it. Perhaps this was because the war years represented no major anniversary of the Address, but given the increasingly number of national and international references to the speech Richmond's silence seems odd, even intentional.

The increasing number of references to the Address did not mean that Americans suddenly found new meaning in the speech, however. The Gettysburg Address links

equality and democracy, but during the wars the entire speech was rarely quoted.

Instead the one line that appeared over and over was that which proclaimed “government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth,” the same line most commonly invoked before the war. The one poster from World War I that featured African-American soldiers and invoked the pledge of a “new birth of freedom” was virtually alone in reminding viewers that the Address possessed a two-fold meaning. Once again national unity trumped racial equality, leaving most to pick out bits and pieces of the Gettysburg Address that would appeal to many and offend none.

A month after the Japanese surrender and the end to World War II, the *New York Times* ran a brief column titled “Topics of the Times” which considered what the word democracy really meant, and what constituted a majority. The column asked, “What is democracy? There are those who now argue that democracy need only be for the people, but not of the people or by the people.”⁷²

When the world wars’ generations invoked the Gettysburg Address they did so in a far-reaching but limited sense. Far-reaching because it was during this era that the speech became global, but limited because it was a document that was used to encourage democracy, but not with an attendant equality. By ignoring the parts of Lincoln’s speech dealing with equality and a new birth of freedom, leaders built a regional and international consensus crucial to helping win the war. In so doing they strayed from the ideals Lincoln established, and thus opened the country up for critique from within and without during the ensuing years.

⁷² “Topic of the Times,” *New York Times*, September 15, 1945, p. 14.

CHAPTER VI

“THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN LIBERTY GOES ON”: 1957-1965*

“The central commitments of the American experiment are probably known to more people in other lands through the words of the Gettysburg Address than through those of the Declaration of Independence.”

Dean Rusk
November 17, 1963

Over the past four hundred years Americans have enthusiastically celebrated the anniversaries of important events: Daniel Webster’s 1820 oration on the bicentennial of the landing at Plymouth Rock possessed legendary status in the nineteenth century, the United States Centennial in 1876 featured the World’s Fair in Philadelphia, while more recently great public interest and programming commemorated the bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark expedition. In the late 1950s and 1960s two major anniversaries ran nearly back to back, the sesquicentennial of Abraham Lincoln’s birth, and the centennial of the Civil War. Public interest in both subjects increased dramatically in the early 1950s, as evidenced by the establishment of dozens of Civil War Roundtables in that decade.¹

It was a tumultuous time in the United States. The decade-old Cold War seemed never-ending, with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev routinely declaring his ability to wipe out any American city he chose. The United States and Soviet Union competed for

* Adlai E. Stevenson, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: An Address Four Score and Seven Years Later* (Unknown City, IL: State of Illinois, 1965), np.

¹ Victor Gondos, Jr., “Karl S. Betts and the Civil War Centennial Commission,” *Military Affairs* 27 (Summer 1963): 53.

influence in Africa's newly independent countries, the Americans urging those nations to adopt democracy while the Soviets made the case for communism. Though communism is technically an economic system, and democracy a political/governmental system, in the Cold War context the showdown centered around American democracy and Soviet communism. Consequently, U.S. leaders sought to showcase democracy to outsiders while inspiring patriotism and unity among the citizens. Within the country, many touted the conflict with the Soviet Union as a reason for thankfulness that the United States remained one nation strong enough to stand up to the communists.

Domestically, that unity was far from reality. The Supreme Court ruling in 1954 overturning the policy of separate but equal facilities brought regional and racial antagonism to the surface. The Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955-1956, the murder of Emmett Till in 1955, and the forced integration of Little Rock's Central High School in 1957 made clear the country's divisions. Judge Walter Jones, one of the primary speakers at a 1961 event commemorating the inauguration of Jefferson Davis in Montgomery, outlawed the Alabama NAACP in 1956.²

As both Lincoln's and the war's most famous speech, the Gettysburg Address occupied a central role in commemorating Lincoln's birth and the Civil War centennial. Though the Cold War and Civil Rights Movement remained the two major issues of the day throughout this period, a subtle shift in the early 1960s that replaced the primacy of the Cold War with that of the Civil Rights Movement had great implications for the

² Jon Wiener, "Civil War, Cold War, Civil Rights: The Civil War Centennial in Context, 1960-1965," in *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, ed. Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 238, 248.

Gettysburg Address. While the South continued to ignore or marginalize the speech, in the North its invocations increased. For the first time, however, those using the speech began to invoke it in the light Lincoln originally intended, as establishing the interconnectedness of democracy and equality. Change came slowly, but at last many Americans accepted Lincoln's message, and pledged their country to live up to its ideal.³

Lincoln Sesquicentennial

In April of 1957 the Lincoln Group of Washington D.C. asked Congress to create a national commission to commemorate the sesquicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth. The group's efforts soon proved successful. On September 2, 1957, President Dwight Eisenhower established the Abraham Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission (ALSC).⁴

In its final report, the Abraham Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission noted, "The nonpartisan character of the Sesquicentennial was pointed up by composition of the Commission whose members were chosen without regard to political affiliation and by the activities of the Commission which have been devoid of partisanship." But in fact the commission *did* have a serious bias; only Texan Ralph Yarborough hailed from

³ The best exploration of this intertwining of the Cold War and Civil Rights Movement is Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

⁴ Abraham Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln Sesquicentennial, 1959-1960: Final Report of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1960), 1-2.

a former Confederate State. Similarly, of the twenty states to establish Lincoln commissions, only Louisiana came from the South.⁵

In a proclamation announcing 1959 as the sesquicentennial year of Lincoln's birth, President Eisenhower noted, "In his writing and speaking Lincoln described the nature of American democracy – 'of the people, by the people, for the people' – which such clarity and splendor that it became the inspiration for movements toward free and responsible government the world over."⁶ Eisenhower's invocation of the Address was not a rarity but rather the first of many over the year-long celebration.

To kick off the sesquicentennial year, Congress held a special joint session on February 12, 1959. To close the event, actor Fredric March read the Gettysburg Address for those assembled. Simultaneously, the Common Council for American Unity sent a press release to 600 foreign newspapers and 700 foreign radio stations discussing the international significance of the Gettysburg Address.⁷ That night President Eisenhower addressed those at the National Lincoln Sesquicentennial dinner, focusing on Lincoln as "A World Figure." After noting the establishment of a Lincoln Society in New Delhi, India, Eisenhower observed, "The first President of modern China, Sun Yat-sen, found his three basic principles of government in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address." At the

⁵ States with commissions included CA, CT, ID, IL, IN, IA (no commission but much involvement), KS, KY, LA, MA, MI, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, WA, WV, WI, D.C., and the territory of Guam. Ibid, vii, xiv, 83; *Lincoln Sesquicentennial Intelligencer* 1 no. 1 (January 1959): 2. Hereafter *LSI*.

⁶ ALSC, *Final Report*, 5.

⁷ *LSI* 1 no. 2 (March 1959): 2-3.

height of the Cold War, Eisenhower sought to use Lincoln to illustrate the United States' role as a global leader, even amongst countries (China) that disavowed the U.S.⁸

Further demonstrating its commitment to making the Address internationally recognized, on June 17 the government presented the Vatican with a Latin translation of the Address. Edigio Vagnozzi, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, noted, "The address is one of the greatest documents ever issued by man. It is a great American document; it is a great human document, and I might truly say that it is a great Christian document."⁹

Over 90 countries around the globe echoed Vagnozzi's acclaim for the Address. On November 19, Prime Minister MacMillan of Great Britain, Prime Minister Nehru of India, Chancellor Adenauer of Germany, President Kubitschek of Brazil, Prime Minister Nkrumah of Ghana, Prime Minister Rahman of the Federation of Malaya, President Diem of the Republic of Vietnam, and Speaker Kato of Japan all offered tributes to Lincoln's words. Lincoln, Argentina, named for the president in the immediate aftermath of his assassination, erected four large plaques inscribed "Of the People, by the People, and for the People" around the town. El Salvador concluded a year long celebration of Lincoln with a ceremony on November 19, 1959, marking the Gettysburg Address. In Rome a capacity crowd at the Embassy Theater saw a program on the Address. Morocco produced a souvenir pamphlet celebrating the life of Lincoln that featured an Arabic translation of the Address on one cover and an English translation on

⁸ "President's Talk on Lincoln," *New York Times*, February 12, 1959, p. 22.

⁹ ALSC, *Final Report*, 46-47.

the other. Honduras produced stamps with six different scenes from Lincoln's life, including one of him delivering the Address at Gettysburg (Figure 6.1).¹⁰



Figure 6.1 Honduras Gettysburg Address Stamp, 1959. *Photo by the author.*

Perhaps most significantly, Taiwan produced a stamp (Figure 6.2) containing the dual images of Sun Yat-sen and Lincoln, with “of the people, by the people, for the people” written in English under Lincoln, and the Chinese equivalent displayed in characters under Sun Yat-sen. During the Chinese Civil War of 1949 the communist People’s Republic of China (PRC) under the leadership of Mao Zedong took over the mainland in 1949. Chiang Kai-shek and government of the Republic of China (ROC) fled to Taiwan. Over the ensuing years the United States protected Taiwan from the constant threat of a PRC amphibious assault, fearing the loss of another region to communism. Thus this stamp in 1959 came during both the sesquicentennial of Lincoln’s birth and the ten year anniversary of the ROC’s resistance to the PRC. American support of Taiwan upset the PRC, a wound this stamp probed to the advantage

¹⁰ Ibid, 50, 100, 107, 110, 116, 121.

of Taiwan both by reminding the world of their legitimacy and by cementing the bond with America. Further, by including Sun Yat-sen on the stamp, the founder of both the ROC and modern China, the ROC reasserted its place as the rightful ruling party for all of China. Taiwan showed that the United States was not the only country that used the Gettysburg Address to simultaneously play up their worthiness while casting aspersions upon the enemy.



Figure 6.2 Taiwan Lincoln Stamp, 1959. *Photo by the author.*

The U.S. government fostered this international attention whenever possible. In addition to sending historians abroad to lecture on the Great Emancipator, the State Department also mailed out 50,000 reproductions of the Address.¹¹ On another front, the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission produced a comic book on the life of Lincoln that the United States Information Agency (USIA) distributed throughout Southeast

¹¹ Ibid, 51.

Asia. The USIA used the story of Lincoln's life to show American values, and featured the Gettysburg Address on the inside cover, along with the explanation that Lincoln's words "will endure forever as an expression of the spirit of the United States of America." The work equally emphasized Lincoln's "two purposes in life – reunite his torn Nation and free the slaves." When it came to 1863 the comic book carried an entire page on the Gettysburg Address, declaring it "the speech that has become one of the most famous in history," and the one "which so classically expresses the democratic ideal." An illustration of Lincoln giving the Address occupied the facing page. (The illustrator added a half dozen people behind Lincoln, one bears a striking resemblance to Theodore Roosevelt.) The final page, titled "Heritage" reveals why foreign nations should study Lincoln: "To Americans and to the peoples of many nations, Abraham Lincoln is the beloved symbol of humanity and democracy. His faith in people, in freedom, in the goodness of man is the very core of America's creed. To study the life of Lincoln is to reach out and touch the soul of a nation." The Lincoln Memorial graced the following page. With the exception of one line from his Second Inaugural Address, no other speech of Lincoln's is quoted in the entire comic book. Foreign nations must come to know America through Lincoln, the book seemed to say, and the way to know Lincoln is through the Gettysburg Address. The USIA translated over 100,000 copies into a variety of foreign languages and distributed them throughout southeast Asia; 32,000 into Vietnamese, 20,000 into Thai, 25,000 into Urdu, 5,000 into Nepalese, 8,000 into Marathi, 8,000 into Gujarati, an unknown number into Arabic, 5,000 into Tamil, and

10,000 into Singalese, though the last two both curiously omitted the Gettysburg Address.¹²

It is difficult to judge the impact of these comic books in encouraging democracy and pro-Americanism in southeast Asia. However, a 1983 work published in Korea by Donggill Kim titled *Abraham Lincoln: An Oriental Interpretation* is suggestive. Kim says Lincoln's "enormous popularity" in Asia is "often baffling and sometimes enigmatic" but "is associated with two important fundamentals – the concept of democracy and the spirit of *jen*." Kim continues, "In the minds of the Orientals, Abraham Lincoln is the champion of democracy." Noting that Sun Yat-sen drew on the Gettysburg Address in writing the Three Principles of the People for the Chinese Republic, Kim concluded, "For millions of Asians, Lincoln is, then, the 'symbol of the free man' and the personification of democratic ideals." The principle of *jen* is one of love, which Kim contends Lincoln exhibited towards his fellow man throughout his life. In concluding, Kim wrote, "Abraham Lincoln transcends his own race, nationality, and age. Examined from an Oriental viewpoint, Lincoln emerges as an Oriental sage, a secular saint."¹³ More evidence comes from China, where Jiang Zemin recited the Gettysburg Address during students protests in the 1980s before becoming the General Secretary of the Communist Party and President of China. During a 1989 visit with Richard Nixon Jiang interrupted the American to recite the Address from memory. It

¹² The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library has copies of all the above translations with the distribution numbers penciled on the inside front cover. James Cornelius, the Lincoln curator, brought these to my attention.

¹³ Donggill Kim, *Abraham Lincoln: An Oriental Interpretation* (Seoul, Korea: Jungwoo-sa, 1983), ix-xi.

would appear those comic books found an audience. Jiang's recitations are not surprising, for while others frequently invoked Lincoln's call for "government of the people, by the people, for the people," to counter communism, that phrase in and of itself supported the institution.¹⁴

A subtle yet massive dispersion of the Address came via the United States Postal Service. From 1960 to 1965 customers desiring to send mail abroad could do so with a 25¢ stamp containing the image of Lincoln surrounded by his famous phrase from the Gettysburg Address: "of the people, by the people, for the people" (Figure 6.3). The government clearly intended to use Lincoln to promote American democracy during the 1960s, and what better way than by reminding everyone who received a letter from the United States of Lincoln's most famous discourse on popular government.



Figure 6.3 Lincoln Airmail Stamp, 1960-1965. *Photo by the author.*

¹⁴ Anthony Spaeth, "Meet Jiang Zemin," *Time*, June 24, 2001.

Domestically, the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania (founded in 1938) hosted a major commemoration in the cemetery each year. Pulitzer Prize winning author and poet Carl Sandburg dazzled the audience of 4,000 with his recitation of Lincoln's words and comments of his own. Sandburg quoted three of Lincoln's speeches in which he affirmed a commitment to equality. The poet's speech stood in marked contrast to Arthur Flemming's, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, who noted his "concern that we in our day will make the maximum possible contribution to a 'new birth of freedom' . . . Are we willing, for example, to make sacrifices in order to strengthen the foundation on which our form of government rests?" Flemming's speech explicitly tied into the Cold War, and even included specific references to the Soviets, while Sandburg's tied into civil rights. It is unfortunate that neither man explicitly discussed the intertwining of these two ideas in Lincoln's mind, but the contrast in the two speeches like made thoughtful audience members question whether in fact the speech concerned democracy, equality, or some mixture of the two.¹⁵

By any measure, the Lincoln Sesquicentennial succeeded. Coming during the Cold War, the international interest in and admiration for Abraham Lincoln provided democracy with a powerful weapon. The late 1950s also witnessed great social upheaval in the United States, but more often than not those invoking Lincoln emphasized his commitment to democracy and glossed over or completely ignored his belief that equality must accompany that democracy. For example, while the commission distributed a million copies of *All Aboard Mr. Lincoln*, a book published by

¹⁵ ALSC, *Final Report*, 49, 95, 170, 173.

the American Association for Railroads, it only disseminated 50,000 copies of *The Great Emancipator* furnished by the John Hancock Insurance Company. While the influence and financial outlay of the donating organizations explains part of this disparity, the difference is nonetheless striking.¹⁶

That celebrations of Lincoln's life centered so heavily in the North is also surprising. When the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission held a competition for students to submit essays on Lincoln, of the seven pieces on the Gettysburg Address one each came from California, Indiana and Minnesota, with two from Pennsylvania and two from Emmittsburg, Maryland, a town just ten minutes away from Gettysburg. Not a single submission came from the former Confederacy.¹⁷ While the Address eventually became a powerful tool for Civil Rights activists, in 1959 it had not yet assumed that role, and instead people invoked it as a part of the Cold War rhetoric on the superiority of democracy. But such invocations remained cloistered in the North, for the South continued to ignore the Address whenever possible, revealing the privileging of a local issue (continued segregation and racial inequality) over a national one (the need to defend democracy during the Cold War).

Civil War Centennial

While the Abraham Lincoln Birth Sesquicentennial was primarily a regional celebration, the Civil War Centennial received national recognition, with forty-five

¹⁶ Ibid, 12.

¹⁷ Jean D. Grambs, ed., *Abraham Lincoln Through the eyes of High School Youth* (Washington, DC: Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, 1959), 39-44.

states establishing commissions to organize commemorations of the war. Of those states not establishing commissions, four did not achieved statehood until after the war while the fifth, Nevada, entered the Union in 1864. In its final report, the United States Civil War Centennial Commission (USCWCC) noted that in 1957, “It had become clear that a great variety of agencies, public and private, were determined to mark the centennial of the struggle that, waged during the agonizing years 1861-65, had given a final decision not only upon the indissolubility of the Union but also upon the impossibility of reconciling the continuance of slavery with basic principles of American freedom and justice.”¹⁸

Despite popular desire to commemorate the Civil War, many feared the paths such ceremonies could take. Virginia’s commission proclaimed their “firm belief that political controversy of the 1960’s should have no connection with a commemoration of the valor and sacrifice 100 years ago of Americans whose critical disagreement was whether there should be one nation or two.”¹⁹ The national commission noted its concern over whether the commemorations “could be planned in such fashion as not to reawaken memories of old sectional antagonisms and political rancors, but instead strengthen both the unity of the Nation and popular devotion to the highest purpose of the Republic.”²⁰ Robert Cook, author of the only full study of the centennial, notes that

¹⁸ The five states without commissions were Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, and North Dakota. U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission, *The Civil War Centennial: A Report to the Congress* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1968), 3, 51.

¹⁹ Virginia Civil War Commission, *Civil War Centennial/1961-65. Final Report: 1965 – Virginia Civil War Commission* (Richmond: Virginia Civil War Commission, 1965), 2.

²⁰ USCWCC, *A Report*, 3.

because Southerners feared that if the centennial remained in private hands moneyed Northerners would dominate it, they favored a national commission.²¹

In a 1959 pamphlet, *Guide for the Observance of the Centennial of the Civil War*, the USCWCC noted, “With the limited funds Congress has authorized, it is evident the National Commission cannot conduct every commemorative exercise all over the nation. What it has in mind is the true American approach: *for each locality to plan and commemorate the chief events of its history during the great national crisis.*” The national commission “aims to serve only as a cooperating agency or clearing house to guide and coordinate the overall programming, so as to avoid costly conflicts and overlapping and to furnish helpful information.”²² The commission remained true to its word, only organizing and hosting two events on its own; the 1962 commemoration of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the 1964 commemoration of the Gettysburg Address.²³ Over 300 local Civil War Centennial Commissions put on literally hundreds of events. Virginia alone boasted 116 county and local commissions.²⁴

In addition to the national publications of the USCWCC already noted, each state produced varying quantities of written material. Most states printed early pamphlets to notify the citizens of events planned by their state commissions and also offered suggestions for activities local commissions could organize. Subsequently, after the

²¹ Robert J. Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 27.

²² U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission, *Guide for the Observance of the Centennial of the Civil War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1959), 5, 14.

²³ USCWCC, *A Report*, 58.

²⁴ VaCWC, *Final Report*, 2.

centennial and at various times throughout, the state commissions reported their activities.

The Northern states commonly referenced the Gettysburg Address in these publications. Washington D.C. offered an extensive paragraph on the Address in its 1962 booklet *The Symbol and the Sword*. Though much of it simply recounted the events of that day, the conclusion mused, “Mr. Lincoln went to Gettysburg and spoke the few words which he believed the world would little note or long remember. When he arrived back in Washington people looked at him the same way, not knowing how tremendously he had grown.”²⁵ Massachusetts’ history of the state’s experience during the war included a letter from Governor Endicott Peabody which noted that the Civil War “was an American tragedy, but it was also ‘a new birth of freedom.’ And freedom needs its champions in the 1960’s as in the 1860’s.” The volume covered the dedication ceremonies in three pages, with the conclusion, “The Gettysburg address is considered one of the greatest pieces of prose to be found in the English language.”²⁶ When Michigan published a list of recommended materials for school use it suggested three films dedicated solely to Lincoln at Gettysburg and two others featuring his words there.

²⁵ _____, *The Symbol and the Sword* (Washington, DC: The District of Columbia Civil War Centennial Commission, 1962), 53.

²⁶ Howard Oedel, *Massachusetts in the Civil War, Volume IV: A Year of Dedications, 1863-1864* (Boston: Massachusetts Civil War Centennial Commission, 1964), 25-27.

Two more sound recordings included recitations of the speech.²⁷ Pennsylvania also said much about the Gettysburg Address in its publications.²⁸

Among the border-states, Maryland alone explicitly discussed the Gettysburg Address, noting that an “uncounted numbers of her citizens journeyed to Gettysburg for the Dedication Day Observances of The Soldiers’ National Cemetery.” The Delaware Civil War Centennial Commission sponsored a performance of Aaron Copland’s “Lincoln Portrait,” which featured the Gettysburg Address, but made no other mention of the speech.²⁹

Of former Confederate states only Florida made even a passing reference to the Gettysburg Address in any publication. In its manual for local communities the commission noted, “Floridians will want to commemorate these epic events of our State’s history with all proper dignity and respect and with an emphasis upon the devotion of those who, in Lincoln’s words, fought ‘That government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth.’”³⁰

Thus, while the Gettysburg Address played a prominent role in the centennial publications of many Northern states, the border and Southern states almost completely

²⁷ C. Irene Hayner, *A List of Materials on the Civil War Recommended for Use in Schools Of Michigan* (Lansing: Michigan Civil War Centennial Commission, 1964), 21-22.

²⁸ Sanford W. Higginbotham, William A. Hunter, Donald H. Kent, *Pennsylvania and the Civil War: A Handbook* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1961), 5, 19.

²⁹ Maryland Civil War Centennial Commission, *The Centennial Anniversary of the Civil War: Maryland’s Observances* (Hagerstown: Maryland Civil War Centennial Commission, 1964), 46; Delaware Civil War Centennial Commission, *Final Report of the Civil War Centennial Commission of the State of Delaware* (Dover: Delaware Civil War Centennial Commission, 1966), 6.

³⁰ Samuel Proctor, *Florida Commemorates the Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965: A Manual for the Observance of the Civil War in the Counties and Cities of the State of Florida* (Coral Gables: Florida Civil War Centennial Commission, 1962), 2.

ignored the speech. The one Southern state that did invoke Lincoln's words, Florida, possessed a Northern tradition as well as a Southern one in 1960 as nearly one-third of the population moved to the state within the preceding decade.³¹

Gettysburg Centennial Commemorations

By late 1963 the Civil War centennial gasped for air. Most state commissions were running out of motivation and funds. New York's commission ceased to function in 1964, while many others continued in name only or with a skeleton staff. Alabama Civil War Centennial Commission Chairman Albert Moore speculated on the flagging interest in 1962 when he wrote, "Many no doubt feel that we should focus our attention on the exceedingly difficult problems of the present instead of studying the past."³²

The Cuban Missile Crisis made the Cold War more immediate than ever. The violence at home caused even greater concern. In Birmingham, Alabama, local police broke up a children's march protesting segregation by unleashing dogs and training high-pressure water hoses on the marchers. Police jailed over 600 children. On June 11, 1963, Alabama Governor George Wallace physically blocked African-Americans from registering at the University of Alabama. The following day Ku Klux Klan member Byron De La Beckwith assassinated NAACP field representative Medgar Evers in Mississippi. Thus the tide shifted; throughout the period the Cold War and Civil Rights Movement were intertwined both in reality and in most of the public orations invoking

³¹ Ibid, 2.

³² Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 204.

the Gettysburg Address. Whereas Americans in 1959 remained most concerned with international affairs, in 1963 domestic issues took precedence.³³

Amidst all this, Pennsylvania planned to observe the centennial of the battle and the Address. The state established a “Gettysburg Centennial Commission” (GCC) in April of 1956, over a year before the legislation that created the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission. In January of 1957 Pennsylvania Governor George Leader appointed the state’s Adjutant General, Major General A. J. Drexel Biddle, Jr., chairman of the commission. In a March 30, 1961, letter to Governor David Lawrence (elected in 1958), Biddle broached the topic of how the commemorations would handle racial issues, a reaction to a recent controversy in Charleston.³⁴

In 1961, Charleston hosted the fourth national assembly of the Civil War Centennial commissions. Coinciding with the centennial of the firing on Fort Sumter, the 1961 event rivaled its 1861 predecessor in revealing the regional splits in the country. The South Carolina Confederate War Centennial Commission handled the logistics for the assembly, and they selected the Francis Marion Hotel, which did not accept African-American guests, as the headquarters. In February the New Jersey commission notified the South Carolinians that Ms. Madaline Williams, an African-American woman, would attend the assembly, and expressed concern that the state’s

³³ Mary Dudziak’s *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* explains this shift in emphasis, particularly in her fifth chapter

³⁴ Louis M. Simon, ed., *Gettysburg – 1963: An Account of the Centennial Commemoration* (Harrisburg, PA: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1964), ix, 1, 5.

segregation policies would prevent Ms. Williams from staying with the other members of the state's assembly.³⁵

When the South Carolina Commission refused to change the meeting place, California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Wisconsin all condemned South Carolina's intransigence, and many commissions announced plans to boycott the assembly. USCWCC executive director Karl Betts deemed the matter out of his hands, so eventually the newly inaugurated President John F. Kennedy stepped in and moved the assembly to the U.S. Naval station in Charleston, an integrated facility.³⁶ Both sides remained unhappy. South Carolina Representative Mendel Rivers noted that the federal intervention in 1961, as in 1861, set "a very dangerous precedent." On the other side, California continued its boycott due to "the South Carolina people's attitude against colored people."³⁷ Ironically, the naval base was segregated by sex, with husbands and wives occupying different nighttime accommodations.³⁸ To avoid such a mess, the GCC unanimously adopted the following resolution:

[The] Commission has emphasized the theme of unity and brotherhood – the unity and brotherhood that grew out of the Civil War, and that necessarily entail equality of opportunity for all. Therefore, as far as the Pennsylvania Commission is concerned, any action that would run counter to this just principle would be prejudicial to the spirit of our policy and

³⁵ Cook, *Troubled*, 88-90. There are two fairly comprehensive overviews of this crisis: L. Ethan Ellis, *Steps in a Journey Toward Understanding: Activities of the New Jersey Civil War Centennial Commission in 1961 at Trenton, Charleston and Salem Church* (Trenton: New Jersey Civil War Centennial Commission, 1963); and Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 88-119.

³⁶ Lewis, *Steps*, 13; "Civil War Parley Bows to Kennedy," *New York Times*, March 26, 1961, p. 1.

³⁷ Wiener, "Civil War," 240.

³⁸ Richard M. Fried, *The Russians are Coming! The Russians are Coming!: Pageantry and Patriotism in Cold-War America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 130.

programming. It is the sense of the meeting that we insist upon equality of opportunity as a condition for our participation in any meetings or events, in connection with our Civil War Centennial observances.³⁹

Partially due to the Charleston fiasco, the national commission forced executive director Karl Betts out in the fall of 1961. The chairman, Ulysses Grant, III, tendered his resignation at the same time. During the first two years of the centennial many felt that Betts and Grant did not make the commemorations racially inclusive and sensitive, focused on the military aspects of the war to the exclusion of the social and political issues, and did not encourage new scholarship. Their replacements, two academic historians, fixed most of those problems.⁴⁰

The new chairman, Allan Nevins, had recently retired from a long and distinguished career at Columbia University. With more than fifty books to his credit, including the 1933 Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Grover Cleveland, he was the most prolific living American historian. No one questioned his expertise in the Civil War era as he was then in the midst of writing an eight-volume masterpiece on the conflict titled *Ordeal of the Union*. Perhaps most importantly, President Kennedy considered him a political ally.

By the end of the month the commission also had a new executive director. James I. Robertson, Jr., born in 1930, hailed from Danville, Virginia, the last capital of the Confederacy. After an undergraduate career at Randolph Macon College and a stint in the Air Force, Robertson earned a doctorate from Emory University under the

³⁹ Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 5-6.

⁴⁰ Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 131-143.

watchful eye of renowned Civil War historian Bell Wiley. Upon graduation Robertson accepted the editorship of *Civil War History*. However, when Grant and Betts resigned, Wiley suggested that the national commission offer Robertson the executive directorship. His appointment, following that of Nevins, ensured the centennial would have a more scholarly tone. In other words, more public lectures and books, fewer reenactments.⁴¹

Both regions claimed victory over Robertson's appointment. The Southern commissions believed he would prevent Northerners from using the centennial for political gain, while the Northern and national commissions thought Robertson would calm anxieties about their racial and political motives, bringing greater support for events like the 1962 Emancipation Proclamation centennial. They were right. Robertson, who felt the Emancipation commemoration an important but potentially divisive event if handled improperly, personally convinced many Southern commissions to support the ceremony, while also ensuring that the event did not become a commentary on the current politics of race.⁴²

While Nevins planned the commission's strategic vision, Robertson handled the daily logistics and decisions. Nevins remained in residence at the Huntington Library in California working on *Ordeal of the Union*, and corresponded with Robertson daily. On January 2, 1963, Nevins wrote:

⁴¹ "Long-Time Civil War Buff of Danville Named Centennial Commission Director," *Danville Register*, December 5, 1961, p. 1.

⁴² Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 150-153.

The more I reflect upon the matter, the more important it seems to me that the National Commission offer some commemoration in Washington of the Gettysburg Address. . . the Address has a broad national and international interest and . . . we may well be criticized if we pass it over unnoticed, and we can easily arrange a modest observance . . . We would gain much from it, and lose nothing.

In a response penned two days later Robertson called the Address “slanted for the Northern side” and noted the existence of “many students who do not share . . . your enthusiasm for Lincoln in general and his Address in particular.”⁴³ Indeed Robertson spoke the truth, as the preceding chapters show, and a commemoration of the Address sponsored by the national commission would assuredly receive only regional support, and could well alienate a number of the Southern commissions. Additionally, at Gettysburg that November Robertson revealed his personal misgivings about the speech.

Perhaps even more importantly, Pennsylvania also planned to commemorate the Gettysburg Address, and an event sponsored by the national commission might compete with rather than compliment the local event. The national commission encouraged locales to organize and host events rather than doing so themselves, and to Robertson this change seemed problematic. But Robertson was intensely loyal. Five years later he offered Nevins a few suggestions for how to craft the introduction to the commission’s final report, but then noted, “In absolutely no way do I mean to imply that you must accept my suggestions. (An applicant for the knighthood never dictated policy to King

⁴³ Allan Nevins to James I. Robertson, Jr., January 2, 1963, Allan Nevins Papers Box 85 “Subject Correspondence,” Folder “Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address Correspondence,” Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Hereafter CURBML; Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 222.

Arthur!)” And so on January 9 Robertson traveled to Gettysburg to discuss with the Gettysburg Centennial Commission the form its commemorations would take.⁴⁴

Robertson spoke at the annual Adams County Shrine Club dinner at the Gettysburg Hotel. The following day the *Gettysburg Times* carried a substantial overview of the night and Robertson’s comments. The speech consisted of equal parts carrot and stick, with Robertson telling the Gettysburgians “no community in the nation has such possibilities as Gettysburg for its Civil War Centennial commemoration,” but warning that many feared a “carnival.” Robertson also cautioned against staging a reenactment, noting that Arlington would never host one, and that Gettysburg should not differ. Earlier reenactments, particularly one at Manassas in 1961, possessed tremendous popular appeal while also leaving a bitter taste in the mouths of some who felt such events made a mockery of the past and those who fell in battle. Robertson implied that reenactments reopen sectional strife by portraying one side as victors and the others as the vanquished: “The consuming theme in our centennial observances must be one word – unity. The great differences of 1863 were not too great for time to heal and this centennial offers a great opportunity for cementing the bonds of unity that hold our country together.”⁴⁵

After Robertson finished, Louis Simon, the executive secretary of the state Gettysburg Centennial Commission, outlined the plans for both the July and November

⁴⁴ James I. Robertson, Jr., to Allan Nevins, February 2, 1968, Allan Nevins Papers, Box 88 “Civil War Centennial Commission,” Folder “Civil War Centennial Commission,” CURBML.

⁴⁵ “Good Taste, Restraint Urged For Centennial Observance at Gettysburg by Shrine Speaker,” *Gettysburg Times*, January 10, 1963, p. 1-2.

remembrances. Simon revealed that while the planners possessed firm ideas for the July ceremonies, those for November had received little thought. He did note that they “like will be in the nature of the Western Maryland’s ‘Mr. Lincoln Comes to Gettysburg’ of a decade ago.”⁴⁶

While Simon’s comments about the July festivities apparently assuaged Robert’s concerns over the battle commemoration, his parting comment about the November plan opened another can of worms. On the centennial of its founding in 1952, the Western Maryland Railway Company sponsored an event reenacting Lincoln’s trip to Gettysburg and his speech at the cemetery. The assertion that the 1952 event would serve as the model for November concerned Robertson. Two days later Robertson wrote to Nevins:

I confess that I am not overly enthused with the Gettysburg program as tentatively planned. There will be no battle reenactment, but I fear that the producers are going too much for pageantry and symbolism. The head mogul for the four-day ceremony is Mrs. Adele Nathan of New York City. . . She produced the 1952 show, “Mr. Lincoln Goes to Gettysburg,” which the Western Maryland Railway sponsored, and which was a reenactment of Lincoln’s trip to Gettysburg and his Address. I understand that they plan to restage this ‘drama’ as the commemoration of the Address on November 19, 1963. Frankly the Gettysburg Anniversary Commission has made little progress toward (or, indeed, given little thought to) the November program. All their efforts currently are going toward the July 1-4 show.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ James I. Robertson, Jr., to Allan Nevins, January 11, 1963, Allan Nevins Papers Box 88 “Civil War Centennial Commission,” Folder “Permanent Folder,” CURBML.

Robertson knew that of which he spoke, as evidenced by Simon's later admission that not until after the battle commemoration did the commission give serious thought to the November program.⁴⁸

As to Nevins' suggestion that the national commission should commemorate the Gettysburg Address, Robertson offered the following:

I have conferred at length with [Congressman Fred Schwengel, the commission's political patron] and Dr. Wiley regarding our sponsoring a program on the Gettysburg Address. All three of us are in agreement on two points: 1) we should not do so if it appears that the Gettysburg Commission's program seems sufficient; and 2) any program held in Washington should assuredly be under the direction of the Lincoln Group, and not us. We also feel that it might be prudent to consider working with the Gettysburg people toward a big commemoration at Gettysburg, rather than have separate programs in Washington and Gettysburg. . . Above all, we should do nothing that would be - - or even appear to be - - in direct competition with the program of the Pennsylvania people.

But it soon became clear that Nevins envisioned a different type of program, an academic consideration of the speech scheduled for December 1963 or January 1964 to avoid any competition with the commemoration in Gettysburg.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, the Gettysburg Centennial Commission prepared to commemorate the battle. As a measure of its importance, the governors of Alabama, Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and South Carolina all took part. But the attendance of a broad cross-section of

⁴⁸ Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 42-43.

⁴⁹ James I. Robertson, Jr., to Allan Nevins, February 20, 1963, Allan Nevins Papers Box 88 "Civil War Centennial Commission," Folder "Miscellaneous Correspondence," CURBML.

the country's governors did not mean the various speakers shared a common view of the battle or Lincoln's speech.⁵⁰

On June 29 the president of Notre Dame University, Reverend Theodore M. Hesburgh, spoke at the Eternal Peace Light Memorial on the battlefield. The *New York Times* reported that Hesburgh "said in a sermon that the Civil War was fought for the Negroes' liberty, but this remained 'unfinished business.'" Hersburgh continued, "Until every white American decides to act morally towards every Negro American, there is no end to the unfinished business."⁵¹

The following day former President Eisenhower officially addressed the Gettysburg Fire Company, though the crowd dwarfed that small group. Even more so than Hersburgh, Eisenhower framed his remarks around a consideration of the Gettysburg Address. The *New York Times* reported, "General Eisenhower urged that every American read Lincoln's Gettysburg Address carefully and ask himself questions regarding the state of self-government today." The former president made clear what he meant in the following passages, going on at length about the need for citizens to do for themselves all that they could, and only turn to the government when they truly could not provide for themselves. Eisenhower's use of the Gettysburg Address to encourage a greater self-reliance and the curbing of government social service programs reveals once more the variety of ways people invoked Lincoln's speech. While most either saw Lincoln's words as applicable to race relations or the status of worldwide democracy,

⁵⁰ Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 20-21.

⁵¹ "Negroes Liberty Held 'Unfinished,'" *New York Times*, June 30, 1963, p. 39.

Eisenhower found in them a more subtle message about government handouts. But then again Ike had made dozens of speeches on Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address; perhaps on that June day he simply sought something new to say.⁵²

A ceremony dedicating the Gettysburg (Battle) Commemorative Stamp on July 1 featured Postmaster General J. Edward Day. He commented that Lincoln's "remarks were immediately recognized as an extraordinary and classic statement of the democratic purpose." With an eye to the Cold War, Day concluded, "In today's world of a divided Germany, a divided Europe, a divided China, Gettysburg provides a beacon light of hope for reunification." Assistant Secretary of the Interior John Carver considered Lincoln's invocation of equality more important:

Lincoln compressed a decade of strife and two years of war into one declaration of faith: That the Nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal should not perish from the earth. That nation has not perished from the earth – but neither have its ideals, so eloquently expressed, been fully implemented. That task remains for our generation to fulfill. For a hundred years, the equality defined on this field has been withheld from millions of our fellow citizens. . . Thus Gettysburg is more than a historical reminder, important as that is. It is just as important that Abraham Lincoln gave voice to what must be a national objective for our generation.⁵³

These two speeches follow the same pattern Carl Sandburg and Arthur Flemming established in 1959, with one talking about the Gettysburg Address in terms of what it said about democracy and the other in terms of its comments on equality, and one hopes that in both cases the audience did a better job connecting these two ideas than the speakers did.

⁵² Edith Evans Asburg, "Eisenhower Cites Perils to Liberty," *Gettysburg Times*, July 1, 1963, p. 17.

⁵³ Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 76-77, 82.

Richard Hughes, governor of New Jersey, echoed Carver's sentiments, noting "The Civil War was not fought to preserve the Union 'lily white' or 'Jim Crow,' it was fought for liberty and justice for all." For the New Jerseyans, racial concerns defined the Centennial from the start, thanks to the segregation issue in Charleston two years earlier.⁵⁴ It is doubtful the planners of the Gettysburg commemoration envisioned that so many speakers would use the battle centennial as an opening to comment on current events, but then again that is what politicians typically do. The diversity of invocations of the Gettysburg Address during that week-long remembrance testified both to the speech's continued relevance and the shift in its meaning.

A March, A Speech, and a Dream

A march in Washington, D.C, the largest in that city since the Civil War, separated the two events in Gettysburg. As befits a national capital, those wishing to protest government inaction frequently demonstrated there. In 1894 an "army" of men led by Jacob Coxey descended on Washington to denounce rising unemployment and encourage the government to inaugurate a public works program to provide the nation with jobs. Almost two decades later 5,000 suffragettes organized their own march on Washington to protest females' exclusion from the polls. In 1932 a group of 20,000 veterans marched on the capitol, demanding early payment of their service bonuses to help alleviate their plight during the Great Depression.

⁵⁴ Edith Evans Asbury, "Hughes Charges Moral Failure To Aid Negroes Since Civil War," *New York Times*, July 2, 1963, p. 14.

In 1941 A. Philip Randolph, the leader of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, proposed a march on Washington to protest segregation in wartime industries. President Franklin Roosevelt forestalled that march by signing Executive Order 8802 forbidding discrimination within the defense industry and in any company holding a government defense contract. But the idea stuck in Randolph's head, and in 1957, on the third anniversary of *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, Randolph helped lead a non-violent demonstration called the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom. Around 25,000 people attended the event at the Lincoln Memorial, with Martin Luther King, Jr., capping off the speeches with his first major address before a national crowd.

In 1963 Randolph helped organize another march, this one to protest continued segregation. The program for August 28 included most of the leaders of the various civil rights organizations: John Lewis from the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, James Farmer from the Congress of Racial Equality (though his incarceration in a Louisiana jail precluded his attendance), and Martin Luther King, Jr., president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. Organizers also invited representatives from each of the six major religions to speak.

Of all the speeches that day King's most explicitly invoked history, drawing in both the Gettysburg Address and Emancipation Proclamation. After a brief comment noting his happiness in being a part of such a demonstration, King immediately referenced the Gettysburg Address, beginning his speech, "Five score years ago." His opening seems almost obvious in retrospect: on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, King literally stood in the shadow of the text of that great speech, its words engraved in

marble just a few feet away. The opening offered another benefit. Those who disavowed Lincoln likely had little time for King to begin with, but by channeling Lincoln King ensured that Lincoln aficionados listened to his words.

References to history and Lincoln were not new with King. In his years as a minister King frequently drew on Lincoln and used the man as an example in his sermons. More tellingly, in their initial call for the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom in 1957, Randolph, King, and Roy Wilkins of the NAACP reminded readers, “In the words of Abraham Lincoln, this is a nation ‘conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.’”⁵⁵

Though the media covered the March on Washington and King’s speech, the use of the Gettysburg Address slipped by unnoticed. Not even the *Gettysburg Times* pointed out to its readers that King borrowed from Lincoln’s greatest speech, a remarkable oversight from a paper that took every opportunity to remind its readers of the *Gettysburg* Address. In Richmond the papers focused more on the limited desegregation that would occur during the 1963-1964 school year than on the march in Washington.⁵⁶

Thus it is hard to discern whether King’s invocation of the Gettysburg Address raised or lowered the nation’s esteem for that document. Unlike their nineteenth century predecessors, newspapers in the 1960s did not typically reprint lengthy speeches such as the one delivered by King. In Richmond it comes as no surprise that the *Richmond Afro-*

⁵⁵ Martin Luther King, Jr., “Call for a Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom,” Martin Luther King, Jr., in *The Papers of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, 6 vols., eds. Clayborne Carson, Peter Holloran, Ralph Luker, and Penny A. Russell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 4:153.

⁵⁶ “Powhatan Has First School Integration,” *Richmond News Leader*, August 29, 1963, p. 1.

America alone printed King's speech. Gettysburg's paper did not, nor did many of the New York or London papers, making it unclear the number of people in 1963 who even knew that King purposely paraphrased the Gettysburg Address.

November 19, 1963

When the battle commemoration concluded, the Gettysburg Centennial Commission turned its full attention to November. While the July events cost over \$100,000, the allocation for November consisted of just \$33,000, a sizeable sum, but not nearly enough for the type of pageant initially envisioned. While local planners were no doubt disappointed, Nevins and Robertson breathed a sigh of relief.

The commission desired a high profile event, and asked the governors of Kentucky (Lincoln's birthplace) and Illinois (where he spent his adult life) to participate in the ceremonies. Pennsylvania Governor William Scranton extended an official invitation to President Kennedy, but trips to Florida on November 18 and Texas on November 20 precluded his participation in the events at Gettysburg. As the official report later noted, "Little did anyone realize how the course of our history might have been changed had President Kennedy's decision been to come to Pennsylvania rather than go to Texas during that week of November, 1963."⁵⁷

The first events commemorating the Gettysburg Address began on Sunday, November 17, at Gettysburg College. Over 2,000 people attended, with admittance by

⁵⁷ Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 42-43, 45-46.

ticket only.⁵⁸ British Foreign Minister John Chadwick, French Ambassador Hervé Alphand, and Italian Ambassador Sergio Fenoaltea offered thoughts on the Address. Those men attended as their predecessors had accompanied Lincoln to Gettysburg in 1863 and witnessed the delivery of the Gettysburg Address.⁵⁹

Chadwick noted that while Britain did not immediately grasp the significance of Lincoln's words, over time "the address which we commemorate today came to be adopted and established as one of the noblest expressions of British ideals" and helped cement the bond between the British and Americans. "For us in Britain, as for you in the United States, and for our great allies, the standard which we upheld, the standard which we must proclaim to all the world, is the moral and spiritual standard defined by Lincoln in the Gettysburg address."⁶⁰ Six days later Chadwick wrote to the local organizers, "I am particularly honoured to have been able to commemorate one of the finest human expressions of man's aims in life that has ever been made." Writing the day after Kennedy's assassination, Chadwick identified the many similarities between Lincoln and Kennedy, and noted that he was greatly saddened the same fate befell both men.⁶¹

Fenoaltea observed simply that Italy also fought the forces of separation in the 1860s, and that his countrymen thought much of the speech. Alphand noted the parallels between Lincoln's speech and the French national motto: liberty, equality, fraternity.

⁵⁸ "'Lincoln is World-Wide Symbol of Freedom' Declares Secretary of State," *Gettysburg Times*, November 18, 1963, p. 1.

⁵⁹ Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 49.

⁶⁰ Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 103-105.

⁶¹ J. E. Chadwick to Milton Baker, November 23, 1963, Vertical Files "Civil War Centennial, Adams County," Adams County (Pennsylvania) Historical Society.

The ambassador could not resist adding that his country's phrase preceded the musings by Lincoln, and concluded "your Government is still struggling against the dark forces of discrimination."⁶²

In keeping with the theme established by the ambassadors, Secretary of State Dean Rusk's titled his keynote address "International Aspects of Lincoln's Address."⁶³ The inclusion of Rusk, like that of the ambassadors, mirrored the 1863 program when William Seward accompanied Lincoln to Gettysburg and spoke the night before the dedication ceremonies.⁶⁴

Rusk opened, "[Lincoln's] memory is revered by all of us who are the heirs of those who fought here – both in the blue and in gray," a dubious statement at best. As befitted the secretary of state, Rusk emphasized America's role as a world model, particularly through documents like the Declaration of Independence and the Gettysburg Address, and noted the major themes of Lincoln's speech: liberty, freedom, and democracy.⁶⁵

As to the stature of the Gettysburg Address, Rusk left no doubt in the minds of his listeners: "The central commitments of the American experiment are probably known to more people in other lands through the words of the Gettysburg Address than through

⁶² Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 100-102.

⁶³ "Official Program of the 100th Anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, November 17-19, 1963," Vertical Files, Folder "Gettysburg Address, Anniversaries," Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁶⁵ Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 95-96.

those of the Declaration of Independence.” Rusk then echoed Eisenhower’s words from four years earlier regarding the impact of the Address on Sun Yat-sen in China and on Indian Prime Minister Nehru. More so than any other speaker during the Civil War centennial, Rusk linked the domestic and foreign policy aspects of the Gettysburg Address, noting:

Our commitments to freedom are the source of our foreign policy. . . They explain also our concern about our failures here at home to live up fully to our own great commitments . . . we will not be at ease until every one of our own citizens enjoys in full the rights pledged by the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution . . . the rest of the world is watching closely the struggle for full equality in this country. Our failures distress our friends and hearten our enemies. But this is not the main reason why we must complete this task. We must complete it as a duty to ourselves. It is past time to complete the task which Lincoln began with the Emancipation Proclamation.

Rusk’s participation in the event clearly signified his appreciation of the significance of the Address as a foreign policy document. Furthermore, his comments make clear that he understood and accepted Lincoln’s assertion of the necessity of including equality within democracy.⁶⁶ As the sitting Secretary of State, Dean Rusk did not speak as a private citizen, but rather as the representative of the Kennedy Administration, and of the country as a whole. Thus, his comments signaled a major shift in American foreign policy. In her *Cold War Civil Rights*, historian Mary Dudziak argues that the United States government, particularly during the Kennedy Administration, came to see Civil Rights as a crucial component of the Cold War. Soviet papers daily reported incidents of discrimination and racial violence in the United States. In one sense, then, the Soviet

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Union finally forced the United States to live up to the ideal of democracy *with* equality that Lincoln set forth a century earlier.⁶⁷

The audience must have agreed with Rusk's assessment of the document and of contemporary politics and foreign relations, for they offered an enthusiastic standing ovation when he finished.⁶⁸ But just as William Seward's comments in 1863 upset some townspeople, some in 1963 found Rusk's statement offensive. Howard Hoffer submitted a letter to the editor of the *Gettysburgian*, Gettysburg College's student newspaper, in which he observed, "Dean Rusk nicely rationalized the economically and ideologically imperialistic policies of the U.S. on the basis of the Gettysburg Address! A hiss-boo would have been necessary had not the prayer by Rev. Vannorsdall brought an air of sensibility to the program."⁶⁹

Hoffer's implication that Rusk's speech was more concerned with current politics than historical events was dead on. Rusk held a press conference just minutes after delivering his speech and confirmed that Adams County (which surrounded Gettysburg) was one of several locations off limits to visitors from Communist-bloc countries, a measure taken "to avoid incidents." Rusk calculated that any type of pro-communist demonstration in America would likely come at a significant cultural or historical site, and Gettysburg topped that list.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 111, 119.

⁶⁸ "'Lincoln is World-Wide Symbol of Freedom' Declares Secretary of State," *Gettysburg Times*, November 18, 1963, pp. 1, 7.

⁶⁹ Howard Hoffer, "Centennial Discord," *Gettysburgian*, November 22, 1963, p. 2-3.

⁷⁰ "'Lincoln is World-Wide Symbol of Freedom' Declares Secretary of State," *Gettysburg Times*, November 18, 1963, p. 7.

The activities on November 17 concluded with a concert featuring Civil War songs by the Gettysburg College Choir and the annual Fortenbaugh lecture by Mississippi-native David Donald, professor of history at Johns Hopkins University, who discussed “Abraham Lincoln and American Nationalism.” Donald argued that while Lincoln mentioned liberty and equality, the virtues of democracy, and the need to preserve the nation, the Great Emancipator dared not offend his listeners, and thus his call for equality only applied to white men.⁷¹

The next day a panel considered Donald’s lecture. Alistair Cooke, the *Manchester Guardian*’s legendary journalist, moderated the panel, which also featured Judge Raymond Alexander of Philadelphia, Iowa Representative Fred Schwengel, poet Archibald MacLeish, and Gettysburg College professor Robert Bloom. The panel disagreed with Donald’s main point, noting that at Gettysburg Lincoln “rose above nationalism,” and focused on the issues of liberty and equality. Alistair Cooke observed that “Lincoln’s words have given the people of our country for the last three or four generations a sense of what this nation is in its noblest sense.” Further, “The African people feel Lincoln singlehandedly freed the slaves.” Archibald MacLeish noted the great steps Lincoln took towards ensuring equality, and lamented that he would be “disappointed by the lack of progress on many fronts” regarding contemporary race relations. Alexander, the only African-American on the panel, asserted his belief that if Lincoln had lived African-Americans would have been “raised to full citizenship a half

⁷¹ *Gettysburg Times*, November 18, 1963. Gettysburg College has sponsored the annual Fortenbaugh lecture since 1962. Coinciding with the anniversary of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, the lecture is named after Robert Fortenbaugh, professor of history at Gettysburg College from 1923 until his passing in 1959. Gettysburg College Civil War Institute, <http://www.gettysburg.edu/civilwar>. Accessed October 10, 2008.

century or more ago.” At the end the audience of 900 offered what the *Gettysburg Times* characterized as “an ovation.”⁷² In a fitting close to the day, the Pennsylvania State Legislature, meeting in Harrisburg, adopted a resolution to “recommend the words of the Gettysburg Address to school children and all citizens in freedom loving countries of the world.”⁷³

November 19 featured two major events: the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania luncheon, highlighted by an address by James I. Robertson, Jr., and the Dedication Day observances at the Soldiers’ National Cemetery. The two events presented a study in contrasts. Robertson’s participation in the Gettysburg Address commemorative event seems a bit odd given his earlier comments about the speech. Nevins would have been a more logical choice; he later dedicated seven pages of *The War for the Union* (1971) to the Address, calling it “immortal” and declaring that as a result of it “throughout the North, more and more men comprehended that the President was the nation’s greatest single asset.”⁷⁴

Regardless of the rationale involved, Robertson found himself at the speaker’s podium on November 19, with a talk titled “The Unwanted Speaker,” a reflection of his contention that Lincoln’s invitation “was an afterthought, and it was also tinged with strong misgivings.” To support this statement Robertson noted abolitionist Wendell Phillips’ evaluation of Lincoln “a first-rate, second-rate man” and Thaddeus Stevens’

⁷² “If A. Lincoln Were Speaking Here Today,” *Gettysburg Times*, November 19, 1963, pp. 1, 8.

⁷³ “State Senate Pays Tribute to Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address,” *Gettysburg Times*, November 19, 1963, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Allan Nevins, *The War for the Union: The Organized War 1863-1864*, vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 449-450.

comment to invite Lincoln to Gettysburg, and “let the dead bury the dead.” Robertson pounded home his title, noting “Ironically, the immortality of that occasion stems solely from the 270-odd words uttered by a man no one really wanted in Gettysburg that Thursday morning in mid-November, 1863.”⁷⁵

Turning to Lincoln’s actual words, Robertson focused on those dealing with the Union:

His dream was that the Old Union, with its many virtues and in spite of its many vices, would be preserved. But at the same time, Lincoln hoped fervently that from the smoking ashes of that terrible cataclysm would rise a New Union – a union in which the nation could enjoy a new birth of freedom, a rebirth of Liberty, and an unchallenged perpetuation of a government both of and for all people.

Robertson’s offered a mixed evaluation of the literary merits of Lincoln’s words:

“Lincoln spoke ten sentences. Two-thirds of his words were mono-syllable. He was not ever original in what he had to say. He had borrowed some thoughts from Thomas Jefferson, and he leaned heavily on phrases from the Old Testament. Many in the audience were more attentive of a photographer laboriously trying to get a picture than they were of the speaker.” On the other hand, he concluded that at Gettysburg Lincoln melded together his logic and imagination for the first time, making for a powerful and immortal speech. In conclusion Robertson observed the irony of a Virginian honoring a Midwesterner for a speech made in Pennsylvania – “proof that the wounds of the civil war were not too deep for healing – that this nation did have a new birth of freedom – that Lincoln’s beloved government of the people did not perish from the earth.” In

⁷⁵ Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 105-106.

declaring that Lincoln's call for "new birth of freedom" related to his vision of a democratic government, Robertson completely downplayed equality. Few quoted the "new birth" line, but in nearly all previous references those using the phrase linked it to equality, not democracy. Perhaps Robertson's personal conception of the line allowed him to accept more of the speech than he may have otherwise.⁷⁶

Following the luncheon a parade formed on the square in Gettysburg, just as in 1863, but instead of horses and carriages the dignitaries rode in automobiles and a small plane flew overhead. By the time the parade arrived at the cemetery nearly 10,000 spectators waited. The number of people on the speakers' platform, 58, revealed just how much had changed since 1863: despite their best efforts to mirror the original program, the event planners simply could not keep the politicians off the stage.⁷⁷

In their report, the Gettysburg Centennial Commission noted three main differences between the ceremony in 1863 and that in 1963: the use of a loudspeaker, that the audience "was spared listening to anything as lengthy as Edward Everett's two-hour oration" and lastly:

Of even greater import is that in 1963 it was possible for two distinguished Americans of Negro ancestry to take an impressive part in a tribute to the man who set their race on the path toward liberty. So it was that the words of Mr. E. Washington Rhodes were listened to with rapt attention, and the exquisite singing of Miss Marian Anderson charged the atmosphere, bringing forth a deeply felt emotional response from all, and tears to the eyes of many.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Ibid, 106-111.

⁷⁷ *Gettysburg Times*, November 20, 1963; Simon, *Gettysburg – 1963*, 56.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 57.

Indeed, E. Washington Rhodes, the President of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, delivered the opening address at the cemetery ceremonies. More than any other speaker, Rhodes made clear that Lincoln's words of 1863 remained unfulfilled. Echoing Lincoln's prediction and fear that a house divided could not stand, Rhodes declared, "Second-class citizenship with all of its attendant evils must end. Unless men of substance and creative minds take positive action, move forward with alertness and stout hearts to remove this injustice, I fear that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, will soon be endangered beyond repair."⁷⁹

Governor Scranton followed Rhodes. Scranton touched briefly on racial prejudice in his address, noting "the tyranny of prejudice is doomed because the American people in their deep common sense realize it is wrong." But he focused more heavily on the raging Cold War and the need to spread democracy, noting that the United States "must never abandon the ultimate effort to free captive peoples wherever they are imprisoned in the world."⁸⁰

As Scranton sat down former-president Dwight Eisenhower, Gettysburg's best-known resident, took the speaker's stand. Those in the crowd must have expected more of the same from Eisenhower, American's greatest cold warrior. Previously, Ike had repeatedly focused on Lincoln's invocation of democracy in his most famous speech, and downplayed the references to equality. But that day Eisenhower reversed course, declaring that Lincoln, "Foresaw a birth of freedom, a freedom which, under God, would

⁷⁹ Ibid, 116.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 118.

restore the purpose and meaning of America, defining a goal that challenges each of us to attain his full stature of citizenship.” Furthermore, he identified Lincoln’s legacy as “a nation free, with liberty, dignity, and justice for all.”⁸¹ What led to Eisenhower’s reversing course is unclear, but what a dramatic change. In quoting Lincoln Eisenhower left out the “new” in front of “birth of freedom,” perhaps indicating that Eisenhower believed the founders intended this conception of democracy with full equality all along. The following day the *Gettysburg Times* reviewed Eisenhower’s speech in a column titled “Unfinished Work Of Which He Spoke Is . . . Unfinished.”

Following Eisenhower’s address a band played Taps, Marian Anderson sang “Lead Kindly Light” and “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands,” and organizers played a recording of the Gettysburg Address by Judge Michael Musmanno of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. The benediction and National Anthem closed the day’s events.⁸²

The *Gettysburg Times* included two separate commemorative editions with their normal publication on November 19, featuring dozens of stories about the Gettysburg Address, Lincoln, and the Civil War in general. The paper included messages from eight Civil War Roundtables in Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C., and letters from the governors of Kentucky (Bert Combs), Illinois (Otto Kerner), and Pennsylvania (Scranton). Scranton acknowledged the domestic racial

⁸¹ Ibid, 119-120.

⁸² “Official Program of the 100th Anniversary of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, November 17-19, 1963,” Vertical Files, Folder “Gettysburg Address, Anniversaries,” Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

discord more in his letter than he did in his speech that day, noting in part, “We give thanks for the distance that we have come in human relations since the time when Americans rose against Americans in the battles of the War Between the States. But we must face the challenge of the future, the many more ‘miles to go before we sleep.’” Kerner spoke at length about the “spirit” of the Address without every identifying that spirit, while Combs discussed Lincoln’s years in Kentucky. Some articles reprinted early accounts of the Address, while others mentioned more recent scholarly debates such as the confusion over the various copies Lincoln wrote out.

Other papers around the country carried considerations of both the Address and the commemorative ceremonies. On November 17 Illinois’ *Champagne-Urbana Courier* ran a two-page article titled “Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address: Unwanted, Unsung – Immortal.” That same day the *Chicago Sun Times* offered a consideration of Edward Everett’s role at Gettysburg titled “The Other Gettysburg Address,” which denigrated the man and his speech as much as the 1863 papers. The Chicago papers, not surprisingly, paid particular attention, and the *Chicago Tribune* offered a report of Rusk’s speech with the subtitle “Urges Equality in the Spirit of Gettysburg.” The following day, on the actual centennial, the *Tribune* reprinted Lincoln’s speech along with an article about the events surrounding Lincoln’s oration. But Illinois was not the only state to get in on the action. The *St. Louis Post Dispatch* of November 19 carried an article titled “The World Did Long Remember,” which offered an overview of the dedication ceremonies in 1863.

The *Times* of London carried three articles relating to the Gettysburg Address centennial. American expatriate Arthur Goodhart, who had already agreed to participate in the Gettysburg Address Commemorative Event that Allan Nevins organized, wrote to the *Times* on November 19 to remind the paper what it said about the Address a century earlier. Goodhart, a professor of law at Oxford University for twenty years, in 1963 held the title Master of University College. Quoting a nineteenth-century writer, Goodhart argued that in 1863 many hated the Address because of its comments about democracy, something that the elite in England, including those in charge of the *Times*, tried hard to check. But now, a century later, British thinking on both democracy and Lincoln's address had come full circle. On November 20 the paper carried a brief account of the previous day's events, emphasizing in particular the roles of African Americans in the ceremonies. On December 4, the centennial of when the *Times* ran the text of the original speech, it reprinted that column.

On November 21 Allan Nevins wrote to Arthur Goodhart complimenting him on the editorial, but also proclaiming his surprise at the *Times*' handling of the Gettysburg Address; "Its commentary was as eccentric as it was malevolent." Much like the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* in 1913, the *Times* printed their 1863 account without noting the inaccuracies and ways interpretations of the Address changed over the ensuing century, a choice that upset Nevins.⁸³

⁸³ Allan Nevins to Arthur Goodhart, November 21, 1963, Allan Nevins Papers Box 85 "Subject Correspondence," Folder "Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address Correspondence," CURBML.

One of the final thoughts offered about the centennial ceremony locally came from a *Gettysburgian* editorial on November 22, 1963. Bruce Packard questioned the lack of diversity among the college's student body, noting that only one "negro" student gained admittance each year, and that campus life remained difficult for minorities who found themselves without peers. Packard concluded by urging the administration and student body both to do more to diversify the student population, a call to arms not substantially answered until the twenty-first century.

National serials including *Life*, *Reader's Digest*, and *Time*, all offered pieces of varying length, focus, and quality, on the Address. Undoubtedly the ceremonies would have received even more press coverage had not the nation turned its attention to Dallas and the assassination of President John Kennedy. The eerie parallels drawn to Lincoln's death a century earlier made history both more relevant and more painful.

Nearly every speaker during from November 17-19, including Hesburgh, Carver, Alphant, Rusk, the entire panel of November 17, Rhodes, Scranton, and Eisenhower, attributed the significance of the Gettysburg Address to its comments on equality and freedom. From Gettysburg to Washington to England and France, the question crying for an answer was when the United States would make good on the founding promise that Lincoln rededicated the nation to in 1863. Just eight weeks later, at another event commemorating the Gettysburg Address, a distinguished group of speakers further probed this essential question.

The Gettysburg Address Commemorative Event

When Nevins and Robertson took control of the USCWCC they emphasized the importance of supporting scholarly contributions to the field of Civil War history. The Gettysburg Address Commemorative Event they organized for January 13, 1964, illustrated this priority. Featuring five lectures on various aspects of the Address, the symposium's academic tone contrasted with the celebratory pageantry of the Gettysburg festivities the preceding November. Despite the modest scope of the event, its mere existence proves the importance Allan Nevins placed on the Gettysburg Address. During the entire centennial the USCWCC only sponsored two events: the Emancipation Proclamation centennial observance and the Gettysburg Address Commemorative Event. The commission had a limited budget and a small staff (only five people), and thus carefully dispensed its economic and human resources.

In early March of 1963 Nevins sent out invitations to possible speakers, and secured commitments from everyone he invited. The chairman wanted a broad cross section of disciplines represented, so he invited a politician, a legal historian, a poet, a theologian, and a literary figure.⁸⁴ Nevins and Robertson set a date of January 13, one that would work with the speakers' schedules and avoid conflicting with the Pennsylvania event. Robertson booked the auditorium of the Department of the Interior, feeling its ability to seat 755 made it a preferable choice over the Library of Congress

⁸⁴ Allan Nevins, ed., *Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address: Commemorative Papers* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), non-paginated preface.

auditorium which only would hold 525. They expected a large contingent of Congressmen, necessitating the building with the greater capacity.⁸⁵

As early as June of 1963 Nevins planned to have the papers published, fulfilling his desire that the centennial leave a legacy of scholarly works that would live past 1965. In letters to the speakers he reminded them to limit their oral comments to 15 minutes, but that their printed essays could run to many times that length. Writing to Robertson, Nevins regretted not publishing the various speeches and poems delivered during the Emancipation Proclamation celebration, and did not wish to repeat that mistake.⁸⁶

Nevins and Robertson planned for every eventuality, except the one thing they could not control: weather. On January 13 nine inches of snow and sleet fell on Washington D.C. The USCWCC newsletter for February noted that of all the things planned in Washington for that evening the Gettysburg Address Commemorative event alone avoided cancellation or postponement. Instead of the hundreds of anticipated guests, only eighty people braved the elements to attend the lectures, a number in marked contrast to the 4,000 spectators at the Emancipation Proclamation celebration and the 10,000 at the November festivities in Gettysburg, but those who made it heard a number of thought-provoking considerations of the Address.⁸⁷

Arthur Lehman Goodhart, a legal historian from Oxford University, delivered the first speech, titled simply "Lincoln and the Law." The lecture considered argued that

⁸⁵ Allan Nevins to James I. Robertson, Jr., June 20, 1963, Allan Nevins Papers Box 85 "Subject Correspondence," Folder "Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address Correspondence," CURBML.

⁸⁶ Allan Nevins to James I. Robertson, Jr., June 25, 1963, Allan Nevins Papers Box 85 "Subject Correspondence," Folder "Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address Correspondence," CURBML.

⁸⁷ *100 Years After*, February 1964. This publication was the monthly newsletter of the USCWCC.

Lincoln's political philosophy came from the Declaration of Independence, essentially a legal brief outlining the wrongs Britain had committed and the justice in American independence, due to his training and vocation as a lawyer. Goodhart quoted Lincoln's comment in 1861 that he "never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence."⁸⁸

Goodhart noted that Lincoln's construction of the Gettysburg Address drew heavily on his training as a lawyer, particularly in his "borrowing" of phrases from other authors. That he chose to pull a line from the Declaration of Independence ("all men are created equal") further evidenced the importance he placed on that document. Ironically, Goodhart asserted, Lincoln's views on equality confused both his contemporaries and later generations of Americans. During the 1858 debates with Stephen Douglas Lincoln came closest to articulating his view on equality when he said of a hypothetical African-American woman, "In her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands without asking leave of anyone else, she is my equal and the equal of all others."⁸⁹

By the time Lincoln went to Gettysburg, he firmly identified the Declaration of Independence as the central document in America's founding, not the Constitution. Goodhart delineated Lincoln's many violations of the Constitution, including calling up the militia without authorization from Congress and his frequent suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Thus, political expediency dictated his promotion of the Declaration

⁸⁸ Nevins, *Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address*, 39, 48.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 41, 57.

as the nation's founding document as much as political philosophy. In conclusion, Goodhart noted, "If he had been a less able lawyer there would probably have been no United States today."⁹⁰

Reinhold Niebuhr followed Goodhart, but his topic, "The Religion of Abraham Lincoln," allowed little room for a discussion of the Gettysburg Address. Novelist John Dos Passos followed with a speech titled "Lincoln and His Almost Chosen People." The title came from Lincoln's speech to the New Jersey senate in 1861 in which he called Americans the Almighty's "almost chosen people," the modifier added because the country had not yet lived up to the principles regarding equality established in the Declaration and Constitution. Dos Passos quoted Lincoln's supposed lament to Ward Hill Lamon that the speech failed, but noted "the address stuck in people's minds. The more they remembered it, the more they were impressed . . . As the years went by, memorized by every schoolchild, the Gettysburg Address became, along with the Declaration of Independence, one of the grand showpieces of the American heritage." While Dos Passos' initial remarks applied most to the domestic turmoil in the United States in 1964, his conclusion blended that theme with the Cold War: "The continuing process that faces the generations alive today is the adjustment of the methods of self-government and of the aspirations of individual men for a full life to the changing shape of mass-production society . . . The alternative is the soggy despotism that pervades two-thirds of the globe."⁹¹

⁹⁰ Ibid, 66, 69.

⁹¹ Ibid, 18, 20, 33, 36-37.

After a poem by Robert Lowell, Illinois Democratic Senator Paul Douglas brought the evening to a close by. Speaking on “The Significance of Gettysburg,” Douglas’ speech called for a Civil Rights Act that would make real the promises first set forth in the 1860s. Douglas tried to remove sectionalism from his appeal, noting that slavery was located in the South due to geographic happenstance, and reiterating some of the failures of both leaders in his region and of his party. The senator’s appeal was urgent: “I am afraid that the Roy Wilkinses and Martin Luther Kings will be pushed aside by the mass of Negro youths who will turn to more violent leaders and methods with an incalculable loss to themselves and our country.”⁹²

In contrast to the Emancipation Proclamation centennial and the Gettysburg Address celebration in November, the press almost complete ignored this commemorative event, possibly because no reporters made their way through the snow that night. Though Nevins had already decided to publish the papers from the symposium, the poor attendance and skimpy coverage likely further motivated him towards that end. Just a week later he contacted the editor of the University of Illinois Press about such a possibility, and soon reached an agreement, with the book coming out in the fall of 1964. Titled *Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address: Commemorative Papers*, the book included the papers presented that night, an extensive introduction from Nevins, and a brief consideration of the nuts and bolts of the Address by David Mearns of the Library of Congress.

⁹² Ibid, 115.

In his introduction Nevins made clear why he felt it so important to commemorate the Address with a special program, noting “The quintessence of much of his thought and emotion is compressed into his Gettysburg Address . . . Assuredly, among the events of the war, the Address merits remembrance as much as any battle or any act of statesmanship except the Emancipation Proclamation.” The critical part of the Address was its statement about equality: “The proposition that all men are created equal was a truth for all ages, and if America under God achieved a new birth of freedom, it would stand as an object lesson to all nations.”⁹³ Four years earlier, at the annual Lincoln dinner in Washington, D.C., Nevins went on at great length about democracy without once mentioning liberty or equality, an indication that the events of the early 1960s shifted his focus. Nevins agreed with Dos Passos that Lincoln felt disappointment after the speech, but Nevins contended that Lincoln’s disappointment came because he thought it had little impact on the audience, not because he thought the speech poor.⁹⁴

A variety of publications including the *American Historical Review*, *Atlanta Constitution*, *Erasmus*, *Journal of Southern History*, *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, *Military Review*, *Pennsylvania History*, and *The Historian* offered positive reviews. A Chinese publication, *Beisho Dayori*, even considered the book.⁹⁵

The book still boasts a wide distribution, with over 800 available in the nation’s research libraries and an unknown number in smaller libraries and private hands. In that

⁹³ Ibid, 6, 11.

⁹⁴ ALSC, *Final Report*, 182.

⁹⁵ Reviews found in Allan Nevins Papers Box 85, “Subject Correspondence,” Folder “Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address Correspondence,” CURBML.

sense, Allan Nevins' vision of the Civil War Centennial lives on, for while we no longer remember the celebrations of the 1960s, we still read the books produced during that era.

Conclusion

The Civil War centennial continued for another fifteen months, but waning interest and funds meant precluded further large public commemorations. During the 1964 World's Fair the Gettysburg Address made another splash. Walt Disney featured an exhibit titled "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln" that included an animatronic Lincoln reciting the Gettysburg Address. The state of Illinois proudly featured its copy of the Address at their state exhibit, and produced a beautiful poster featuring the text of the Address in English surrounded by translations in French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Japanese, Latin, Russian, and Spanish. The 1879 prophesy of Kentuckian Robert Owen that one day the Address would be translated into all languages had come true.⁹⁶

So what, then, did the Gettysburg Address mean during this era? From 1945 until 1962, those invoking the Gettysburg Address mostly did so in terms of the Cold War. In that era most Americans felt foreign responsibilities and entanglements nation's single biggest issue and threat. No one better defended and promoted that institution of government than Lincoln, and thus the Address was utilized in that era typically to show off democracy. By 1963, however, civil rights stood at the fore. And in that light the Gettysburg Address served the country too, for it offered an admonition from a

⁹⁶ "Lincoln's Gettysburg Speech," *Illinois State Journal*, November 17, 1879.

Southern-born Republican to embrace the promise of the Declaration by recognizing the equality of all men.

For a hundred years the nation lost Lincoln's meaning at Gettysburg, for almost no one in the ensuing century discussed or acted on Lincoln's demand that democracy *must* include equality. But in 1963 the promise of equality made in 1776 and renewed in 1863 was finally put to the test, and the Gettysburg Address became the historic symbol of that promise. Though little noted at the time, King's invocation of the Gettysburg Address in his "Dream" speech symbolized that shift.

CHAPTER VII
PORTRAYALS OF THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS,
1876-1965

“Every school child, adopting Lincoln’s Gettysburg speech, can now speak glibly of ‘government of the people, by the people, and for the people.’”

George Pepper
Saturday Evening Post
May 5, 1917

In 1896 Baltimore publisher R. H. Woodward Company brought out a textbook authored by J. William Jones titled *School History of the United States*. Jones identified himself as “born, reared, and educated on Southern soil, following for four years with youthful devotion the battle-flag of the Southern Confederacy, for twelve years secretary of the Southern Historical Society.” He explained that “for many years I have been solicited to write a School History of the United States which, while fair to all sections, would do full justice to the Southern States.” Due to his aforementioned biography, Jones felt, “I may modestly claim that I have had some facilities for knowing, and some qualifications for preparing, a history of the United States which shall be acceptable to the South and fit to be taught in her schools.”¹

When published, Jones’ book became the favored history text in the South, though not in the North. Jones made no mention of the Gettysburg Address in his work, and roundly decried Lincoln’s issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation: “His

¹ J. William Jones, *School History of the United States* (Baltimore: R. H. Woodward, 1896), 8.

proclamation was clearly unconstitutional, his plea of military necessity a shallow pretext. The final consummation of the edict, by a triumph of force over justice and right, was as bold a piece of wholesale robbery as ever the conqueror inflicted upon the conquered.”²

From the late 1800s through the 1960s the interpretations of the Civil War era in school materials, namely textbooks and readers, varied widely by region and over time. The coverage of the Gettysburg Address did not break this general rule, as the following examples will show. But because parents and local school board members understood school curricula as central means whereby children learned their nation’s values, and because choosing textbooks required parents and school board members to articulate the reasons for their support or rejection of particular portrayals, debates over textbook adoption often laid bare the regional and political stakes entailed in remembering or forgetting the Gettysburg Address.

Public Education in the United States Before 1860

In 1647 Massachusetts passed the first public school law in the colonies. That act required that towns of fifty or more households appoint and provide for a schoolmaster. The law ensured that all good Puritans could read the Bible, and complemented the founding of Harvard in 1635 as an institution to train ministers. After independence the “common” or public school system grew quickly. By 1823, Maine, only a state for three years, boasted 1,500 common schools, while two years later the

² Ibid, 293.

tally in New York stood at over 7,800. According to the 1860 Census, Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont all reported that 80% or more of their white children aged 5-15 years in school, while Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island claimed in excess of 70%. But this snapshot of nearly universal education did not extend past New England. In Virginia, for example, 42.8% of the white children attended schools, and that represented the highest figure among the states that soon seceded and formed the Confederacy.³

As the level of education offered in the states differed, so too did the textbooks used, with regional contests over content predating the Civil War. In 1793 Jedidiah Morse, a Yale-educated minister living in Charlestown, Massachusetts, published *The American Universal Geography* in an attempt to break America's dependence upon Britain for textbooks. Not everyone found Morse's work to their liking. According to Edgar Knight, a historian of education, Morse's book "provoked protests from the South because of the misinformation, misrepresentations, and 'falsities' which the volume was said to contain . . . Morse's geography appears among the first textbooks to provoke these sectional protests."⁴ It was far from the last. In his work on Pocahontas, Robert Tilton shows that during the early national period Virginians promoted the Pocahontas story as a way to assert its role as the origin point for the nation, a role that New England

³ Carl L. Bankston III and Stephen J. Caldas, *Public Education: America's Civil Religion* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2009), 21, 28, 30.

⁴ Edgar W. Knight, "An Early Case of Opposition in the South to Northern Textbooks," *Journal of Southern History* 13 (May 1947): 245.

claimed for itself by emphasizing the landing on Plymouth Rock and the first Thanksgiving.⁵

This regional contest became ever more distinct and consequential in the early 1800s as the South stopped defending slavery as a “necessary evil” and began defining it as a “positive good” for slave and slave owner. C. Vann Woodward notes the introduction of a resolution in the Alabama state legislature to prohibit licensing teachers who had lived in the state for less than ten years, an act intended “to protect the state against abolition teachers.”⁶

In an 1860 article in *DeBow's Review* a writer cautioned that many of the history texts being used in Southern schools painted slavery as a purely Southern evil, noting, “We, who now support and defend the institution of slavery, are either denounced or pitied, the residents of the Northern States, who have always been the chief prosecutors of the slave-trade, are allowed to pass uncensored.” In general terms, the writer continued, “They are filled with praise and glorification of the first settlers of the New-England Northern States generally, as a set of incorruptible patriots, irreproachable moralists, and most exemplary models for future imitation,” while, “On the other hand, the individuals, who organized society in the Southern States, are pictured as a race of

⁵ Robert S. Tilton, *Pocahontas: The Evolution of An American Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 37.

⁶ C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1960), 66.

immoral reprobates, who have handed down all their vices and evil habits to their descendants of this day.”⁷

Daniel Harvey Hill, a professor of mathematics and civil engineering at Davidson College in North Carolina, catered to the Southern market with his 1857 *Elements of Algebra*. One problem asked students to work out the respective rate of travel for two soldiers given the following information: “The field of battle at Buena Vista is 6 ½ miles from Saltillo. Two Indiana volunteers ran away from the field of battle at the same time; one ran half a mile per hour faster than the other, and reached Saltillo 5 minutes and 54 6/11 seconds sooner than the other.” Another began, “A man in Cincinnati purchased 10,000 pounds of bad pork, at 1 cent per pound, and paid so much per pound to put it through a chemical process, by which it would appear sound, and then sold it at an advanced price, clearing \$450 by the fraud.”⁸

The Civil War only made this problem worse. Marinda Moore’s *Primary Geography* found a following in the South, no doubt at least in part because it cast aspersions upon the enemy. Moore observed that the United States was “now tumbling into ruins” because of “the injustice and avarice of the Yankee Nation,” a curious statement for a book ostensibly seeking to teach geography. Likewise, Moore posed the hypothetical question, “What is the present drawback to our trade,” and followed up with

⁷ _____, “Our School Books,” *DeBow’s Review* 28 (October 1860): 438.

⁸ D. H. Hill, *Elements of Algebra* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1857), 321-322; Hal Bridges, “D. H. Hill’s Anti-Yankee Algebra,” *Journal of Southern History* 22 (May 1956): 221.

the answer, “An unlawful Blockade by the miserable and hellish Yankee Nation.”⁹ An arithmetic text by Lemuel Johnson asked, “7 Confederate soldiers captured 21 Yankees and divided them equally between them; how many did each one have?” One question, “If one Confederate soldier can whip 7 Yankees, how many soldiers can whip 49 Yankees?” came from a popular saying.¹⁰

In the years after the war writers from both North and South advanced their narratives of American history, both inevitably showing that the other violated the Constitution and brought on the war. But as the nation tried to move past the wounds of the Civil War in the late nineteenth century it faced a new problem: immigration. The number of immigrants entering the country exploded between 1890 and 1920. By 1900 immigrants and children of immigrants in the United States represented 1/3 of the population. Many saw schools as both a way to turn the immigrants into Americans *and* productive workers, two major concerns at the turn of the century. The Pledge of Allegiance, required of all schoolchildren after October 12, 1892, evidences this.¹¹

Whereas just over 50% of the nation’s school-aged children attended school in 1870, that number rose to 60% in 1900, and 80% in 1920.¹² The number of children flocking to schools required a new conception of the educational experience; no longer did curriculum only account for the children of elites. Teachers used two basic resources

⁹ M. B. Moore, *Primary Geography, Arranged as a Reading Book for Common Schools, with Questions and Answers Attached*, 2nd ed. (Raleigh: Branson & Farrar, 1864), 40, 47.

¹⁰ Lemuel Johnson, *An Elementary Arithmetic, Designed for Beginners: Embracing the First Principles of the Science* (Raleigh: Branson & Farrar, 1864), 44, 51.

¹¹ Bankston, *Public Education*, 43-45, 51.

¹² *Ibid*, 55.

to educate students in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: readers and textbooks.

Readers

In the nineteenth century most students learned their history somewhat incidentally through readers. The *McGuffey Readers*, first published in 1836, remain the iconic examples of the literary reader, having sold more than 120 million copies.¹³ Though McGuffey came out too early to include the Gettysburg Address, later readers included Lincoln's most famous speech in tracts designed to teach students how to use the English language.

The *Riverside Literature Series* was a typical pamphlet that included the Gettysburg Address among its lessons. A monthly publication put out by Boston's Houghton, Mifflin and Company, the January 1888 edition featured "The Gettysburg Speech and Other Papers by Abraham Lincoln and An Essay on Lincoln by James Russell Lowell."¹⁴ The following year the Parker Publishing Company of Taylorville, Illinois, put out a brief pamphlet titled *Lincoln's Gettysburg Speech. With Suggestive Exercises on Teaching Synonyms, Word-Analysis, Figures of Speech, Etc.* This pamphlet belong to *Parker's Lessons in Literature*, a series of approximately 300 leaflets

¹³ ____, *Textbooks in Education: A Report from The American Textbook Publishers Institute to its membership, its friends, and any others whose interest in the development of the educational system in the United States goes beyond a mere passing fancy* (New York: The American Textbook Publishers Institute, 1949), 41, 45.

¹⁴ ____, *The Gettysburg Speech and Other Papers by Abraham Lincoln and An Essay on Lincoln by James Russell Lowell*, Riverside Literature Series No. 32 (January 1888).

“Famous throughout the United States as the best regular or supplementary reading obtainable” and “prepared expressly for supplementary reading in schools.”¹⁵ A similar set, titled *The Little Classic Series*, was published by the A. Flanagan Company of Chicago. In 1905 they produced *Speeches by Lincoln* as a part of the Eighth Grade readers.¹⁶

The most influential words ever written about the Gettysburg Address came from the pen of Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, whose “The Perfect Tribute” appeared in the July 1906 *Scribner’s Magazine*. A Mobile, Alabama, native, Andrews married a New York Republican in 1884 and spent her adult life in that state. In Andrews’ story a depressed Lincoln wondered on the train ride to Gettysburg, , “Of what use was it for such a one to try to fashion a speech fit to take a place by the side of Everett’s silver sentences?” Despite this, Lincoln borrowed a pencil from Secretary of State William Seward and composed an address on a “bit of brown paper.” At the conclusion of Lincoln’s speech on November 19 Andrews wrote, “Not a hand was lifted in applause,” and thus, “In Lincoln’s heart a throb of pain answered it. His speech had been, as he feared it would be, a failure.”¹⁷

The following day, after returning to Washington, Lincoln had an encounter that changed his life. Dragged to a hospital by a young boy determined to find a lawyer to make out a will for his dying brother, Lincoln encountered Carter Hampton Blair, a

¹⁵ _____, *Lincoln’s Gettysburg Speech*, Parker’s Lessons in Literature (Taylorville, IL: Parker Publishing, 1889).

¹⁶ _____, *Speeches by Lincoln*, Little Classic Series (Chicago: A. Flanagan, 1906).

¹⁷ Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, “The Perfect Tribute,” *Scribner’s Magazine* XL (July 1906): 17-20.

mortally wounded Confederate captain from Georgia. Blair did not know his guest's identity, and in the course of their talk declared that at Gettysburg President Lincoln, "Made one of the greatest speeches of history." Thinking about the future, Blair noted, "It will live, that speech. Fifty years from now American school-boys will be learning it as part of their education."¹⁸

The story generated enough demand that in September 1906 it came out as a brochure, with a run of 575 copies, marking its transition from an article to a reader. This was just the beginning. In 1909, the centennial year of Lincoln's birth, Scribner's printed a School Edition. In 1943 Lincoln scholar Gerald McMurtry noted the book boasted twenty-five distinct editions with more than 57 printings, and a total output of over half a million copies.¹⁹ It is probably the second-best selling Lincoln book of all time behind only Doris Kearns Goodwin's recent *Team of Rivals*. More than any other work, this book introduced American school children in both history and literature classes to the story of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. It also seems likely that Andrews' "perfect tribute" of perfect silence at the end of Lincoln's speech influenced Charles Baum, the 9-year-old sitting near Lincoln who in 1935 categorized the reception of the speech as "profound silence."²⁰

In 1935, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios produced a half-hour movie based on Andrews' work starring Charles "Chic" Sale as Abraham Lincoln. Adapted for the silver

¹⁸ Andrews, "The Perfect Tribute," 23.

¹⁹ R. Gerald McMurtry, "The Perfect Tribute," *Lincoln Herald* 45 (June 1943): 28.

²⁰ Charles Baum, "President Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg, Pa., November 19th, 1863," Statement written December 17, 1935. Gettysburg College Library Special Collections.

screen by Ruth Cummings and directed by Edward Sloman, the film began with a man carving the words of the Gettysburg Address onto a stone, but then followed the Andrews story almost exactly.²¹ In addition to its immediate impact, the film was appeared on a number of suggested resources for schools to use in teaching the Civil War during the centennial in the 1960s, stretching its reach past the half-century mark.²²

Ultimate, the story proved just a little too good. The Confederate army never enrolled a Carter Hampton Blair. And while the story made the rounds for a while in the late nineteenth century, Lincoln did not write the Gettysburg Address on a scrap of paper on the train to Gettysburg. Rumors that he borrowed a pencil from a young train engineer named Andrew Carnegie are also untrue, despite Carnegie's claims to the contrary.

So why did Andrews make up her story? The story was at heart a reconciliationist narrative showing that a common appreciation for Abraham Lincoln healed the country's wounds. In reality, no such common appreciation of Lincoln's words or such a reconciliation existed. Southern newspapers ignored the text of Lincoln's speech in 1863 and chided his presence at the dedication ceremonies. More recently, Southerners continued to ignore Lincoln's speech. Of all the readers

²¹ Today the film is nearly impossible to view. There is a copy at UCLA, but they guard it carefully. As a part of the Lincoln Birth Bicentennial in 2009, the University of Illinois hosted a film festival, and they searched for a copy. The family of Charles Sale found one among his estate, a copy of which is now viewable to researchers at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

²² C. Irene Hayner, *A List of Materials on the Civil War Recommended for Use in Schools Of Michigan* (Lansing: Michigan Civil War Centennial Commission, 1964), 22.

previously cited that included the Gettysburg Address none came from the South, and no evidence exists of their use there.

On the other hand, a number of English children's books discussed Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address. In 1906 Mary Hamilton produced a biography of Lincoln for the Children's Heroes Series published in London by T. C. & E. C. Jack, Ltd. Hamilton told her readers that Lincoln "had not prepared anything, but the short speech which he gave made a deep impression upon all who heard it, and puts into very noble words the thoughts that were always present to his mind." She then quoted the entire speech. Whether Hamilton simply did not know of Lincoln's preparation of his remarks ahead of time, or if she intentionally hid that work in order to make his words appear more inspired or authentically from the heart, remains unclear.²³

Wilhelm Hoffman's 1867 German-language biography of Lincoln preceded Hamilton's book by nearly forty years. Titled *Abraham Lincoln: Emancipator of Slaves. A Narrative for the Youth*, this work makes clear Lincoln's role as a tool for educating children on the international level as well as the national one, making Southern omissions even more glaring.²⁴ This regionally dichotomous coverage of Abraham Lincoln and his most famous address is even more evident in the textbooks utilized in the varying regions of the country in the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries.

²³ Mary Hamilton, *The Story of Abraham Lincoln*, The Children's Heroes Series (London: T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1906), 101.

²⁴ Wilhelm Hoffman, *Abraham Lincoln: Emancipator of Slaves. A Narrative for the Youth* (Breslaw: Trewendt, 1867).

Textbooks

The issue of textbooks, specifically what they cover and their perceived biases, is one of long standing. James Loewen's 1996 *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* is the most popular critique of textbooks, but far from the first. Before the Civil War the issue of textbooks was not a major one; most children brought whatever books they owned with them from home and the teachers gave individual assignments. While primers and readers were often assigned with some uniformity, these focused on the traditional triumvirate of writing, reading, and arithmetic. Many of the readers did focus on history, but early educators did not consider that subject worthy of independent study.²⁵

That changed in the late 1800s as schools at all levels began offering courses in history for the first time. An 1891 National Education Association (NEA) report suggested thirty subjects for high schools, including Modern and American history.²⁶ These courses required textbooks, and exactly who would pay for those books and which ones would be selected soon became a point of contention in many areas.

Even the term "textbook" is a bit slippery. Whereas today we are used to products full of objectives, reading checks, summaries, various levels of questions from true/false to short response, and profuse illustrations, these are fairly new conventions. In the late 1800s and early 1900s textbooks differed little from the narrative histories sold to the general public. The conventions that made a book a textbook included the

²⁵ ____, *Textbooks in Education*, 75.

²⁶ Edgar B. Wesley, *NEA: The First Hundred Years, The Building of the Teaching Profession* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 111.

numbering of paragraphs for easy reference, bolded vocabulary words, and the inclusion of a page or so of questions to consider at the end of each chapter.

In 1949 the American Textbook Publishers Institute, a board consisting of 57 of the nation's top publishers who produced 85% of the nation's textbooks, put out a brief history/propaganda piece on the role of the textbook in the classroom. In the introduction the book offered a witty monologue supposedly delivered by an editor to a potential author. When asked what to write to attain commercial success, the hypothetical editor replied, "Just write what you believe that an editor will believe that a salesman will believe that a superintendent will believe that a supervisor will believe that a teacher will believe that a child will read with understanding, with pleasure, and with profit." This tongue-in-cheek remark encapsulates both the difficulties of the author, and of those who study the evolution of textbooks over time, for it is frequently difficult to determine who pulls the strings regarding the content that makes it into textbooks.²⁷

We do know which books individual states approved for use in their schools, and also those with the greatest circulation by region for much of this era. The patterns of regionalism evident in antebellum textbooks persisted throughout this period, abating only reluctantly in the 1960s. The 1890s were a particularly important decade in the evolution of Southern textbooks. That era saw the founding of both the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) in 1889, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy

²⁷ _____, *Textbooks in Education*, 122, ix.

(UDC) in 1894, the two groups that took the lead in advocating textbooks which presented a Southern point of view.²⁸

While J. William Jones' book enjoyed the preference of Southerners in the late 1800s, when Susan Pendleton Lee's *New School History of the United States* appeared in 1899 it soon gained that mantle. Published in Richmond by the B. F. Johnson Publishing Company, Lee's work followed up to her earlier *School History of the United States*.²⁹ The Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction approved Lee's book as the *only* United States history text in the state's public schools for 1904-1905.³⁰

Echoing J. William Jones, Lee noted, "The author is encouraged to hope that this history will meet the approval of the wise and experienced educators of American children, and supply the want, so often expressed in the South, for an *unprejudiced* and *truthful* history of the United States." The popularity of Lee's book warranted a revised edition just a year later which added maps, vocabulary, and a fuller history of the most recent presidential administrations. Her lavishly illustrated chapter on the Civil War focused on the military aspects of the war, and spent little time on domestic politics. Following in Jones' footsteps, Lee made no mention of the Gettysburg Address. An examination of the readers and other books approved by the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction for that year indicates no others that included the Gettysburg Address,

²⁸ A tremendous essay on the interpretation of Lincoln in these early textbooks is David Goldfield, "Lincoln's Image in the American Schoolbook." *American Studies Journal* 53 (Summer 2009), <http://asjournal.zusas.uni-halle.de/166.html>, accessed December 8, 2009.

²⁹ Susan Pendleton Lee, *New School History of the United States*, rev. ed. (1899; Richmond: B. F. Johnson, 1900).

³⁰ "Text Books Used in the Public Schools of the City of Richmond, Session, 1904-1905," *Broadside* 1904:20, Virginia Historical Society.

continuing, whether intentional or not, the censoring of the speech in the Old Dominion.³¹

In contrast to this recalcitrance to discuss Lincoln's speech and all of its implications in Virginia is Michigan's 1915 bulletin published by the State Superintendent of Public Education and titled *Lincoln at Gettysburg*. Superintendent Fred Keller penned an introductory letter stating, "We are confident that the study of Lincoln's immortal speech will impress the boys and girls of Michigan what a privilege it is to be an American citizen." The bulletin featured a two page facsimile of the Bliss version of the Gettysburg Address, a brief overview of the cemetery and Lincoln's Address by O.T. Carson, another article by John Morrow, present at the cemetery in 1863, and some suggestions by Elinor Gage, an English teacher in Traverse, on lessons centered around the speech.³²

Albert Bushnell Hart's 1918 *School History of the United States* became the nation's popular American history textbook in the 1920s and 1930s. Hart, a professor of government at Harvard University, conscientiously sought inclusiveness, and thus his frontispiece consisted not of the traditional image of George Washington, but instead featured a boat of immigrants passing the Statue of Liberty as they sailed into New York. Taking a page from the Southern-oriented textbooks of the era, Hart played up the section reconciliation after the Civil War, and noted that Lincoln "was born in Kentucky, and he understood the southern people." Under a brief section about Lincoln Hart noted,

³¹ Lee, *New School History*, preface.

³² [Michigan] State Superintendent of Public Education, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, Bulletin No. 55, 1915.

“Lincoln’s greatness was due chiefly to his wonderful power of knowing what was going on in the hearts of the people. His brief speeches are full of noble spirit, of thoughts as true for the South as for the North. . . .” Hart then quoted several of Lincoln’s more memorable lines, including “Government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”³³

A book published that same year garnered more popularity in the South, however. John Holladay Latané taught history at Johns Hopkins University and specialized in American foreign relations. His 1918 work, *A History of the United States*, sympathized with the Southern interpretation of the war and Reconstruction, evidenced by his comment in the preface that “The slavery contest was economic in its origins and development.” Latané presented a benign and likeable Lincoln, but like Lee before him made no mention of Lincoln’s most famous speech. This is not surprising in light of Latané’s comments on the Emancipation Proclamation: “The proclamation was strictly a war measure,” and quoted Lincoln’s famous letter to Horace Greeley to support that point. Latané presented Lincoln’s own words to make this point, but by omitting any mention of Lincoln’s stipulation at the end of the Proclamation that emancipation consisted of “an act of justice” and by failing to consider the Gettysburg Address at all, Latané permitted himself to ignore clear evidence of Lincoln’s moral opposition to slavery. To further probe this question would urge a reconsideration of both the causes and results of the Civil War, something Latané studiously avoided. Because of this

³³ Albert Bushnell Hart, *School History of the United States* (New York: American Book Company, 1918), 347-348.

avoidance, Latané appealed to the South as well as the North, making his book one of the first to achieve a national circulation.³⁴

Published just two years after Latané's work, James Ford Rhodes' *History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850 to the McKinley-Bryan Campaign of 1896* summed up the battle of Gettysburg by reprinting the Gettysburg Address, noting, "Nothing can so fitly close my account of the battle of Gettysburg."³⁵ Rhodes' history found audiences throughout the North, but the obviously pro-Northern slant of the book, evidenced by the inclusion of the Gettysburg Address, precluded its adoption in Southern schools.

In 1927 Ginn and Company of Boston published David S. Muzzey's *History of the American People*. Muzzey, a native New Englander and long a professor at Columbia University, already claimed one textbook to his credit, a 1911 work titled simply *American History*. The 1927 book was, in Muzzey's words, "A new high-school text written in response to the request of many teachers for a fuller treatment of our history, especially of its social and economic phases in the last few decades."³⁶

Muzzey's earlier text garnered both praise and criticism. J. Montgomery Gambrill, head of the Department of History and Civics at the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, reviewed the book in the *American Historical Review*, noting, "One of the most striking features is the easy confidence with which the author passes judgment upon men

³⁴ John Holladay Latané, *A History of the United States* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1918), 381; Goldfield, "Lincoln's Image in the American Schoolbook," n.p.

³⁵ James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850 to the McKinley-Bryan Campaign of 1896* (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 297-298.

³⁶ David Saville Muzzey, *History of the American People* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1927), iii.

and events from the early explorers to the Roosevelt policies.” That trait got Muzzey into hot water, as did his tendency to be “at various points inaccurate in detail or misleading because of extreme condensation.” But most damaging, “While much is said to show the South’s side of the long controversy that culminated in the Civil War, the author’s sympathies are more than plain: the South fought for an ‘unworthy cause.’” That cause, Muzzey made clear, was slavery.³⁷

In 1931 a committee of three appointed by the Virginia State Department of Education adopted Muzzey’s book for use in the state’s public schools, a shock to those who wished to present a more regionalized version of American history. The anti-Muzzey forces mobilized quickly. A response mechanism, or rather several response mechanisms, already existed.

In 1907 Fred Robertson of Tallahassee, Florida, wrote a brief letter to the *Confederate Veteran* which decried, “These long-legged Yankee lies will continue to run until we write our own history and print our own books.”³⁸ A number of the Confederate veterans’ groups including the United Confederate Veterans, United Daughters of the Confederacy, and the Sons of Confederate Veterans, far earlier formed committees to make sure that the books adopted in the South agreed with the Confederate interpretation of the war.

In 1919 the United Confederate Veterans issued a pamphlet penned by Mildred Rutherford demanding that states “reject a text-book that glorifies Abraham Lincoln and

³⁷ J. Montgomery Gambrill, review of *An American History*, by David Saville Muzzey, *American Historical Review* 17 (April 1912): 677-679.

³⁸ Fred Robertson, “Historical Inaccuracies,” *Confederate Veteran* 15 (June 1907): 284.

vilifies Jefferson Davis.”³⁹ Four years later Rutherford wrote another “expose” titled *The South Must Have Her Rightful Place in History*. The book attacked Abraham Lincoln and those who wrote about him in the preceding sixty years. Chapters with titles such as “Abraham Lincoln not the preserver of the Union” and “Violations of the Constitution by Lincoln” dominated. Rutherford’s premise was, “False history accepted as truth destroys civilization. For over sixty years the civilization of the South has been almost destroyed by the falsehoods written about it.” More specifically, “The time has fully come when the South especially should know the truth about Abraham Lincoln.”⁴⁰

These truths included the “fact” that Lincoln “headed the list of subscribers to John Brown’s raid in Kansas and Virginia, advocating murder and arson.” Rutherford took particular care to dispel the notion that the Gettysburg Address came from Lincoln’s genius: “Lincoln’s biographers pose him as a highly educated literary personage, and the Gettysburg speech which Seward wrote afterwards is put into every collection of great speeches and attributed to Lincoln, not Seward.” Ironically, Rutherford then printed Ward Hill Lamon’s comment about the poor reception of the speech and the negative appraisals offered by Lincoln himself and Seward. If she truly believed that Seward wrote the speech it is hard to imagine why she would include the negative reactions. At the end of her pamphlet Rutherford made clear exactly what she advocated, “We of the South are not advocating the adoption of any one text book, but

³⁹ Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *A Measuring Rod to Test Text Books, and Reference Books in Schools, Colleges and Libraries* (Athens: United Confederate Veterans, 1919), 5.

⁴⁰ Mildred Lewis Rutherford, *The South Must Have Her Rightful Place in History* (Athens: privately printed, 1923), 1-2.

we are advocating that those text books unjust to the South shall be ruled out of our schools, out of our homes, out of our public and private libraries, and that new encyclopedias and books of reference now being sold be carefully examined before place in our homes or public or private libraries.”⁴¹

Thus, by 1931 many individuals and organizations in the South awaited mobilization should an “anti-Southern” history textbook gain adoption in the public schools. Perhaps the most influential criticism of the Muzzey text came from the Sons of Confederate Veterans. At their annual convention in June of 1932, Matthew Page Andrews delivered the report of the SCV’s Text Book Committee. Matthews wrote widely on American history, even producing a textbook of his own, and in 1932 chaired the SCV’s Text Book Committee. Soon the report came out in pamphlet form and given the title *A Protest Against Provincialism*, ensuring it a wide audience.⁴²

Muzzey made his fair share of mistakes. In describing the situation in Washington in April of 1861 Muzzey painted a dramatic picture: “President Lincoln paced the floor of his office in the White House for hours, gazing anxiously down the Potomac, where the Confederate gunboats might appear at any moment and have the capital at their mercy.” In reality, the Confederacy owned no gunboats in April 1861, and would not possess one capable of attacking Washington until the *C.S.S. Virginia* launched in March 1862, nearly a year later.⁴³ Muzzey’s factual mistakes allowed the

⁴¹ Ibid, 13, 30, 33, 49.

⁴² Matthew Page Andrews, *Report of the Text Book Committee, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Being A Protest Against Provincialism* (Richmond: Sons of Confederate Veterans, 1932), 1.

⁴³ Muzzey, *American*, 360-361; Andrews, *Protest*, 19.

SCV greater latitude in attacking his interpretive decisions, and confirmed for Southerners that Muzzey's book presented bad history all around.

In his passage on Thirteenth Amendment Muzzey concluded, "When we consider that the Thirteenth Amendment to our Constitution might have been the prohibition of Congress ever to disturb slavery in the Southern states, instead of the eternal banishment of slavery from the land, we may say that the awful sacrifices of the Civil War were not made in vain." Muzzey's words strongly echoed the Gettysburg Address, though he did not cite that document in his text. Andrews and the Sons of Confederate Veterans vehemently disagreed that the end of slavery justified what they considered an unconstitutional war, noting that economics would have made slavery unprofitable in the decades following the Civil War and led to its natural demise. In their disavowal of slavery this committee proved itself more progressive than some of Muzzey's antagonists, like Lyon Tyler.⁴⁴

The criticism of Muzzey's textbook penned by Matthew Page Andrews for the Sons of Confederate Veterans paled in comparison to the essay Lyon Gardiner Tyler wrote trashing the work. Whereas the SCV pamphlet ran to thirty pages, Tyler's came in at 106. The title alone left little doubt as to the content: *A Criticism By Lyon Gardiner Tyler of History of the American People by DAVID S. MUZZEY, of Massachusetts*. The classification of the pamphlet as a "Criticism," the capitalization of Muzzey's name, and the identification that he hailed from Massachusetts, all indicated Tyler thought.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Muzzey, *History*, 395; Andrews, *Protest*, 16.

⁴⁵ Lyon G. Tyler, *A Criticism By Lyon Gardiner Tyler of History of the American People by DAVID S. MUZZEY, of Massachusetts*, 2nd rev. ed. (Richmond: Richmond Press, 1932).

In painting Muzzey's history as flawed because of its regional bias, Matthew Page Andrews tried to give the appearance of not personally having that regional bias. He spoke in terms of the "true" or "federal" history rather than simply countering Muzzey's Northern slant with his own Southern one. Not so with Tyler. Noting that Muzzey privileged the role of New England in the Early Republic and blamed the South for the secession crisis, Tyler responded, "In the course of this review attention will be called to the occasions when the North sought to 'put it over' the South on issues entirely distinct from that of slavery."⁴⁶

As Tyler's ostensibly reviewed the Muzzey text, and Muzzey did not mention the Gettysburg Address, there are no references to that speech in the main portion of *A Criticism*. However, Tyler included a lengthy appendix, and titled section three "Claims for Lincoln." The third subcategory under this section is "Lincoln as 'the Friend of the South,'" and took on the contention that Reconstruction would have been far less unpleasant for white Southerners under Lincoln than it turned out with the Radical Republicans in charge. In seeking to dispel this notion, Tyler noted that Lincoln's actions did not provide conclusive proof of his alleged soft-spot for the South, and

No conclusions can be drawn from Lincoln's words. He was a word juggler, and tried to fool people instead of convincing them. In the text several instances are given. Two more may be added. His Gettysburg speech has been eulogized, but truthfully speaking it is a mere rhetorical flourish based upon a dishonest assumption implied and not directly expressed. That assumption is that if the South had succeeded "government of the people, by the people, and for the people would have perished from the earth." Nothing is more absurd. The Gettysburg speech illustrates the use of words, as described by Webster, and in

⁴⁶ Ibid, 3.

avoiding a just conclusion the Gettysburg speech shows itself a gilded fraud.⁴⁷

He continued, “That words in the mouth of Lincoln had little or no meaning is further proved by his second inaugural. . .” After quoting Lincoln’s phrase that if the war lasted until all the blood spilled equaled that extracted during a quarter millennium of slavery it would be a just outcome, Tyler rebutted, “The negroes were the most spoiled domestics in the world, and instead of receiving no requital for their service, the negroes received large returns.”⁴⁸ Tyler’s bigotry clearly got the best of him, using the excuse of Muzzey’s textbook to further his anti-Lincoln campaign despite the fact that the book did not discuss either Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address or the Second Inaugural at length. Further, his categorization of Lincoln as a “word juggler” represented a change from his earlier days, when he noted that the “literary merits” of the speech were “recognized,” and perhaps reflected his growing bitterness over the rise of Abraham Lincoln’s reputation, even within his home state. Tyler was one of the few people to see Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address as making a powerful case for the connection between democracy and equality, and given his own biases he rejected that interpretation, seeking every possible way to discount Lincoln’s speech. First he chastised the notion that if the Union failed popular governments worldwide would fail, then he accused Lincoln of obfuscating the meaning behind his words with eloquence, and finally he asserted that Lincoln’s words possessed no eloquence. Lincoln’s rising reputation seems to have

⁴⁷ Ibid, 103-104.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 104.

literally driven Tyler mad, as each succeeding pamphlet chronicles his resort to increasingly alarmist rhetoric and decreasingly rational thought.⁴⁹

Despite the impression given by neo-Confederates like Mildred Lewis Rutherford and Lyon Gardiner Tyler, the Gettysburg Address appeared in very few textbooks during this earlier period. The pro-Confederate books previously mentioned did not discuss, analyze, or reprint the speech, but neither did books published for African-American audiences nor Northern audiences during this period, all of which focused almost exclusively on military and political history. As the Gettysburg Address did not affect the outcome of a particular battle or carry the force of a law, most passed by it without comment.

For example, in 1875 Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a prewar abolitionist and the colonel of the first African-American regiment in the Civil War, published *Young Folks' History of the United States*. While Higginson spent a good amount of time reviewing the Emancipation Proclamation, he offered not a single word on the Gettysburg Address.⁵⁰ Sixteen years later Edward Johnson's *School History of the Negro Race* also remained silent on the great speech.⁵¹ One of the bestselling books aimed at a Northern audience in the early 1900s was Edward Channing's *A Student's History of the United States*, first published in 1898 but then revised numerous times

⁴⁹ [Lyon G. Tyler], "The South and Germany," *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine* 26 (July 1917): 11.

⁵⁰ Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Young Folks' History of the United States* (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1875).

⁵¹ Edward Johnson, *A School History of the Negro Race in America* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1891).

over the succeeding thirty years. Channing's book took such a blatantly Northern perspective that he put a blue cover on the volume to show his support for the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the Union's veterans' organization, and featured Lincoln's image on the frontispiece. Despite this stance, Channing also ignored the Gettysburg Address.⁵²

As preceding chapters made clear, the resonance of the Gettysburg Address hit a nadir during the late 1800s and early 1900s. While the speech started to rise in parts of the country by the second decade of the nineteenth century, it still remained taboo in the South. In *Schoolbook Nation* Joseph Moreau explains how the Southern view came to dominate the nation's textbooks:

Most Southern states at the turn of the century had begun to adopt textbooks on a statewide basis while most states in the North still left those choices entirely in the hands of local officials (states and territories in the less populous West split more evenly on the issue). Publishers had more incentive to meet the specific demands of a large, single purchasing unit like Texas than those of a multitude of smaller ones in Illinois and Massachusetts, each with different expectations and preferences regarding content.⁵³

For a time publishers brought out editions tailored to each region, or at least containing imprints (sometimes falsified) from various locations. But eventually publishers abandoned this practice in favor of a solitary text that appealed to all, or least did not offend anyone.⁵⁴ The Michigan bulletin recommending a variety of school materials

⁵² Edward Channing, *A Student's History of the United States* (New York: Macmillan, 1898).

⁵³ Joseph Moreau, *Schoolbook Nation: Conflicts Over American History Textbooks From the Civil War to the Present* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 86-87.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 84.

that covered the Gettysburg Address and Albion Bushnell Hart's textbook are both evidence that not everyone accepted this economic reality, as are the large number of public recitations of Lincoln's speech incorporated into Northern schools.

Public Performances

Many school children first encountered the Gettysburg Address during holiday public performances. While the speech did not appear in students' textbooks in the late 1800s and early 1900s, it frequently appeared in the readers, and thus often became a part of public performances, particularly in the North. In his 1942 work on the Gettysburg Address, *Torch of Freedom*, Elbert Moses noted that "My introduction to the Gettysburg Address was in the Public School. It was my task to memorize and speak it on the customary Friday afternoon program. I was not singled out especially, others had to give this or similar selections."⁵⁵

In 1971 Robert Dewey wrote of his memories of the "Old Vets" who inhabited his Massachusetts town. In discussing the commemorations of Decoration Day, Dewey wrote, "In the ninth grade the smartest boy recited the Gettysburg Address," showing the importance of the tradition in that it was not entrusted to just any student.⁵⁶

In 1908 the Lincoln Education League incorporated in New York and soon turned its attention to placing tablets of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in the nation's schools. The League wrote to schools offering to pay one half the cost of the tablets, and

⁵⁵ Elbert Moses, *The Torch of Freedom* (Pittsburgh: privately printed, 1942), 8.

⁵⁶ Robert Dewey, "The Old Vets," *American Heritage* 22 (April 1971): 56.

suggesting they collect the rest through “popular subscription.” The League claimed funds sufficient to subsidize 1,000 tablets, on a “first come, first served” basis.⁵⁷

The 1913 celebrations in Gettysburg, detailed extensively in Chapter IV, illustrate this connection between public education and recitations of the Gettysburg Address. The anniversary celebrations of the speech that year ran concurrently with the 59th Annual Adams County Teachers’ Institute, and the participants at the meeting attended the ceremonies commemorating Lincoln’s famous speech.⁵⁸ The *New York Evening Post* reported that in Chicago “Pupils above the sixth grade had memorized the address and recited it at the hour at which President Lincoln began his speech. To-night the speech will be repeated in nearly every night school and social center in the state.”⁵⁹

Two years later, in the midst of World War I, a gathering of 10,000 schoolchildren in Mount Morris Park, New York, heard a recitation of the Gettysburg Address as a part of their civic education that day.⁶⁰ On March 11, 1922, five New Jersey boys caught throwing rocks at railroad trains came before the town police recorder to make their amends. The oldest boy, fourteen, recited the Gettysburg Address from memory, which he did with only one mistake. The four younger boys read the Address from a book. Thus the speech served both as both punishment and salvation for

⁵⁷ Lincoln Education League, memorandum, 1908, Lincolniana Collection, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois.

⁵⁸ “59th Annual Institute,” *Gettysburg Times*, November 17, 1913, pp. 1-2.

⁵⁹ “Lincoln Day at Gettysburg,” *New York Evening Mail*, November 19, 1913.

⁶⁰ “Children Pledge Loyalty to Flag,” *New York Times*, June 15, 1915, p. 7.

these five youths, a case notable enough to make the pages of the *New York Times* the following day.

In 1938 the Chicago Public School sponsored perhaps the glitziest school celebration of the Gettysburg Address. On the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the speech the school system produced a radio program to commemorate the Address. WBBM broadcast the program at 4:45pm on Saturday, November 19. The cast of characters included Lincoln, David Wills, Daniel Webster, Theodore Parker, Robert Toombs, William Barton (Lincoln historian), and Mary Lincoln, with the script running to ten pages. The program perpetuated a number of myths, most importantly that the organizing committee did not really want Lincoln to come to Gettysburg and that he wrote his speech hastily late on the night of November 18. The program also added a new myth, that Mary Todd Lincoln journeyed to Gettysburg with her husband and helped give him the confidence to write the masterpiece. While getting some of the facts wrong, by quoting William Barton's contention that the Address was "a declaration of America's fundamental principles," the program identified multiple principles, namely democracy and equality, thus getting Lincoln's central idea correct and disseminating it to an untold number of children and adults throughout the Chicago area.⁶¹

These early recitations of the Address are an interesting link between past and present. Pre-twentieth century education consisted largely of "training" the mind by memorizing large amounts of information. In this way the exercises calling upon either

⁶¹ George Edwards Jennings, "75th Anniversary, Gettysburg Address," *Lincolnia* Collection, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

a selected student or the student body as a whole to recite the Gettysburg Address from memory harkened back to past educational practices. On the other hand, the Address was more uniquely American than most passages previously memorized, and therefore was a link to the future. Eventually the Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania would sponsor an essay contest titled “What the Gettysburg Address Means To Me,” an exercise aimed at middle and high school students, and thus move past the mere memorizations and recitations of the Address to deeper considerations of its lasting legacy and enduring significance. Students grappled with that question more meaningfully during World War II.

World War II

With the outbreak of war in 1939, particularly after the beginnings of American involvement in 1941, the United States quickly reoriented the nation’s public schools. Nearly all the education associations, from the National Education Association to the National Council For Social Studies, advocated the need for a greater understanding of the nation’s past and its values as a means of building support for the war effort. During World War I schools adapted their curriculum to reflect the current conflict, but the lack of a national education infrastructure precluded any massive attempts at coordinating wartime programs. In fact, the federal government largely stayed out of school affairs at this time, setting standards for health within the schools, but leaving issues of curriculum up to state and local officials.⁶² Rather than encouraging the role of schools in

⁶² Bankston, *Public Education*, 60.

promoting democracy and civic education during World War I, the government restricted textbook production to 50% of the prewar levels, allocating those excess resources to the war effort.⁶³

The interwar period saw great advances in education, particular related to social studies. The National Education Association was founded in 1857, but its growth mirrored that of the public schools, and did not really take off until after World War I. In 1921 the National Council for the Social Studies was founded, signaling the rising importance of that subject. The term “social studies” is a telling choice; in the aftermath of world war the nation’s leaders wanted to ensure greater knowledge not just of the United States but also of the world’s other countries. America did not know her allies or enemies well enough, educational leaders thought, and that parochialism did not lead to peace.⁶⁴

By 1941 social studies were an integral part of the school curriculum. This time around, rather than seeing textbooks and programs of study as a burden on the nation’s resources, the country’s leaders saw them as a necessary tool to remind Americans what they fought for, and who they should support. Just months after the outbreak of war, educators began modifying the curriculum in ways that brought greater visibility to the Gettysburg Address.

In 1941 the Federal Security Agency and U.S. Office of Education published A. Laura McGregor’s *Living Democracy in Secondary Schools*, showing the integral part

⁶³ Gerard Giordano, *Twentieth Century Textbook Wars: A History of Advocacy and Opposition* (New York: Peter Lang, 2003), 17.

⁶⁴ Wesley, *NEA*, 60.

education played in national defense. In the very first line of her work McGregor established the centrality of the Gettysburg Address to the American experiment: “The people of the United States believe in government of the people, by the people, for the people.”⁶⁵ That same year the National Education Association’s Educational Policies Commission produced a report titled *Our Democracy*. Under a section “What we mean by Democracy” the authors noted, “The idea of democracy is well summarized by Lincoln’s famous phrase, “Government of the people, by the people, for the people.” The commission members came from Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C., all either Northern or border-states during the Civil War.⁶⁶

In September 1942 the National Council for the Social Studies created a “Commission on Wartime Policy.” At the national meeting two months later the Commission presented its report, titled *The Social Studies Mobilize for Victory*. The Commission gave as its reason for being the rationale, “The war requires that American citizens learn about many topics of new or increased importance. Among these are: the meaning of democracy, its history, its practice, and its continuing development, together with the alternatives posed to totalitarianism.” Under a heading of “The Democratic Way of Life Must Be Understood and Appreciated by all Citizens of Democracy” the Council recommended, “In the element and secondary schools pupils should study the

⁶⁵ A. Laura McGregor, *Living Democracy in Secondary Schools* (Washington, DC: Federal Security Agency, U.S. Office of Education, 1941), 1.

⁶⁶ Educational Policies Commission, *Our Democracy* (Washington, DC: National Education Association of the United States and the American Association of School Administrators, 1941), 9.

great documents of our national democratic tradition and present crisis such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Gettysburg Address, Wilson's Fourteen Points, the Atlantic Charter, and the Four Freedoms." The report continued, "Schools should make arrangements for representatives of minority groups within the community to serve as resource persons for acquainting teachers and pupils with the points of view, cultural contributions, and problems of their groups." While that suggestion went largely unheeded during the war, it presaged the post-war dialogs on the place of minorities within the community and the appropriateness of segregated schooling.⁶⁷

This national directive spawned a number of regional and state offshoots. In 1943 sixty New England educators assembled at Harvard University and, taking *The Social Studies Mobilize for Victory* as their template, produced *A Wartime Program in Social Studies for New England Schools*. These teachers felt it crucial that "American youth should be taught the diversity of the world's cultures and should develop appreciation and tolerance for other peoples," and focused more on an understanding of other nation's than a rededication to the principles of this country.⁶⁸ This held true for Missouri's publication, *Adopting the Missouri Courses of Study in the Social Studies to the Wartime Emergency*, which generally consisted of outlines for courses on our allies in Asia, Latin America, and Canada rather than a deeper understanding of democracy.

⁶⁷ _____, *The Social Studies Mobilize for Victory: A Statement of Wartime Policy adopted by the National Council for the Social Studies, November 28, 1942* (Washington, DC: The National Council for Social Studies, 1942), 3, 6, 8, 11.

⁶⁸ _____, *A Wartime Program in Social Studies for New England Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Graduate School of Education, Harvard University, 1943), iii, 2.

In neither case did the authors invoke the Gettysburg Address, possibly because the National Council for the Social Studies had already done so.⁶⁹

By far the biggest link between the Gettysburg Address and World War II, however, came from Chicago. When James C. Ames, the owner of the third or Everett copy of the Gettysburg Address, died in 1943 his heirs offered their copy of the speech to the Illinois State Historical Library. The Ames heirs generously agreed to sell the document to the schoolchildren of the state for the sum of \$60,000. On October 12, 1943, Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction, Vernon L. Nickell announced a campaign whereby the state's schoolchildren would donate their pennies to purchase the manuscript. Over the ensuing five months the children raised \$50,000, and when it appeared they might fall short department store magnate Marshall Field III stepped up to donate the final \$10,000.⁷⁰ Field could well afford his generosity: on his fiftieth birthday in 1943 he inherited approximately \$75 million, and that stood in addition to an estimated \$93 million he received on earlier birthdays.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Missouri, *Adapting the Missouri Courses of Study in Social Studies to the Wartime Emergency* (Jefferson City: Mid-State Printing 1942).

⁷⁰ Louis A. Warren, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration: : "A New Birth of Freedom"* (Fort Wayne, IN: Lincoln National Life Foundation, 1964), 165-166; Gabor Boritt, *The Gettysburg Gospel: The Lincoln Speech That Nobody Knows* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 289.

⁷¹ "The Press: Marshall Field at Work," *Time Magazine*, September 27, 1943, p. 44. This copy, as has been previously outlined in Chapter 4, was originally drafted by Lincoln in early 1864 in response to Edward Everett's request for a manuscript that could be bound with his own from that day and auctioned off at the New York Sanitary Fair. The details of the sale are murky, but apparently Carlos Pierce of Boston, a close friend of Everett's, purchased the collection for \$1,000. Pierce died in 1870, and in 1875 his widow sold it to the Keyes family, also of Boston. It was that copy which was read aloud in Congress by Senator Henry W. Keyes of New Hampshire on Lincoln's birthday in 1920. In 1929 the copy was bought by autograph dealer Thomas Madigan for \$100,000, and then sold a year later to Chicago banker James C. Ames for \$150,000. From 1935 onward the speech was exhibited at the Chicago Historical Society.

On March 24, 1944, the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) affiliate in Chicago, WLS, aired a fifteen minute radio program celebrating the schoolchildren's purchase of the Address. The announcer, WLS Educational Director Jerry Walker, noted, "The immortal words of this address belong to all Freedom-loving Americans. And now that we are again 'engaged in a great war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure . . .' we pause to pay tribute to the Great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln." Oliver Barrett, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library spoke at length about the speech in its day. Barrett also noted, "The youth of America are trustees for the security of its future. And the school boys and school girls of Illinois – representatives of awakened youth – by their gift to the State have conveyed a promise and a pledge that they are, and ever will be, worthy of that trust." Superintendent of Public Instruction Vernon Nickell explained the role of the schoolchildren in the project: "From the very first, the boys and girls have demonstrated a high degree of patriotism and enthusiasm. In this national crisis when our young men are dying on the battle fronts around the globe in defense of our free institutions, the school children have demonstrated that they have the spirit of sacrifice and devotion to the end that the American Way of Life may 'long endure.'" ⁷²

Four children, Kenneth Jones of Vandalia High School representing the southern portion of the state, Geraldine Archambault of Mudelein Cathedral High School in Chicago representing the state's parochial schools, Fred Krammer of Lane Technical

⁷² "Lincoln's Gettysburg Address Presentation – Remote From Springfield," radio script, March 24, 1944, Lincolniana Collection, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. CBS would not move into television until the 1950s.

High School in Chicago representing the northern parts of Illinois, and Nancy Carol Miller of Logan County for the central schools, together presented the document to Paul Angle, the librarian of the Illinois Historical Society. Jones previously committed to entering the armed forces upon graduation, and when Walker asked whether his impending service gave the Gettysburg Address any additional significance, Jones responded, “Yes it does, Jerry. As I stood in front of the Lincoln collection here in the Historical Library, I thought of the great many things Lincoln had done. It made me proud to be the representative of the schools of Southern Illinois.” Seven-year-old Nancy Carol Miller added the cute-factor to the program, announcing to everyone listening that she weighed just 49 pounds but shared Lincoln’s birthday and lived near Lincoln, Illinois, the only town named for the man before his election as president in 1860.⁷³

Though World War II would last for another seventeen months, this event was, in many ways, the culminating experience of schoolchildren’s interactions with the speech during the war. Invoked throughout the war in America’s schools, the Address reminded everyone of what the country stood for, and what it fought for from 1941 to 1945.

The 1960s

As the United States moved past World War II it dealt with a host of issues. In one sense, 1945 marked not the end of war, but rather the mere switching of enemies. The same Soviet ally that helped defeat Nazi Germany grew into a major threat,

⁷³ Ibid.

particularly given the diametrically opposing governing and economic systems employed by the two superpowers. Most historians now accept that the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was as much a warning to the Soviets as an attempt to end World War II. One communist superpower caused concern, but when China also went communist in 1949, the panic hit a new level. While the nation's texts more overtly celebrated democracy during World War II than ever before, that message became more explicitly anti-communist after 1949.⁷⁴

Integration in postwar America also played into the textbooks of this era. The desegregation of the Armed Forces in 1947 signaled the beginning of a shift. After the 1954 ruling in *Brown* textbooks became even more integrated, for they could no longer focus on black or white audiences, but instead had to cater to diverse classrooms. A number of studies examining the changing depictions of race, freedom, and democracy in textbooks during the critical decades of the 1950s and 1960s found significant revisions during this period.

In the December 1969 issue of *Social Education* James A. Banks, a professor of education at the University of Washington, Seattle, published a piece titled "A Content Analysis of the Black American in the Textbooks." Barnes contended, "Since textbooks, which comprise the core of the social studies curriculum, can influence racial attitudes, it becomes imperative to evaluate carefully the content of textbooks with a view toward

⁷⁴ Bankston, *Public Education*, 91.

ascertaining the contributions which they might be making toward helping youngsters clarify their racial attitudes, self-perceptions, and value orientations.”⁷⁵

And indeed textbooks had already started changing. Much as 1963 marked the critical year when Americans began thinking of the Gettysburg Address more in the context of its statements about equality than those about democracy, in 1964-1965 American textbooks became more progressive concerning racial matters.⁷⁶

In *Molding the Good Citizen: The Politics of High School History Texts*, authors Robert Lerner, Althea K. Nagai, and Stanley Rothman identify the three most dominant history textbooks for each decade from the 1940s through 1980s.⁷⁷ An examination of the three most popular history texts from the 1950s and the 1960s and what they say about the Gettysburg Address is revealing.

In the 1950s those texts consisted of Leon Canfield and Howard Wilder’s *The Making of Modern America* (1952), David Muzzey’s *A History of our Country* (1952), and Fremont Wirth’s *United States History* (1955). Canfield and Wilder offered three sentences on the Address, laying out the facts of its delivery, noting its frequent invocations, and then, “In the most of the troubles and bitterness of war, Lincoln was able to express in a few unforgettable words the highest ideals of our democracy.” A picture of Daniel Chester French’s statue of Lincoln residing in the Lincoln Memorial and the entire text of the Address occupied the facing page. The brief evaluation offered

⁷⁵ James A. Banks, “A Content Analysis of the Black American in Textbooks,” *Social Education* 33 (December 1969): 954.

⁷⁶ Juel Janis, “Textbook Revisions in the Sixties,” *Teachers College Record* 72 (December 1970): 293.

⁷⁷ Robert Lerner, Althea K. Nagai, and Stanley Rothman, *Molding the Good Citizen: The Politics of High School History Texts* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1995), 159-161.

makes it difficult to discern whether the authors considered equality among “the highest ideals of our democracy.”⁷⁸ David Muzzy did not mention the Gettysburg Address at all.⁷⁹ Wirth printed the text of the speech, calling it “a masterpiece of eloquence which is today considered one of the great pieces of literature.”⁸⁰

In the 1960s an updated version of Canfield and Wilder remained one of the most popular books, and was joined by Lewis Todd and Merle Curti’s *Rise of the American Nation* (1968), and Henry Bragdon and Samuel McCutchen’s *History of a Free People* (1967). Canfield and Wilder did not change the text from the 1950s, they merely added chapters covering the preceding decade and left the coverage of the Gettysburg Address the same.⁸¹ The 1961 and 1968 versions of the Todd and Curti text covered the Gettysburg Address in the same way: by printing the entire text of the speech in a box titled “Living American Documents” without offering any analysis.⁸² This unchanging text was fairly common. Houghton Mifflin first published John Hicks’ *A Short History of American Democracy* in 1943. A second edition in 1956, a third in 1966, and a fourth in 1970 offered few textual changes, with no mention of the Gettysburg Address

⁷⁸ Leon H. Canfield and Howard B. Wilder, *The Making of Modern America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1952), 316-317.

⁷⁹ David Muzzey, *A History of Our Country* (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1952).

⁸⁰ Fremont P. Wirth, *United States History*, rev. ed. (New York: American Book Company, 1955), 241.

⁸¹ Leon H. Canfield and Howard B. Wilder, *The Making of Modern America*, rev. ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), 316-317.

⁸² Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti, *Rise of the American Nation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1961), 397; Lewis Paul Todd and Merle Curti, *Rise of the American Nation* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1968), 566.

anywhere.⁸³ Thomas Bailey's *American Pageant*, first published in 1956 and then revised six times over the next twenty-three years, followed the same pattern. The sixth edition, published in 1979, contained the same text on the Gettysburg Address present in the first edition, namely a brief passage on the poor reception of the speech including a quote from the *Times* of London, followed by a phrase suggesting the detractors got it wrong: "But the President was speaking for the ages."⁸⁴

Given how little most textbooks in this era changed from one edition to the next, the Bragdon and McCutcheon work stands as a major exception. The first edition of *History of a Free People* came out in 1954, and it remained in print into the 1990s. The original edition of the book contained a prologue announcing "The United States was the first large nation to attempt government of the people, by the people, and for the people." The author's did not identify Gettysburg Address by name or mention it anywhere else in the text or in the index. The coverage in both the 1961 and 1964 editions of the book was the same.⁸⁵ The 1967 edition, however, contained significant changes. Most obviously, the Gettysburg Address appeared in the index for the first time. More significantly, the index listed two entries for the speech, not just the one present in the earlier editions. An extensive section on the Declaration of Independence

⁸³ By 1966 the publishers had dropped the "Short" from the beginning of the title, a wise move as the book then ran to 823 pages. Perhaps it was the audience's perception of "short" that had changed, as Hicks' initial 1943 work had been 36 pages longer than that!

⁸⁴ Thomas Bailey, *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic* (Boston: Heath, 1956), 438; Thomas Bailey, *The American Pageant: A History of the Republic*, 6th rev. ed. (Boston: Heath, 1979), 408.

⁸⁵ Henry W. Bragdon and Samuel P. McCutchen, *History of a Free People* (New York: Macmillan, 1954), ix; Henry W. Bragdon and Samuel P. McCutchen, *History of a Free People*, 4th rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1961), xii; Henry W. Bragdon and Samuel P. McCutchen, *History of a Free People*, 5th rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1964), xii.

contained a sub-section titled “Widespread Influence of the Declaration.” In each of the previous editions this section covered Lafayette’s admiration for the document and the statement by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India that the speech marked a “landmark in human freedom.” For the first time this 1967 edition also included the phrase, “By it the Americans made a commitment, as Lincoln said in the Gettysburg Address, ‘to the proposition that all men are created equal.’ As a result, the Declaration has been a continual lever for change in American society, in the direction of equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal voice in government.”⁸⁶ Whereas the only mention of the Gettysburg Address in the preceding editions concerned democracy alone, this reference both explicitly and by its placement in the text commented on equality. The great strides in the Civil Rights Movement during the early 1960s, and particularly Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, invocation of the speech in 1963, clearly made an impression upon either the authors or the publishers.

Change generally comes slowly to textbooks, as evidenced by both the consistent text many keep despite “revising” each edition, and by the incredible time spans many remain in favor with educators. Writers like John Hicks and Thomas Bailey who never changed what they said about the Gettysburg Address during this period are the rule rather than the exception. That the Bragdon and McCutchen textbook explicitly updated its treatment of the Gettysburg Address to discuss in greater detail its pronouncements about equality, offers clear evidence that textbooks in the late 1960s reflected the shift in interpretations of the speech on display at Gettysburg in 1963.

⁸⁶ Henry W. Bragdon and Samuel P. McCutchen, *History of a Free People*, 6th rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 60.

Britain

Throughout the period under study the British offered no sustained interpretation of Abraham Lincoln within that nation's public schools. In fact, British schools barely taught general American history until very late in the period, and then only on a hit-and-miss basis. During the height of the Cold War in the 1950s, British-authored textbooks on American history began appearing for the first time, but they did not have wide use before 1965.⁸⁷

Conclusion

The nation's schools echoed the themes present in the preceding three chapters. The regionally dichotomous publication and uses of readers containing the text of the Gettysburg Address suggests the persistence of regional divides over the causes and consequences of the Civil War a century after that conflict's end. Further evincing this is the large number of public performances of the Gettysburg Address in Northern schools versus the few in Southern ones. Most significant, however, because of their pervasiveness and extreme influence in shaping what schoolchildren know about history, were the differing ways the primary American history textbooks in each region dealt with the Address. No major textbook adopted in the South during this era mentioned the Gettysburg Address, while a number of textbooks popular in the North did so, first in terms solely related to democracy in general, later as equality related to democracy.

⁸⁷ An excellent expose on the teaching of American history in British schools can be found in Sigmund Skard, *American Studies in Europe: Their History and Present Organization*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), 45-130.

The second major theme, in both the work as a whole and this particular chapter, is the evolving meaning of the Gettysburg Address. Through the 1960s the speech was exclusively invoked for either its literary merits or its promotion of democracy in a broad sense that did not in any obvious way include equality. Though literary merits and democracy are not exclusive in any way, commentators nearly always picked one or the other to focus on in their analyses, rarely combining the two. In the 1960s some finally started to acknowledge the speech's significance as what it said about the necessity of including equality within democracy. As is the nature with such a medium, textbooks in the late 1960s both responded to changes in the accepted interpretation of the Gettysburg Address and then drove the indoctrination of future generations in that new conception. The change did not come overnight, but the shift was underway in both the nation and its schools.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

Let's go see old Abe
 Sitting in the marble and the moonlight,
 Sitting lonely in the marble and the moonlight,
 Quiet for ten thousand centuries, old Abe.
 Quiet for a million, million years.

Quiet –

And yet a voice forever
 Against the
 Timeless walls
 Of time –
 Old Abe.

Langston Hughes
Lincoln Monument: Washington (1932)

Abraham Lincoln frequently read the Richmond newspapers, the *Richmond Examiner* and *Richmond Dispatch* in particular, and it is quite possible he saw what they said about his remarks at the Soldiers' National Cemetery in Gettysburg. It might have amused him that they portrayed his impromptu remarks on November 18 as the only public words he spoke while in Gettysburg. Given Lincoln's appreciation of comedy, he must have laughed heartily upon reading John Daniel's assertion that the ceremonies were "the substitution of glittering foil and worthless paste for real brilliants and pure gold," and that Lincoln had acted like a clown. But if Alexander Woolcott's 1941 assertion that Abraham Lincoln intended the Gettysburg Address for Southerners as much as Northerners is correct, the president must have regretted that not a single Confederate-controlled newspaper reported the actual words he spoke that day. The

Richmond papers carried the text of both his inaugural addresses, but not that of the Gettysburg Address. No one really knows why Lincoln went to Gettysburg. It is the type of question some inquiring reporter may have asked in the 1890s when his speech was starting to be invoked again, but Lincoln's early death has left us with many unanswered questions.¹

Put in its proper context, the Gettysburg Address was Lincoln's most profound public statement on both democracy *and* equality, despite the frequent cleaving of these two ideals, particularly before 1963. In January 1863 Lincoln could not put moral force behind the Emancipation Proclamation, fearing that doing so would jeopardize its ability to withstand legal challenges. Ten months later Lincoln publicly rectified that omission at Gettysburg. In quoting Thomas Jefferson's assertion in the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal" and adding his own pledge "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom," Lincoln made clear that this speech centered on equality. In his final line, "That government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth," Lincoln offered perhaps the greatest statement of the democratic principle in the history of mankind. While those three lines are typically quoted separately, one must remember that Lincoln's final sentence blended the two, reading, "It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly

¹ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 617; *Richmond Examiner*, November 25, 1863; Alexander Woollcott, *For Us the Living* (Radio City, NY: Linguaphone Institute, 1941), 9.

resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” Since January 1863 the Union army had been fighting and dying for freedom. Lincoln never intended his promotion of democracy (“of the people, by the people, for the people”) to stand apart from the earlier part of the sentence in which he called for “a new birth of freedom,” or the first lines of the speech where he announced the nation’s rededication to the principle “that all men are created equal.”

With the end of the Civil War and the slow reunification of the nation, one would suspect that regional interpretations of the Gettysburg Address would grow increasingly unified. After all, Americans would have to come to a common understanding of a document discussing issues of such importance, would they not? Amazingly, that unified national interpretation never came to pass. The divergent textbooks used in the North and South, the contrasting comments on the speech offered at the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922, the silence emanating from the South on the speech during World War II and the Cold War, and the outright dismissal of the Address by a number of Southerners during the Civil War Centennial in the 1960s, all make clear that through 1965 the nation fundamentally disagreed over the significance and message of the Gettysburg Address.

Ironically, the Address drew many foreign nations closer to the United States. From China in 1911 to Bulgaria in 1944, Peru in 1945, and France in 1958, countries around the world bought into the ideals of the Gettysburg Address and modeled new

governments and constitutions on Lincoln's ideals. That the reaction within the United States diverged, but that parts of the country held an interpretation in common with a number of foreign nations, suggests that regional identities shaped responses to the speech far more than national ones.

Within the United States a slow shift also occurred. Before the 1960s most people invoked the Gettysburg Address in terms of what it said about democracy. But with the increasing importance and impact of the Civil Rights Movement came a new interpretation of the Gettysburg Address that saw Lincoln as arguing for the intertwining of democracy and equality. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "Dream" speech in 1963 that blended the Declaration of Independence, Emancipation Proclamation, and Gettysburg Address into a unified vision of America most clearly articulated this interpretation. This recapturing of Lincoln's original message turned the Gettysburg Address into the "centerpiece of American racial discourse," as Richard Katula argues.²

Not everyone approved of the shift. White Southerners in the former Confederacy tried to downplay the troubling elements of Lincoln's speech. By focusing on the aspects dealing with political theory ("government of the people, by the people, for the people"), white Southerners ignored the parts dealing with race and liberty ("all men are created equal," "a new birth of freedom"). Pierre Nora's comment that

² Richard Katula, "The Gettysburg Address as the Centerpiece of American Racial Discourse," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 28 (Summer 2000): 110-111.

“memory, being a phenomenon of emotion and magic, accommodate only those facts that suit it,” sums up this phenomenon quite well.³

The diverse ways the Gettysburg Address has been interpreted in these three distinct cities in the United States, especially when compared to London, shows an explicit attempt by these regions to reconcile in the aftermath of the war. Lincoln’s conception of equality as an integral part of democracy proved a stumbling block to national reconciliation in the century after the Civil War, and thus the nation marginalized that particular concept even while the speech received great accolades for a variety of other reasons. But in the 1950s and early 1960s international and domestic pressures forced the United States to take steps to increase racial equality. In this many Americans began to speak of the Gettysburg Address as Lincoln had originally intended, as his most eloquent statement on the necessity of equality in a democratic society. After a hundred years, Lincoln’s words finally found their audience.

³ Pierre Nora, “General Introduction: Between History and Memory,” in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, English translation by Arthur Goldhammer), 3.

NOMENCLATURE

ALPL	Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
ALSC	Abraham Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission
CURBML	Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library
CW	<i>Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln</i>
CWCC	Civil War Centennial Commission
GCC	Gettysburg Centennial Commission
LSI	<i>Lincoln Sesquicentennial Intelligencer</i>
USCWCC	United States Civil War Centennial Commission
VaCWC	Virginia Civil War Commission

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VITA

Name: Jared Elliott Peatman

Address: 7610 Rudyard Street, Falls Church, VA 22043

Email Address: jared.peatman@gmail.com

Education: B.A., History, Gettysburg College, 2002
M.A., History, Virginia Tech, 2006
Ph.D., History, Texas A&M University, 2010