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ABRAHAM LINCOLN

SPEECHES AND WRITINGS

1859-1865

*Speeches, Letters, and Miscellaneous Writings
Presidential Messages and Proclamations*

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Address at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

Address delivered at the dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on 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 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 have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for 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 can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. 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 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.

November 19. 1863.

cavalry on a 600-mile raid through Mississippi in April 1863. General John Hunt Morgan led Confederate cavalry on raids in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio.

328.4 John Murphy] The records indicate that Murphy remained in the service but deserted again the following year.

329.10 *four* corps] See Lincoln to Rosecrans, September 28, 1863, p. 516 in this volume.

329.21 case is settled] Wright was hanged on October 23, 1863.

330.18 *To James M. Cutts, Jr.*] A court-martial sentenced Cutts, the brother of Mrs. Stephen A. Douglas, to dismissal from the service for conduct unbecoming an officer; one of the charges was that he had pecked into the hotel room of a lady while she was undressing. Lincoln remitted the sentence, substituting a reprimand. According to John Hay's diary, the president remarked that Cutts "should be elevated to the peerage for it with the title of Count Peeper." The second half of this double pun was no doubt a reference to the Swedish minister in Washington, Edward Count Piper.

330.29-31 "Beware . . . thee,"] *Hamlet*, I, iii, 65-67.

332.7 the promise made] That Hackett would perform in Washington in December.

332.10 My note to you] Lincoln's letter of August 17, 1863, which Hackett had circulated in a broadside printing.

333.22-28 Mr. Durant . . . Mr. Flanders] Thomas J. Durant and Benjamin F. Flanders, leading Louisiana Unionists.

336.1 *Address at Gettysburg*] This is Lincoln's final text, prepared in the spring of 1864 for facsimile reproduction in *Autograph Leaves of Our Country's Authors*, a book published by the Baltimore Sanitary Fair. The Associated Press report, based upon shorthand notes, may be closer to what he actually said at Gettysburg, but a comparison with other newspaper accounts, and with Lincoln's autograph drafts, indicates that it probably contains several errors, among which are "our power" instead of "our poor power" and "refinished work" instead of "unfinished work." The Associated Press version is as follows:

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 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 [applause]; 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 the earth. [Long-continued applause.]

337.6 elections this autumn] The Republicans won a legislative majority in New York and retained the governorships of Ohio and Pennsylvania. In the Ohio election, Clement L. Vallandigham, the Democratic gubernatorial candidate who had conducted his campaign from exile in Canada, was defeated by over 100,000 votes.

337.17-18 a short address] Everett gave a two-hour oration at Gettysburg before Lincoln spoke.

349.10-11 remodelling . . . Indian system] Bills to do so were introduced in 1864, but they did not become law.

349.37-53.36 When Congress . . . way.] These eleven paragraphs of the incomplete preliminary draft are in Lincoln's hand, indicating that he himself composed the message from this point on, whereas the preceding parts were probably written by various members of the Cabinet, with the likely exception of the opening paragraph.

351.24 issue a proclamation] See the proclamation of amnesty and reconstruction, pp. 555-58 in this volume.

358.10 *Amnesty*] Emily T. Helm (1836-1930), Mary Todd Lincoln's half sister and the widow of a Confederate general, had arrived in Washington with the aid of a presidential pass and was on her way to the Todd family home in Kentucky. In his diary entry for December 14, Orville H. Browning wrote: "The President told me his sister in law, Mrs Helm was in the house, but he did not wish it known. She wished an order for the protection of some Cotton she had at Jackson, Mississippi. He thought she ought to have it, but he was afraid he would be censured if he did so." See the documents of the same date and also Lincoln to Stephen G. Burbridge, August 8, 1864, p. 616 in this volume.

360.26 Henry F. Luckett] Convicted of smuggling percussion caps to the enemy, Luckett, according to some of his friends, was "insane." Lincoln pardoned him on March 30, 1864.

360.33 Gen. Schofield . . . relieved] William S. Rosecrans replaced