

# THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

**THE CONTEXT AND CONTENT**

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# GETTYSBURG ADDRESS: THE CONTEXT

- Speaker: Abraham Lincoln
- Date: 19 November, 1863
- Occasion: Official dedication ceremony for the national cemetery of Gettysburg
- Venue: Gettysburg in Pennsylvania
- Significance: The site of one of the bloodiest and most decisive battles of the civil war, the battle of Gettysburg
- **The battle of Gettysburg:** fought from July 1 to July 3, 1863
- Major General George Meade's army of the Potomac defeated the Confederate General Robert E. Lee's army.

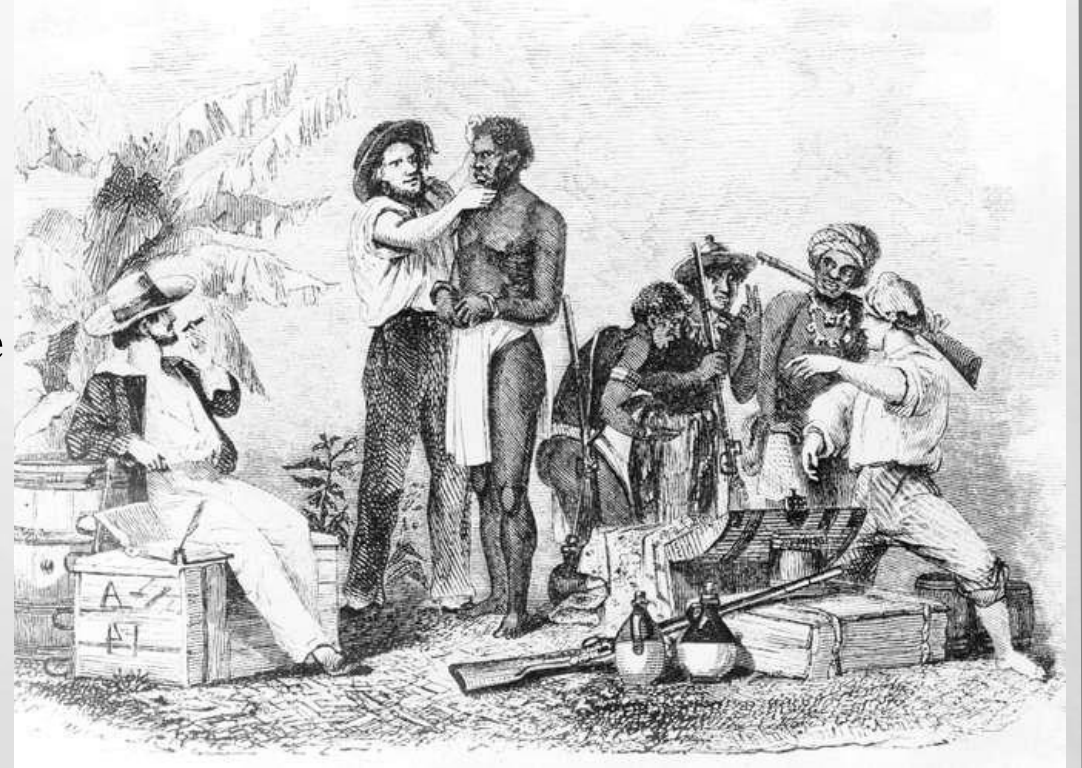


A Painting by Thure de Thulstrup



# THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR AND THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

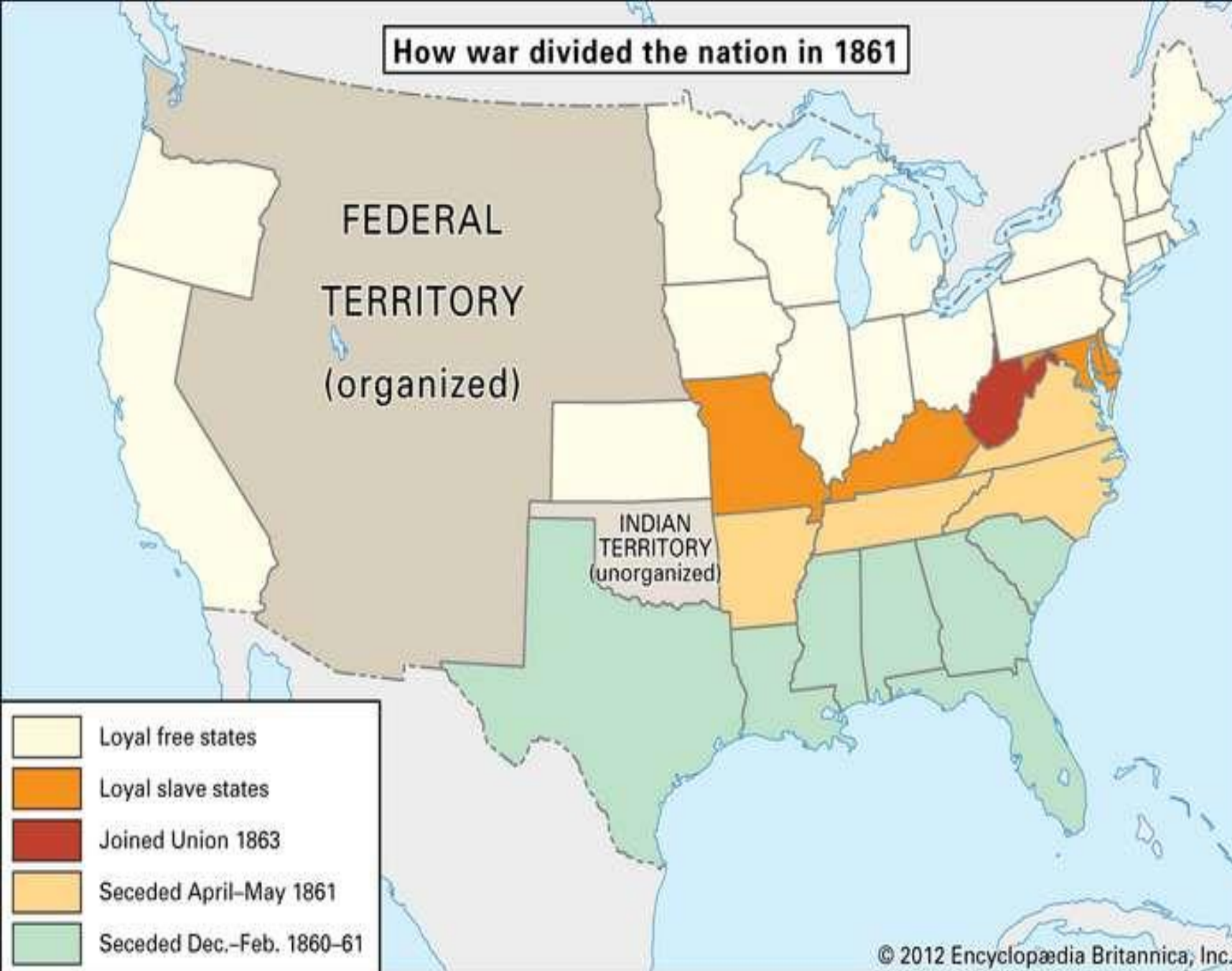
- American Civil War (1861-65) fought between the United States (Union) and 11 Southern States that separated from the Union and formed the Confederate States of America
- The union's victory in the battle of Gettysburg gave the North a major boost
- Put an end to Confederate General Robert E. Lee's plan to invade the north.
- President Abraham Lincoln traveled to Gettysburg to dedicate the battlefield's cemetery.



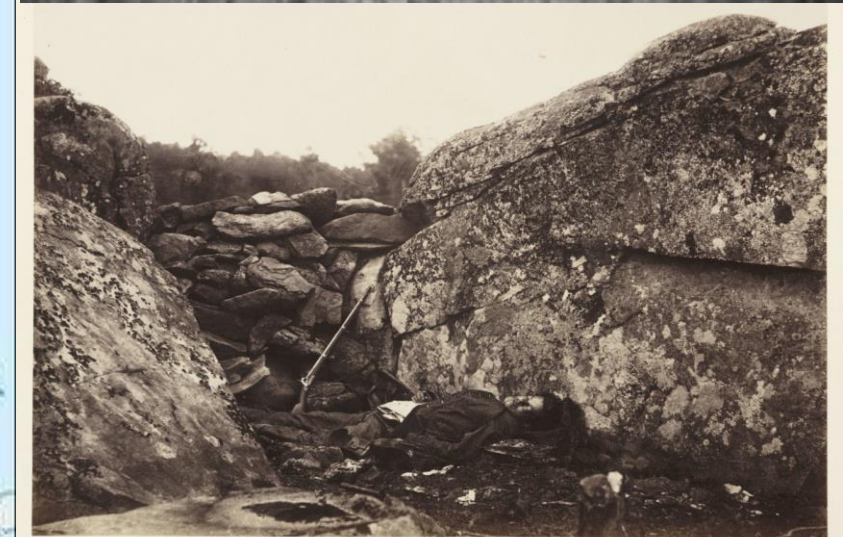
Inspection and Sale of a Negro, engraving from the book Antislavery (1961) by Dwight Lowell Dumond. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## How war divided the nation in 1861

The secession of the Southern states (South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Texas, Virginia, Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina) in 1860–61



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Four score and seven years ago our fathers  
brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, con-  
ceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition  
that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testi-  
fying whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived,  
and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met  
here on a great battlefield of that war. We <sup>have</sup> come  
~~here~~ to dedicate a portion of it as <sup>a</sup> final rest-  
ing place <sup>for</sup> 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 can not dedicate—  
we can not consecrate—we can not hallow this  
ground. The brave men, living and dead, who slug-  
gled here, have consecrated it far above our <sup>poor</sup> power  
to add or detract. The world will little note,  
nor long remember, what we say here, but  
can never forget what they did here. It is  
for us, the living, rather to be dedicated  
here to the unfinished <sup>work</sup>, which they have,  
thus far, so nobly carried on. It is rather





# GETTYSBURG ADDRESS: CONTENT ANALYSIS

- Lincoln invoked the principles of human equality (declaration of independence)
- Remembered the sacrifices of civil war
- Expressed the hope for freedom: Lincoln finishes by echoing the beginning of his speech and of the country by envisioning “a new birth of freedom” — for slaves as well as non-slaves
- The famous definition of democracy: Representative Government
- The living can honor the martyrs by continuing to fight for the ideals they gave their lives for
- Clarity, conciseness, precision
- Edward Everett, the featured speaker later wrote to Lincoln, “I wish that I could flatter myself that I had come as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes.”

# THE STYLE

- 272 words
- “Four score and seven years ago.” Such style was common in the king James Bible, notably in the psalms
- Allusions to the Declaration of Independence and Pericles’ funeral oration
- Inclusive language:

“Our fathers brought forth”, “we are engaged in a great civil war”, “we are met on a great battlefield”, “we have come to dedicate” , “it is ... proper that we should do this”, “we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground”, “our poor power to add or detract”, “it is for us the living”, “the great task remaining before us”, “we here highly resolve.”

# THE STYLE

- **Elements of poetry – Metaphors**

The nation as a living being: The nation was conceived,/ the nation might live,/ the government shall not perish.

**Alliteration:**

Our fathers brought forth; new nation; our poor power to add or detract

- **Repetition for emphasis:**

Conceived in liberty ... dedicated to the proposition ... created equal

So conceived and so dedicated; We can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow

Government of the people, by the people, for the people.



# TECHNIQUES USED BY LINCOLN

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. (Allusion, Archaism)

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.

(Call to Action, contrast, Euphemism)

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.

(Contrast, Classical Rhetoric: *Ethos*, *Logos*, *Pathos*, *Kairos* (Being timely, choosing the occasion), shared knowledge, structured like a Greek funeral oration: invoking/ honouring the dead, inspiring the living)

# LINCOLN AT GETTYSBURG





# IMPORTANT VIDEO LINKS

## THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

- [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=BICU5UFFULU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BICU5UFFULU)

## AN ANALYSIS

- [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=SMSMTN3OXZS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMSMTN3OXZS)

## A PERFORMANCE BY FRITZ KLEIN

- [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=YQNNBUJ81SY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQNNBUJ81SY)

## A BRIEF BIO OF LINCOLN

- [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=L80\\_Q2TPVEO](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L80_Q2TPVEO)
- [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=RKM3BBEH4NA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RKM3BBEH4NA)

# THANK YOU

