The Gettysburg Address

by Abraham Lincoln

A Scholarly Edition

edited by Tyler Monaghan

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# Publisher’s Note

This document was laid out in Microsoft Word and saved as a PDF file using Microsoft Word’s built-in Save as PDF function. It was printed on a Brother DCP-7065DN laser printer. Paragraph text is in 11-point Times New Roman font. Primary headings are in 16-point bold. Secondary headings are italicized. The collation table was created in Microsoft Excel.

All image files are jpeg format files. The “Bliss copy” and New York Times images were converted from PDF files using the web application at freepdfconvert.com, see references. The New York Times page was cropped and straightened in Photos (Windows application). The images of the Hay draft have been cropped using Microsoft Word in order to remove blank verso pages.

Please note that all images and manuscripts derive from trustworthy and authoritative sources with the exception of the Everett copy. Apparently held by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, the editor could not obtain digital files directly from this source. The included images are from Wikimedia Commons and appear to match the photographs available online from the *Gettysburg Daily.*

# Introduction

In the first three days of July in 1863, during the depths of America’s civil war, “[a]n estimated 51,000 soldiers were killed, wounded, captured, or listed as missing after the Battle of Gettysburg.”[[1]](#endnote-1) In November, President Abraham Lincoln traveled by train from Washington to Gettysburg on the 18th, probably having begun a draft of his address prior to the journey, on White House stationary.[[2]](#endnote-2) Probably suffering from symptoms of smallpox infection, Lincoln continued his written remarks on some other paper.[[3]](#endnote-3)

Lincoln had been invited to the consecration of the national Gettysburg Cemetary(fix caps and formal name here) that day in order to “formally set apart these grounds to their sacred use by a few appropriate remarks.”[[4]](#endnote-4) The day’s program included music, an opening prayer and benediction, an oration by Everett (who is he? cite), and Lincoln’s remarks (list as cited in program).

Speaking before a crowd of around 15,000 (cite?), Lincoln’s short remarks would become known as the “Gettysburg Address” and would become popularly regarded as one of the finest pieces of oration in America’s history (cite?). Lincoln was certainly capable of delivering lengthy addresses. Each of his “state of the union” addresses weighed in between 5,900 and 8,500 words. However, his second inaugural address was only 699 words, showing that Lincoln was also capable of brevity. Weighing in around 272 words, the Gettysburg Address was short even in comparison to the second inaugural.

This edition compiles six different versions of the Gettysburg Address. A reading-text is included, based on the Bliss copy of the text (see textual note for more information). An apparatus records all variants among the different witnesses. Notes are included for particularly tricky or interesting variants. Photographic images for each witness are included for the reader’s convenience.

# Note on the Texts

***Bl*** – Bliss copy (Smithsonian)

***Nic*** – Nicolay Copy (LOC)

***Hay*** – Hay draft (LOC)

***Ev*** – Everett Copy (IL/wiki)

***Ba*** – Bancroft Copy (Cornell)

***NYT*** – New York Times printing on 11/20/1863

## Rationale

Employing textual criticism techniques for a document such as the Gettysburg Address poses some unique questions and challenges.

The importance of authorial intent has been deemed less important here than the public perception and impact of the text. While literature, poetry, and works for the stage certainly impact their readers, it seems fair to say that rhetoric from a US president has a potentially more direc

## Lineation, punctuation, and silent emendations

The Bliss copy serves as the copy-text for the reading text of this edition. Lincoln’s long, low dashes (rendered by most sources as em-dashes) are rendered as double underscore characters \_\_ in this volume.

Lincoln often broke words across lines in his manuscripts. In so doing, Lincoln most often used what appear to be two short, stacked horizontal dashes, similar to an equals sign. In this edition, these symbols are ignored and words are silently emended to their whole, unbroken forms. Words are never broken (hyphenated) across lines in this volume.

## Exceptions

Exceptions to any of the guidelines explained in this note should occur with explanatory footnotes in the apparatus.

estimated 15,000 at address…

memorial ~ 7million visitors/year? [source](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/05/15-most-visited-national-landmarks-in-washington-dc/451941/)

## The copy-text and apparatus

The “Bliss copy” is used as the copy-text because of its popularity and inscription on the Lincoln Memorial.

# The Gettysburg Address

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.

Abraham Lincoln.

November 19, 1863

# Apparatus

The apparatus records all variants (other than lineation and pagination). No distinction is made between accidental and substantive variants. Changes in lineation, however, are not noted. The apparatus records the copy-text version of the text before a closing square bracket, followed by a space then the variant reading, then a space followed by the siglum or sigla for the witnesses in which the variant reading appears.

A vertical pipe | indicates a line break.

A swung dash ~ indicates that the word in the reading text is repeated in the variant. This is usually used to show a change in punctuation.

Ellipses . . . are used to save space by indicating portions of text not reprinted in the apparatus. There are no ellipses in the text, so these never represent readings from any witnesses.

The symbol Omit is used when the given reading does not appear in a witness.

The Nicolay copy contains strikethroughs, corrections, and insertions. They are handled by the apparatus as follows:

* For struck through words, when legible, they will appear in curly brackets with the word “strike” followed the struck word(s) in quotation marks. When, as is usually the case, the struck word(s) cannot be read with confidence, the word “strike” simply appears in curly brackets.
* Insertions are enclosed in carat/exponent symbols, ^like so^
* Struck words that are immediately followed by insertions indicate that the insertion was written above the struck word(s) as a replacement.

Footnotes may be included if editorial comment is deemed necessary. In all cases, superscript numbers indicate a footnote in this volume and do not occur in any reading of the texts.

***Bl*** – Bliss copy

***Nic*** – Nicolay Copy

***Hay*** – Hay draft

***NYT*** – New York Times printing on 11/20/1863

***Ev*** – Everett Copy

***Ba*** – Bancroft Copy

1 Address . . . Gettysburg.] Omit ***Hay, Ev, Ba*** Executive Mansion | Washington, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 186 . ***Nic*** PRESIDENT LINCOLN’S ADDRESS. | The President then delivered the following dedica-|tory speech: ***NYT***[[5]](#footnote-1)

2 Four score] Fourscore ***NYT***

2 fathers] Fathers ***NYT***

2 forth] ~, ***Ba***, ***Hay*** ***Nic***

2 on] upon ***Nic*** ***Ev*** ***NYT***

3 continent] Continent ***NYT***

3 Liberty] liberty ***Nic*** ***NYT***

4 all men are created equal.] “all men are created equal” ***Nic*** all men are created equal. [Applause.] ***NYT***

6 nation] ~, ***Hay***

6 conceived] ~, ***Nic*** ***Hay*** ***EV*** ***BA***

7 met] met here ***Hay***

7 battle-field] battle field ***Nic*** battle\_field ***EV***

7 We have come] We {strike} ^have^ {strike} ^come^ ***HAY*** We are met ***NYT***

8 that field,] it, ***Nic*** it ***Hay*** ***NYT***

8 as a] as {strike} a ***Hay*** as the ***NYT***

8 resting place] resting-place ***NYT***

8 for] {strike “of”} ***Hay*** of ***NYT***

8-9 here gave their lives] died here ***Nic*** here gave their lives, ***BA***[[6]](#footnote-2)

9 that that] that the ***Nic***

9-10 It is . . . do this] This we may, in all propriety do ***Nic*** [[7]](#footnote-3)

11 But,] ~ ***HAY***

11 dedicate\_ we] dedicate. We ***NYT***

11 consecrate\_\_] ~, ***NYT***

12 hallow\_\_ this ground.] hallow, this ground\_\_ ***Nic*** hallow this ground. ***Hay*** ***NYT***

13 here,] ~ ***NYT***

13 consecrated] hallowed ***Nic***

13 it,] ~ ***Hay*** ***BA*** ***NYT***

13 our poor power] our ^poor^ power ***Hay***

14 detract.] detract. [Applause.] ***NYT***

14 note,] ~ ***NYT***

14 remember] ~, ***Hay*** ***EV*** ***NYT***

15 here, but] here; while ***Nic***

15 it can] can ***Hay***

15 did here.] did here. ***Nic*** here. [Applause.] ***NYT***[[8]](#footnote-4)

15 us] ~, ***Hay*** ***EV*** ***NYT***

15-16 It is for us the living, rather,] It is rather for us, the living, {strike “to stand here”}^we here be dedicated^ ***Nic*** It is for us the living, rather ***Hay*** ***NYT***

16 the] this ***EV***

16 unfinished work which] unfinished ^work^ which ***Hay*** refinished work which ***NYT***

16 which] that ***NYT***

16-17 they who fought here have thus far] they have, thus far, ***Hay*** they who fought here, have, thus far, ***EV*** they have thus so far ***NYT***

17 so nobly advanced.] nobly carried on. [Applause.] ***NYT***

16-18 dedicated here . . . before us\_\_] dedicated to the great task remaining before us\_\_ ***Nic***

18 before us\_\_] before ^us\_^\_\_ ***Hay*** before us, ***NYT***

18 that] ~, ***Nic***

19 that] {strike}^that^ ***Hay***

19-20 they gave] they here, gave ***Nic*** they gave {strike “gave”} ***Hay*** they here gave ***EV*** ***BA*** ***NYT***

20 d***Ev***otion\_\_] ~; ***NYT***

21 that these] these ***Nic*** that the ***NYT***

21 vain\_\_] ~; ***Nic*** ***Hay*** ***NYT***[[9]](#footnote-5)

21-22 that this nation, under God, shall] that this nation, shall ***Nic*** [applause] that the Nation shall under God ***NYT***

22 freedom\_\_] ~, ***Nic*** ***NYT*** ~; ***Hay***

22 that government] that this government ***HAY*** that, government ***EV*** that Governments ***NYT***

23 people, by] people by ***Nic***

23 people, for] people and for ***NYT***

23 earth.] earth, [Long continued applause.] ***NYT***

24 Abraham Lincoln.] Omit ***Nic*** ***Hay*** ***EV*** ***BA*** Three cheers were then given for the President and the Governors of the States. ***NYT*** [[10]](#footnote-6)

25 November 19, 1863.] Omit ***Nic*** ***Hay*** ***EV*** ***BA*** ***NYT***

# Photographic reproductions

## Bliss copy

|  |
| --- |
| A close up of text on a white background  Description generated with very high confidenceBliss 1 |
| A document with black text  Description generated with very high confidenceBliss 2 |
| A close up of text on a white background  Description generated with very high confidenceBliss 3 |

## Nicolay Copy

|  |
| --- |
| A close up of text on a white background  Description generated with high confidenceNicolay 1 |
| A close up of text on a white surface  Description generated with high confidenceNicolay 2 |

## Hay draft

|  |
| --- |
| A close up of text on a white surface  Description generated with high confidence  Hay draft 1 |

## Everett Copy

|  |
| --- |
| A close up of text on a white background  Description generated with high confidenceEverett 1 |
| A close up of a piece of paper  Description generated with high confidenceEverett 2 |

## Bancroft copy

|  |
| --- |
| A close up of text on a white background  Description generated with high confidenceBancroft 1 |
| A close up of text on a white surface  Description generated with high confidenceBancroft 2 |

## New York Times 11/20/1863

|  |
| --- |
| A close up of a newspaper  Description generated with high confidenceNYT |

# References

Lincoln, Abraham. Abraham Lincoln papers: Series 3. General Correspondence. -1897: Abraham Lincoln, November 1863 Gettysburg Address: Hay Copy. November, 1863. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mal4356600/. (Accessed April 01, 2018.)

Lincoln, Abraham. Abraham Lincoln papers: Series 3. General Correspondence. -1897: Abraham Lincoln, November 1863 Gettysburg Address: Nicolay Copy. November, 1863. Manuscript/Mixed Material. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/mal4356500/. (Accessed April 01, 2018.)

<http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/gettysburg150/exhibition/bancroft/index.html> (Bancroft)

<https://www.gettysburgdaily.com/edward-everetts-copy-of-abraham-lincolns-gettysburg-address-returns-to-gettysburg/>

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Everettcopy-1.jpg>

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Everettcopy-2.jpg>

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/documentsgallery/exhibitions/gettysburg_address_1.html> (Bliss)

THE HEROES OF JULY. (1863, Nov 20). New York Times (1857-1922) Retrieved from <http://flagship.luc.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.flagship.luc.edu/docview/91768791?accountid=12163>

1. https://www.civilwar.org/learn/civil-war/battles/battle-gettysburg-facts-summary [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. maybe? cite? [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. cite both of these, smallpox and continuation of remarks on different paper [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Wills [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Nicolay copy includes header from White House stationary. NYT includes a line introducing the President as speaker and is part of a larger front-page narrative of the day’s events. Only the Bliss copy contains the explanatory “Address delivered at the dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
6. It is unclear to the editor whether there is meant to be a comma after “gave their lives” in the Bliss copy, or whether it is just a particularly heavy stroke on the “s” at the end of “lives.” In this volume, it is treated as if the comma is not present. If it were, that would of course impact the variants recorded in the apparatus. Likewise, it is not clear whether the Hay draft contains this comma; it is treated as if it does not. In the next sentence, “It is … do this,” the “s” at the end of “is” appears heavy, matching the “s” in question, but the “s” at the end of “this” is quite different, leaving it unclear. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
7. The sentence structure here might suggest a comma after the word proprietary. Like the prior note, it is possible there is meant to be a comma here, but if so it blends into the “y” in “propriety” too well, and is treated here as if it does not exist. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
8. The apparent underlining of “did” is in light, faint hand, more closely matching the second page of NIC than the first. It seems possible Lincoln underlined this word faintly upon reviewing the first page of the speech. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
9. the light and uneven script here makes it hard to determine whether this is a comma or semicolon in the Nicolay draft; the editor has chosen a semicolon for consistency with the Hay draft but the reader should examine the manuscript image and draw their own conclusion. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
10. Lincoln’s signature and the date November 19, 1863 only appears in one witness, the Bliss copy. Because it immediately follows the closing of the address, the editor has here included the “three cheers” lines. See the rationale section of the Note on the Text for more info. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)