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).

# 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. Manuscript images for each witness are included for the reader’s convenience.

# Note on the Texts/Textual Note (?)

***Bl*** – Bliss copy

***Nic*** – Nicolay Copy

***Hay*** – Hay draft

***Ev*** – Everett Copy

***Ba*** – Bancroft Copy

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

***AP*** – AP wire story

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, as such: \_\_.

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 not 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…

newspapers printed and circulation?

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

Include full-text of AP wire story

## The copy-text and apparatus

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

## Silent Emendations

# The Gettysburg Address

## Bliss Copy

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

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## Nicolay Copy

Named for John G. Nicolay, President Lincoln's personal secretary, this is considered the "first draft" of the speech, begun in Washington on White house stationery. The second page is writen on different paper stock, indicating it was finished in Gettysburg before the cemetery dedication began. Lincoln gave this draft to Nicolay, who went to Gettysburg with Lincoln and witnessed the speech. The Library of Congress owns this manuscript.

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 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 come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do.

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 hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.

It is rather for us, the living, we here be 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 these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, 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.

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## Hay Copy

Believed to be the second draft of the speech, President Lincoln gave this copy to John Hay, a White House assistant. Hay accompanied Lincoln to Gettysburg and briefly referred to the speech in his diary: "the President, in a fine, free way, with more grace than is his wont, said his half dozen words of consecration." The Hay copy, which includes Lincoln's handwritten changes, also is owned by the Library of Congress.

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 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 have come to dedicate a portion of it, 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 can never forget what they did here.

It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they have, thus far, so nobly carried on. 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 shall have a new birth of freedom; and that this government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

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| A close up of text on a white surface  Description generated with high confidence |

## Everett Copy

Edward Everett, the chief speaker at the Gettysburg cemetery dedication, clearly admired Lincoln's remarks and wrote to him the next day saying, "I should be glad, if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion, in two hours, as you did in two minutes." In 1864 Everett asked Lincoln for a copy of the speech to benefit Union soldiers, making it the third manuscript copy. Eventually the state of Illinois acquired it, where it's preserved at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

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 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 here 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.

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## Bancroft Copy

As noted above, historian George Bancroft asked President Lincoln for a copy to use as a fundraiser for soldiers. When Lincoln sent his copy on February 29, 1864, he used both sides of the paper, rendering the manuscript useless for lithographic engraving. So Bancroft kept this copy and Lincoln had to produce an additional one (Bliss Copy). The Bancroft copy is now owned by Cornell University.

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 here 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.

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## NYT

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# 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 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 edition and do not occur in any reading of the texts.

***Bl*** – Bliss copy

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***Hay*** – Hay draft

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

***Ev*** – Everett Copy

***Ba*** – Bancroft Copy

***AP*** – AP wire story

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

2 Four score] Fourscore NYT

2-3 forth] ~, Ba, Hay, Nic

2 on] upon Nic Ev

3 Liberty] liberty Nic NYT

4 all men are created equal.] “all men are created equal” NIC all men are created equal. [Applause.]

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

8 for] {strike “of”} HAY

8-9 here gave their lives] died here NIC here gave their lives, BA[[6]](#footnote-1)

9 that that] that the NIC

9-10 It is . . . do this] This we may, in all propriety do NIC[[7]](#footnote-2)

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,] ~

13 consecrated] hallowed NIC

13 it,] ~ HAY BA NYT

14 detract.] detract. [Applause.]

14 remember] ~, HAY EV NYT

15 here, but] here; while

15 did here.] did here. NIC here. [Applause.] NYT[[8]](#footnote-3)

15 us] ~, HAY EV

# References

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.” [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
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-1)
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-2)
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-3)