



# THE LINCOLN FORUM BULLETIN

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## PLAYWRIGHT-SCREENWRITER TONY KUSHNER EARNS RICHARD NELSON CURRENT AWARD FOR 2013

He galvanized American attention on the AIDS epidemic. He riveted movie audiences by re-imagining the gripping tragedy of the Summer Olympics at Munich. He successfully tackled modern interpretations of Bertolt Brecht's daunting *Mother Courage*, Corneille's *The Illusion*, and Ansl'y's *The Dybbuk*. So it was no surprise that audiences expected nothing less than a masterpiece from playwright Tony Kushner when Steven Spielberg announced that he would write the screenplay for his eagerly anticipated film, *Lincoln*.

Kushner did not disappoint. His extraordinary script for the Spielberg film won the St. Louis Literary Award, the New York Film Critics Circle Award, the Paul Selvin Award, the Barondess Prize from the Civil War Round Table of New York, and the annual award of achievement from the Lincoln Group of New York. Kushner also earned nominations for best adapted screenplay for *Lincoln* from the Writers Guild of America, BAFTA, the Golden Globes, and the Oscars.

And now 57-year-old Anthony Robert Kushner, born in New York, raised in Lake Charles, Louisiana, educated at Columbia and NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and the winner of countless prizes for his stage plays, has been awarded the 18<sup>th</sup> annual Richard Nelson Current Award of Achievement from The Lincoln Forum.

"Never was a Lincoln project more breathlessly anticipated by our community of scholars, students, and aficionados than Spielberg's *Lincoln*," commented Lincoln Forum Chairman Frank J. Williams in announcing the honor, "and never were high expectations more brilliantly realized. Even the greatest screen acting and surest direction rises or falls on the strength of a screenplay, and Tony Kushner not only brilliantly captured the Abraham Lincoln we know—but somehow shed dramatic new light on a Lincoln we only *thought* we knew. To say that Tony Kushner brought Lincoln to life would be an understatement. In fact, he brought new life to the entire field of Lincoln studies, made our 16<sup>th</sup> President part of the modern global conversation, and gave an entire new generation throughout the world a chance to experience the complexities of the man and his mission to save American democracy and destroy American slavery. The Forum is honored to pay tribute to Tony Kushner's magnificent accomplishment, and to thank him for all he has done to animate our country's greatest leader."

Lincoln Forum Vice Chairman Harold Holzer, who served as script consultant to the Spielberg film, and by tradition will present the award at the Forum Symposium's annual banquet, commented: "I was privileged to work with and get to know the amazing Tony Kushner during the course of the Spielberg project, and regard it as one of the most exhilarating and rewarding experiences of my career in the Lincoln field. To watch a genuine genius absorbing the Lincoln canon, along with the huge inventory of Lincoln biographies and histories, and then reinterpreting and humanizing the material into a human-scale yet epic drama, took my breath away. As they no doubt realized even before the film was released, Kushner's and Spielberg's vision of Lincoln—determined, wise, modest, tragic, funny, and brilliantly political—will do more to influence the world's idea of the man than any film ever produced and any book ever written. Tony not only accepted that responsibility, he rose to the occasion with a Lincoln for our age—and the ages. It's a particular thrill that the Forum is capping the 'year of *Lincoln*' by adding Tony to our pantheon of Current honorees."



Daniel Day-Lewis & Tony Kushner (moviepins.com)

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## MIDPOINT



### MESSAGE from the CHAIRMAN

David Brooks's July 2 *New York Times* column was right about Civil War soldiers' strong political and ideological beliefs, and right in its characterization of their sense of duty and feelings of indebtedness to the past.

As this year's Forum will highlight, the tide began to turn for the North in 1863 with Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. The Confederate Army struck back at Chickamauga, but Union victories at Chattanooga pushed the Confederate Army out of eastern Tennessee and opened the door to a Union advance into Georgia. Losses on both sides were high and many in the North and South were growing weary of the war. Yet, as our panels will demonstrate, the armies remained committed.

The year 2012-2013 will also be remembered as the season of Steven Spielberg's *Lincoln*—arguably the best, and certainly the most successful, Abraham Lincoln biopic to date. Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*, which inspired the film, achieved its third separate appearance on the best-seller list. Abraham Lincoln re-emerged at the top of the news and in all the media. We will hear more about the creation and production of *Lincoln* from its New York-born screenwriter, Tony Kushner, who grew up in Louisiana.

Lincoln's final proclamation of freedom, on January 1, not only ordered freedom for slaves in Confederate territory, but also encouraged the enlistments of black soldiers and sailors in Federal service and paved the way to arming them. A narrative of this impressive story is also in the offing at our Forum as is a new look at Julia Ward Howe's riveting *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, which galvanized the soldiers and the nation.

We will see, too, that the convergence of modern technology and mass conscription commenced with Ulysses S. Grant's great victory at Vicksburg which hewed the Confederacy asunder, and General George G. Meade's win at Gettysburg—a victory not foreordained.

We will muse, too, on what Abraham Lincoln said at Gettysburg 150 years ago. We believe the detail we will devote to the war in 1863 this November will be enough to satisfy the keenest student of tactics, courage, and leadership.

Abraham Lincoln once confessed that he did not control events—they controlled him. But if he was not in control, who was? Everyone in that tumultuous time was full of foiled schemes, plans that backfired, and happy endings that turned out more complex than anticipated.

While 1863 sealed a new nation, the war would continue for another horrific year-and-a-half. The war continues to smolder in our time, too, whether or not we always recognize it. Those who welcome the discussion have made our last two Forum symposia record-breaking sellouts and unforgettable settings for education, discussion, and camaraderie. We urge you to make your plans early for 2014, for there is nothing like our in-person gatherings to stimulate our appreciation for history. 📌

Frank J. Williams  
Chairman

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## “OUR” GETTYSBURG, 150 YEARS AFTER...

As hospitably as modern Pennsylvanians today welcome armies of 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Civil War enthusiasts, including Lincoln Forum symposium attendees from north and south alike, it wasn't always so.

When the Union's Army of the Potomac drove the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia from the state after the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, no less important an observer than Abraham Lincoln, was so delighted that he sat down and composed the first poem he had written in more than a decade. He titled his four-line comic ditty “Gen. Lee's invasion of the North written by himself.”

*In eighteen sixty three, with pomp, and mighty swell,  
Me and Jeff's Confederacy, went forth to sack Phil-del,  
The Yankees they got arter us, and giv us particular hell,  
And we skedaddled back again, and didn't sack Phil-del.*

Behind the humorist's façade the modern reader can still intuit the enormous sense of relief that undoubtedly stimulated those verses. Desperately worried that a Lee triumph at Gettysburg might have threatened the entire Keystone State, and with it, the Union itself, Lincoln was comforted enough by the Union triumph to express his joy in rhyme—but also politically astute enough to file away his fretful composition forever. It would not do to let the public know how close he believed Philadelphia had come to annihilation. The poem remained hidden away in his private secretary's files, undiscovered for a hundred years.

Today's travelers—even seasoned Lincoln and Civil War aficionados—tend to think of the war's greatest battle as a single, isolated event: the bloody high water mark of the Confederacy at a legendary farm town in the southeast corner of the state. Indeed, this landscape was once a field of nightmares: Devil's Den, the Round Tops, the Wheatfield, and Cemetery Ridge. It was also a field

*continued on page 10*

# TO SAVE THE REPUBLIC: ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND THE HONORABLE PURSUIT OF A FREE UNION

**By Lawrence Weber**

As the early days of the American Civil War were unfolding and the destiny of the republic was beginning to be contested on battlefields like Bull Run in the East, and Wilson's Creek in the West, Abraham Lincoln was engaged in an esoteric, yet no less perilous type of battle. Lincoln was privately working his way through the dangerous political minefield of slavery, emancipation, and the maintenance of Union loyalty within the Border States. For Lincoln, possessing and maintaining Border States like Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and Delaware for the Union was of critical importance to the ultimate preservation of the nation as a whole. In the initial days of the war, Lincoln reportedly said, "I hope to have God on my side, but I must have Kentucky." Walking a razor-thin political line between unionists and slaveholders within these states, and presenting a balanced political agenda that would maintain loyalty to the Union became a primary goal of his budding administration.

Kentucky could have arguably been considered the most significant Border State during the Civil War. With the secession of Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Arkansas from the Union after the bombardment of Fort Sumter, Kentucky played a pivotal role in linking the western Border State of Missouri to the eastern Border States of Maryland and Delaware. Kentucky also served as a buffer between several of the key Confederate states in the Deep South. States like Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia would have had direct access to the Union's western states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois through Tennessee which sat mainly on the southern border of Kentucky. Without Kentucky, Missouri would have been completely isolated as the lone western Border State, and vital western supply centers in places like St. Louis would have been much more problematic to maintain as Union forces waged war in the Western Theater. To lose Kentucky to the Confederacy could mean losing the whole war, and Abraham Lincoln knew it.

As information began to filter in to the War Department that slaves were being pressed into service against the Union on battlefields like Bull Run, and that these slaves represented a significant military asset to the Confederate cause, the Lincoln administration privately, and the members of The United States Congress publically, began anew the intense debate on just what to do about the slave question. Abolitionist Frederick Douglass understood the complexity of the crisis acutely and was able to verbalize what he thought the proper solution should be. "War for the destruction of liberty must be met with war for the destruction of slavery." Other more moderate voices attempted to find some sort of middle ground which would strike at the military aspect of slavery while at the same time protect the Border States from breaking away.

The Constitutionality of the slave question presented itself to the members of the Congress. John J. Crittenden vociferously maintained that Congress had no right to legislate on the slave issue. Kentucky politician and future Senator Garrett Davis, "informed Lincoln that if it came to a choice between preserving slavery or saving the Union, he would sacrifice slavery even if it meant that 'another fiber of cotton should never grow in our country.'" Illinois Senator Lyman Trumbull argued that Congress was able to punish treason by confiscating property; thus attacking individual instances of slavery by confiscating slaves who aided the Confederacy during the rebellion, while not attacking the entire institution of slavery at the same time.

On July 30, 1861, Union General Benjamin Butler wrote to Simon Cameron, the Secretary of War, asking him pointedly to clarify the status of confiscated slaves at Fort Monroe, Virginia. "Are these men, women, and children slaves? Are they free? ...What has been the effect of the rebellion and a state of war upon [their] status?" Before Secretary of War Cameron could answer the letter, Congress passed *An Act to Confiscate Property Used for Insurrectionary Purposes*, more commonly known as the First Confiscation Act, on August 6, 1861.

The Confiscation Act of 1861, was a law designed to "confiscate property (including slaves) utilized for Confederate military purposes and declared that the owner would 'forfeit his claim' to any slave so employed." The Confiscation Act of 1861 was passed along party lines with all but six Republicans voting in favor of the act, and all but three Democrats voting against it. Lincoln's bipartisan support for the war was quickly eroding, and nowhere was this more apparent than the Border States. Lincoln had reached a crisis. "This bill," John J. Crittenden complained, "will be considered as giving an anti-slavery character and application to the war." Delaware Senator James A. Bayard, a Peace Democrat, "took as his motto, 'Anything is better than a fruitless, hopeless, unnatural civil war.'"

Fearing that the Confiscation Act violated the Constitutional right to due process of the law, and that Border States would be further alienated by its antislavery tone, Lincoln nevertheless reluctantly signed the bill into law the same day as its passage, essentially bowing to pressure from the bill's overwhelming Republican support. The Confiscation Act also essentially nullified the Crittenden-Johnson Resolution which stated that the Union would take no action against the institution of slavery, and that the war was being fought exclusively for the preservation of the Union. Preservation of the Union began to take on a divisive antislavery nature, just as Crittenden had predicted, and Lincoln had feared.

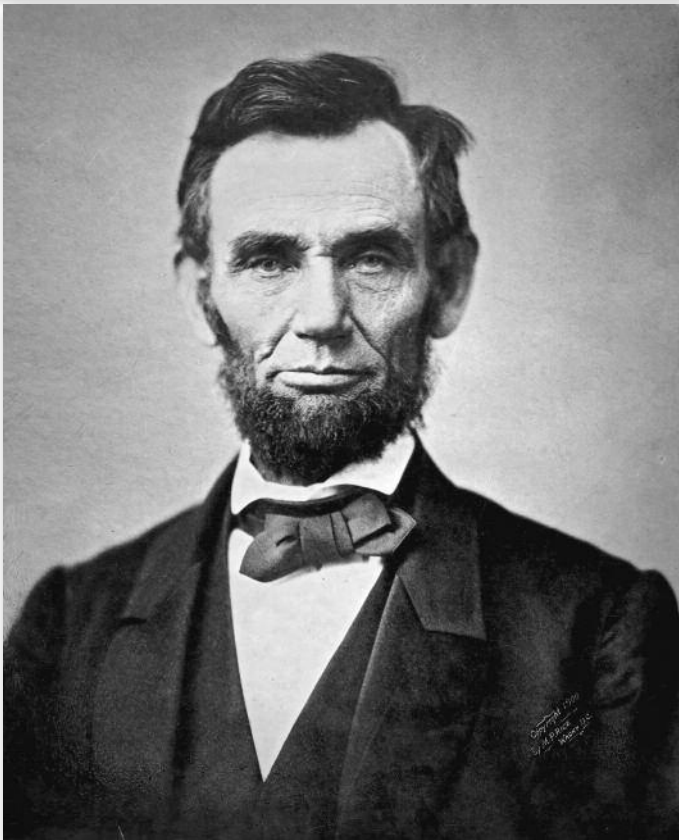
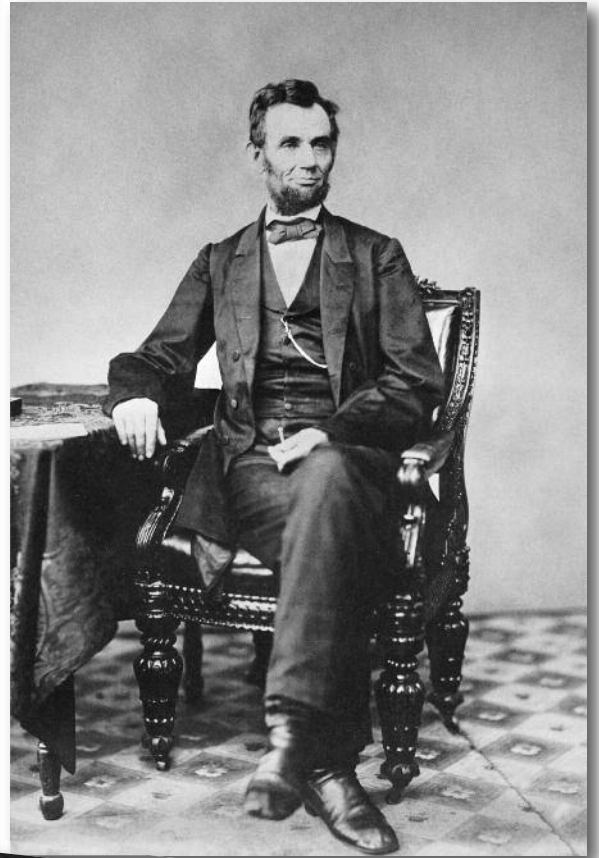
September 1861 represented a critical month for the Union war effort regarding Kentucky's ultimate fate. On Tuesday, September 3, 1861, fortune seemed to intervene on the side of the Union when Confederate Major General Leonidas Polk ordered troops into Kentucky to occupy the city of Columbus, in direct violation of the tenuous neutrality of the critical Border State. Polk's Kentucky invasion represented one of the most significant blunders of the Civil War, and prompted the Kentucky state legislature to request Union aid to drive away Polk's Confederate forces in the state. As a direct result of this, along with Lincoln's modification of Frémont's emancipation proclamation, the status of Kentucky's neutrality now shifted strongly towards the Union.

The eventual Battle of Perryville, Kentucky, in 1862 became a turning point for Lincoln because it definitively secured Kentucky for the Union; a major factor which allowed Abraham Lincoln the latitude to act boldly, on slavery and emancipation without fear of losing the Border States. In helping to give freedom to the slave, and by assuring freedom to the free, Abraham Lincoln proved himself more than equal to the grand trust of the people. In the end, Lincoln evolved into the great central figure of our American history by saving the republic he loved so much.

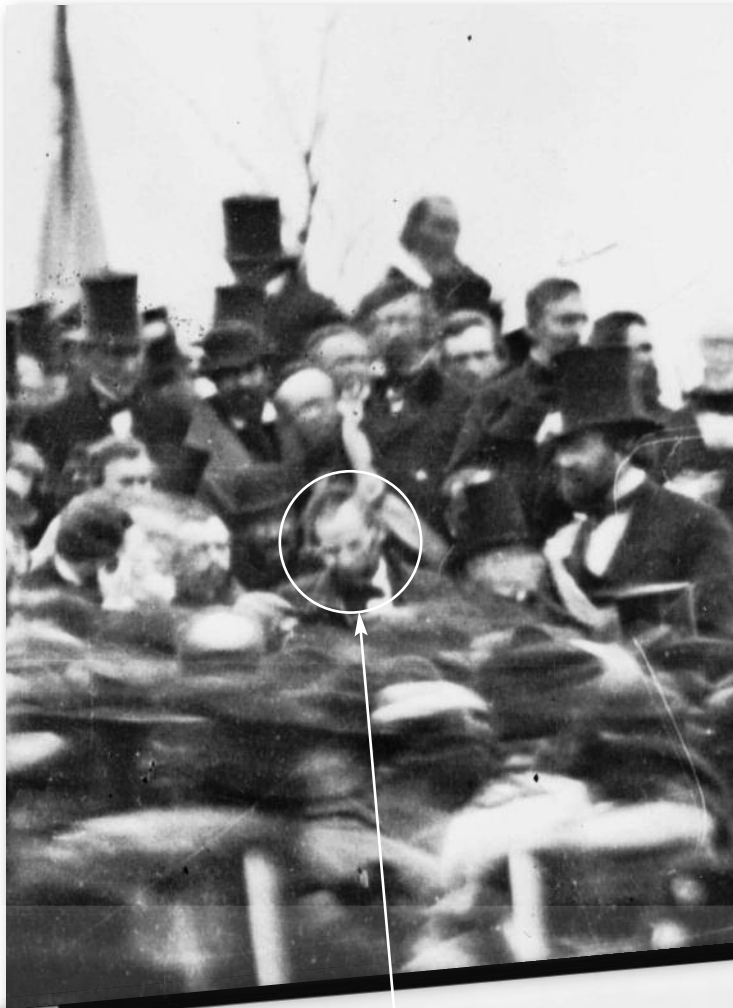
*(Lawrence Weber is a teacher and published writer, whose research interests include the Antebellum and Civil War Eras, American Religious History, and Transcendentalism.)* 📖

## 150 YEARS AGO, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1863: THE LINCOLN IMAGE PRE-GETTYSBURG

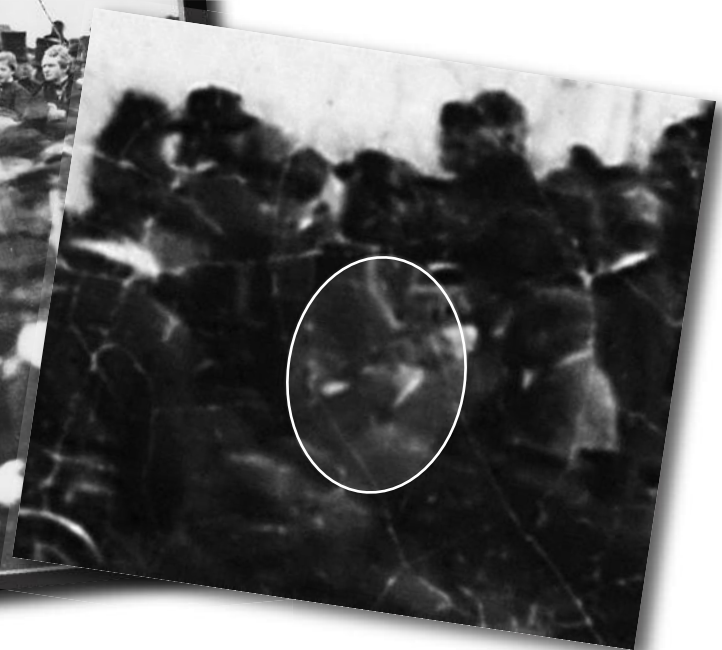
Was it the approaching November 19, 1863 Gettysburg ceremonies that inspired Abraham Lincoln to visit Alexander Gardner's Washington photo gallery eleven days before the event to sit for a series of magnificent portraits? For years, Lincoln scholars believed that such might have been the case—after all, Lincoln brought with him to Gardner's an envelope containing an advance copy of Edward Everett's principal oration for the Gettysburg ceremony to study between poses. Lincoln told eyewitnesses to the sitting that he, too, was working on his address, but unlike Everett's, it would be "short, short, short." In truth, however, Lincoln did not visit Gardner's to "immortalize" himself in portraiture (John Hay's description of the sitting) even as he prepared to immortalize himself in rhetoric. The fact is, Lincoln was asked to visit the studio to provide photographic models for use by sculptress Sarah Fisher Ames, who was having difficulty creating her bust portrait of the President from life sketches (eventually she would complete her work in marble and sell it to the U. S. Senate for its Capitol collection.) The riveting close-up Lincoln portrait below, considered one of the most magnificent ever taken, actually enjoyed little circulation during the 19<sup>th</sup> century—it did not begin appearing until 1909—because Ames apparently walked away with the only print! Not until the Lincoln centennial did heirs to Gardner's archive of glass plates think to reproduce this long-ignored picture. Several other portraits from the November sitting did enjoy mass-production and wide distribution at the time, including this portrait of Lincoln with Hay and senior private secretary John G. Nicolay, (lower right) and the seated pose (right) showing Lincoln cross-legged in a chair, the Everett speech still inside the envelope that can be seen on the table to Lincoln's right. When Lincoln wondered why his left boot appeared blurry in this photo, journalist Noah Brooks suggested that the natural pulse of blood flowing to his extremities might have simply made his foot throb during the long exposure. "That's it! That's it!" Lincoln burst out. "Now that's very curious, isn't it?" (Photos: Library of Congress). 📖



## HOURS FROM IMMORTALITY



Abraham Lincoln, hatless, head bowed (center), the lower portion of his face slightly obscured by an onlooker's hat, waits his turn to speak on the platform at the Gettysburg National Soldiers Cemetery, November 19, 1863—hours from immortality. Edward Everett would speak for more than two hours, and a long ode would be sung, before Lincoln stood and delivered his own two-minute elegy. Presidential secretary John Nicolay sits to the President's right. At top, entering the scene, is the blurred figure of principal orator Everett, a large black bow tie flopping over his gleaming white shirt. Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin enters from the right, his young son at his side. For years, this was believed to be the only extant photograph of Lincoln at the site of his most famous speech. According to legend, photographers preparing to capture him as he delivered the address were still fussing with their cameras and plates when the President unexpectedly concluded his two-and-a-half-minute oration and took his seat before they could take their pictures. (John Hay wrote of "a daguerreotypist, with his instrument prominently placed at the outskirts of the main crowd," endeavoring "by the aid of the softly-glowing, hazy sun" to "snatch and forever preserve the animated foreground, rich in eminent citizens." But he was not to succeed. A few years ago, photo historian Bob Zeller unearthed a National Archives photograph which, he argued, showed Lincoln, from the back, arriving at the cemetery on horseback (Zeller debuted the discovery at a recent Forum Symposium). An even more recent analysis—released in October's *Smithsonian Magazine*—suggests that Lincoln is indeed in the picture below, but more likely arriving on the grandstand, in fuzzy profile. Whatever the outcome of the likely debate over who really appears in the newly discovered Gettysburg image, and precisely where, one thing remains certain: the photographers on the scene that day missed a great opportunity—even Alexander Gardner, who had captured Lincoln's likeness so brilliantly at his Seventh and D Street capital gallery less than two weeks earlier. They remained on the stand at the distant fringes of the crowd, and never captured the main event. (Photo: National Archives). 📌



# DID AMERICAN EDUCATION FORGET GETTYSBURG?

By Fred Zilian

While the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg was commemorated with fanfare within historical circles and at Gettysburg itself, the education world has shown stunningly little interest. Abe Lincoln, our most admired president, would be disappointed and would shudder at the implications for our country.

In probably the greatest land battle ever fought in the Western Hemisphere, Union and Confederate forces clashed at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 1-3, 1863. During these three days some 70,000 Confederate soldiers, led by General Robert E. Lee, engaged 90,000 Union forces, led by Major General George Gordon Meade, in command of the Army of the Potomac for only three days. Lee had invaded the North with the hope, militarily, of scoring a decisive victory which, politically, might strengthen the Northern peace movement and force President Abraham Lincoln to negotiate for peace.

The battle witnessed uncommon valor and good and poor tactical decisions on both sides, culminating in the ill-fated Confederate assault led by Major General George Pickett. Of the 14,000 Southern troops who attacked that July 3, only about one-half returned. While the Union won a resounding victory, the human toll on both sides was very costly: 23,000 Union casualties (killed, wounded, and missing) and 28,000 Confederate casualties, more than a third of the Confederate force.

Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia would fight and win many other battles after Gettysburg; however, their former dominance in tactics and initiative was now matched by experienced Union forces, soon to be led by Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant.

Many Americans who have heard of this battle may not know of its magnitude and significance. Many perhaps make facile assumptions about the inevitability of the North's victory in the Civil War, similar to the common view of World War II—we all know the conclusion and casually assume the Allied victory was inevitable.

Not so. The Battle of Gettysburg could have gone either way, and with it the Civil War. If Lee had prevailed over Meade, there was no guarantee that the North's superiority in manpower, finances, and industry along with Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation would win the war. If the Confederacy succeeded in stifling the North sufficiently so that public opinion shifted dramatically, we would have become two separate nations. Lincoln's greatest nightmare would have come true: that self-government was a chimera.

To be sure, America remembered the battle. This past year Hollywood has given us Spielberg's *Lincoln*; although, this was focused on Lincoln and the abolishment of slavery. Also, *Copperhead*, a movie about the peace movement in the North, opened in late June. The Postal Service has given us some marvelous stamps featuring the Emancipation Proclamation, the Battle of Gettysburg, and the Battle of Vicksburg. At Gettysburg itself, thousands of re-enactors gathered the first week in July to relive and commemorate the battle.

Given the magnitude and significance of the battle, it is surprising that major media in the world of primary and secondary education have essentially ignored it. During this past year the weekly newspaper *Education Week*, self-described as "American Education's [K-12] Newspaper of Record," has had no articles on the battle or even the Civil War, focusing on such things as the implementation of the Common Core standards,

assessment of students, and teacher education and evaluation. Likewise, *Independent School*, the quarterly magazine for independent schools, has also ignored this pivotal battle and our Civil War, focusing on such themes as technology, experiential learning, safety and security in schools, and accomplishing school missions in an era of fiscal restraints. Even the PBS catalogue for June features neither the battle nor the war. Its cover emphasizes "Constitution USA" and its rear cover features British dramas.

The implications of this neglect are serious. Societies and civilizations require glue to bind and sustain them, and one important source of this binding is significant historical events, such as the Battle of Gettysburg. It was the so-called "high water mark of the Confederacy." It was, along with Vicksburg, the pivotal battle of the Civil War, the war which forged a new identity for our country. It eliminated the Southern way of life based on slavery. We were no longer a "house divided." Before the war it was common to say "the United States are;" afterward, it became "the United States is."

With the former prominence of Columbus Day now diminished, and Thanksgiving now overtaken by a commercialism which whisks us from Halloween almost directly to Christmas, the remembrance of such key events becomes even more important.

Secondly, the education world's neglect of Gettysburg may signal complacency about the health and longevity of our country. One of the great insights Lincoln gives us is his reminder of the contingent nature of our democratic system, a system which needs tending by its people for its survival. In May, 1861, Lincoln stated: "the central idea pervading this struggle is the necessity ... of proving that popular government is not an absurdity."

With the rise of China and The Rest, America is again faced with maintaining its interests in a changing and challenging world. Lincoln also gives us insight into our greatest challenge: "If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen we must live through all time, or die by suicide."

(*Lincoln Forum member Fred Zilian is an educator at Portsmouth Abbey School and Salve Regina University, RI, and for fifteen years has been an Abraham Lincoln presenter/interpreter.*) 📖

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## CORRECTION

The Spring 2013 *Bulletin* inadvertently credited the article, "The Long Shadow of Lieber's Code," to our valued occasional contributor John Elliff. In fact, it was authored by another Forum treasure, legal expert Burrus ("Buzz") Carnahan. A revised text correctly listing Carnahan as the author was posted on the Lincoln Forum website a few weeks after our error. We again apologize to Buzz and John for this mistake. 📖

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# NICOLAY COPY OF THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS TO GO ON DISPLAY AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

By Michelle Krowl

As part of the sesquicentennial celebration of the American Civil War, the Library of Congress will display the Nicolay Copy of the Gettysburg Address from November 8, 2013 through January 4, 2014.

The Nicolay Copy represents the earliest of the five known copies of the Gettysburg Address handwritten by Abraham Lincoln. This document is presumed to be the only working, or pre-delivery, draft, and is thought by some Lincoln scholars to be the reading copy of the address. Lincoln used Executive Mansion stationery for the first page of the address, and wrote the text in ink. As the final line on the page ends mid-sentence, it is likely that the text once extended onto a second page of matching stationery, and was also written in ink. The use of Executive Mansion letterhead, in addition to circumstantial evidence provided by associates who observed Lincoln in the days before his visit to Gettysburg, strongly suggests that Lincoln wrote the first page of this draft in Washington, D.C.

The second page, however, was written on what has been loosely described as foolscap. Lincoln wrote in pencil on this page, and bridged the sentence uniting the two pages with a penciled correction in the last line of the first page. Most likely Lincoln decided to make changes to the address on either the night of November 18 or the morning of November 19, while staying at the home of David Wills, thus accounting for the different paper stock and writing medium.

Despite the different sizes of paper, they display matching fold marks, indicating that the documents were folded together as a unit.

The Nicolay Copy differs the most from the other four copies of the address in Lincoln's hand. Both the Nicolay and Hay Copies lack the phrase "under God" prior to "a new birth of freedom," which does appear in many newspaper transcriptions and the subsequent three handwritten versions. Also missing from the Nicolay Copy is a line of text referring to the unfinished work nobly carried on by the soldiers, and a reiteration of the idea that "It is rather for us to be here dedicated."

This first draft of the Gettysburg Address is often referred to as the "Nicolay Copy" for its association with presidential secretary John G. Nicolay. Nicolay mentioned to R. W. Gilder in 1885 that the original manuscript "is now lying before my eyes," and Nicolay was in possession of the document when he wrote "Lincoln's Gettysburg Address" for *The Century* magazine. A facsimile of the full document was reproduced for the first time in the article, published in February 1894. Additionally, Nicolay's daughter Helen recalled being told by John Hay that President Lincoln had given to John Nicolay the original manuscript of his Gettysburg Address.


Physical custody of the Nicolay Copy of the address apparently passed to John Hay, who also acquired a second draft of the address, now commonly referred to as the Hay Copy. Perhaps to solve problematic ownership issues, John Hay's three children donated both the Nicolay and Hay Copies of the Gettysburg Address to the Library of Congress in April 1916, along with the manuscript draft of Lincoln's second inaugural address, inscribed to John Hay. At the same time Helen Nicolay donated to the Library Lincoln's so-called "Blind Memo" of August 23, 1864, which had been given to her by John Hay's widow.

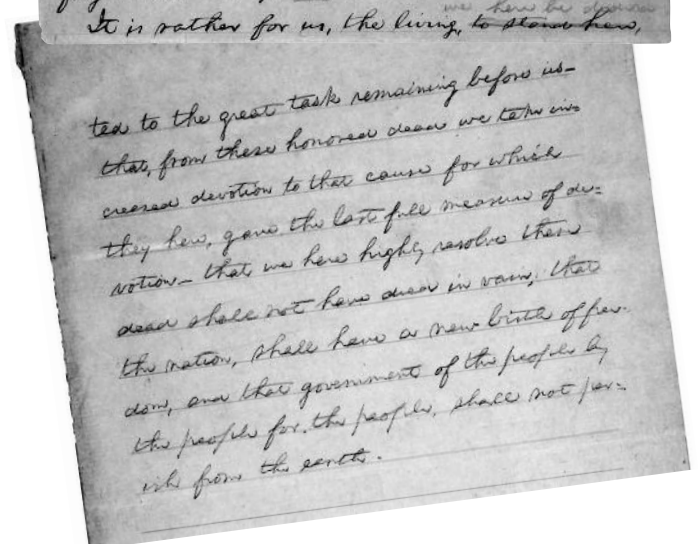
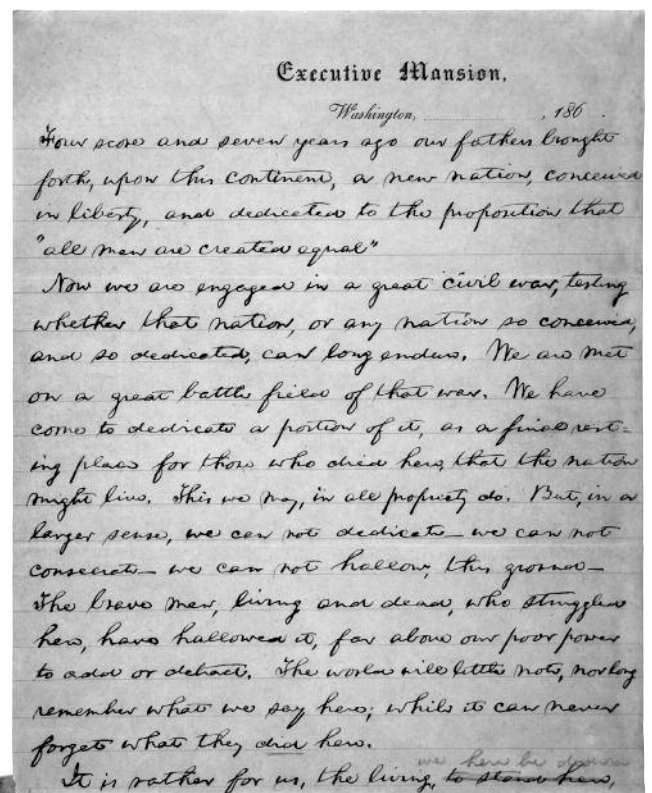
The Library of Congress will display the Nicolay Copy in commemoration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War and the Gettysburg Address. Rarely placed on public view, visitors will have a unique opportunity to closely examine the address in the Great Hall of the Thomas Jefferson Building beginning on November 8, 2013. On November 20, 2013, the Nicolay Copy will be installed in

the Library's *The Civil War in America* exhibition (second floor of the Jefferson Building), where it will remain on display until the close of the exhibition on January 4, 2014.

*The Civil War in America* exhibition also features pages from Lincoln's first and second inaugural addresses in his own hand, a page from his 1863 "Conkling letter," items in his pockets on the night of the assassination, the check-out register listing the books Abraham and Mary Lincoln borrowed from the Library of Congress from 1861-1863, as well as many other Lincoln documents or Lincoln-related items.

Do not miss the opportunity to see the Nicolay Copy of the Gettysburg Address and other Civil War treasures at the Library of Congress!

(Michelle Krowl is the Civil War and Reconstruction Specialist, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.) 



# GETTYSBURG HERO'S MEDAL OF HONOR RE-DISCOVERED, RETURNED TO BRUNSWICK, MAINE

By J. T. Leonard And the Associated Press

(With thanks to Henry F. Ballone)

After being discovered in the back of a book in Duxbury, Mass., the original Congressional Medal of Honor awarded to Col. Joshua Chamberlain has taken a long and circuitous route back to Brunswick.

In July, shortly before the town's annual Chamberlain Days celebration, the Pejepscot Historical Society received a small package from a donor who said he wished to remain anonymous. Inside the envelope was the medal, with the donor's wish that it be returned to Brunswick and authenticated "in honor of all veterans."

Historical society director Jennifer Blanchard was skeptical.

After all, she knew that Chamberlain's Medal of Honor—redesigned in 1904 and re-issued to Chamberlain in 1907—was safely displayed just up the hill in the George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections and Archives at Bowdoin College.

However, after several months of scrutiny by state and federal historians, the Smithsonian, Library of Congress, and the U.S. Army, the anonymous medal has proven to be the real deal.

"All of the experts we've consulted believe it to be authentic, and we are tremendously honored to return the medal to Chamberlain's home in Brunswick," Blanchard said.

According to display etiquette proscribed by the Medal of Honor Society, when the medal was redesigned its recipients had the option of returning the original in exchange for new, or keeping both original and redesigned.

The stipulation is that only one could be worn on display at a time, never both.

Chamberlain apparently kept his original medal, bestowed Aug. 11, 1893, by U.S. President Grover Cleveland, in recognition for heroism at Little Round Top during the Battle of Gettysburg 30 years earlier.

After Chamberlain's death in 1914, the medal found its way through generations to his last living descendant, granddaughter Rosamond Allen.

Upon her death in 2000, the contents of her estate were donated to the First Parish Church of Duxbury. Later, the medal's anonymous benefactor bought several books during a church fundraising sale and later discovered the medal inside the pages.

The donor actually tried to send it to Pejepscot twice—the first attempt was misaddressed and returned by the postal service. Chamberlain, the former college president, professor, soldier and state governor, took great pride in the medal, Blanchard said.

"There is photographic evidence that Chamberlain was very proud of the medal, that he wore it quite often," she said, gesturing at the 120-year-old accolade perched on the corner of her desk.

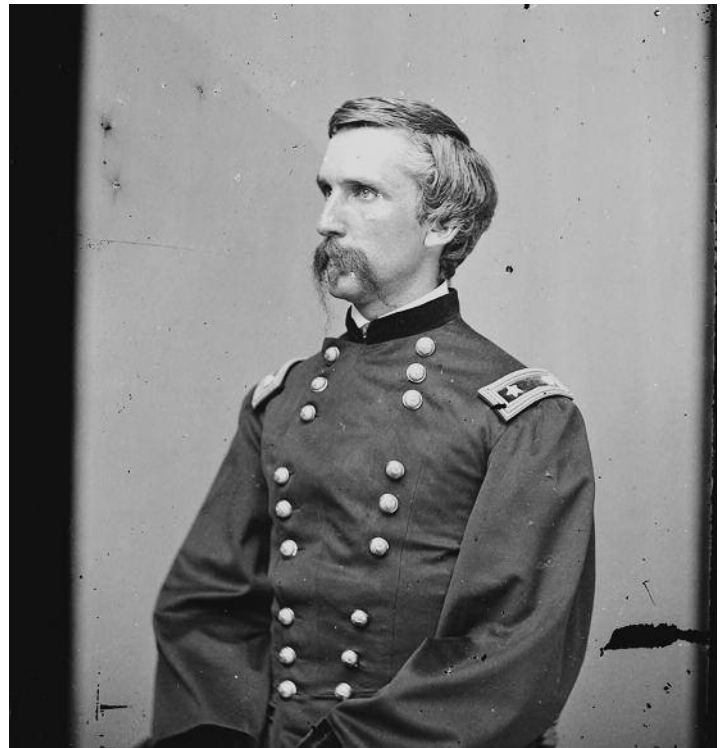
Pejepscot Historical Society now has ownership of—and display responsibilities for—the medal.

Made of brass, the medal is dulled by time and wear, and its suspension ribbons—both the 1893 original and the 1896 re-issue that covers it—are slightly ragged. But the thought of such history on the corner of her desk awed Blanchard.

"I'm just thrilled that it is what it appeared to be," she said.

The hardest part was keeping her secret while 150 years' worth of Chamberlain revelry swirled around her this summer, she said.

"Of course, we had to withhold the announcement until we could finish the authentication process," she said.



Joshua Chamberlain (freeinfosociety.com)

Congress redesigned the medal in 1904, and Prof. Chamberlain received his in fall 1907. That medal currently resides in the campus library's special collections, where it can be seen Monday through Friday, said curator Richard Lindemann.

Chamberlain was recommended for the medal by 1857 Bowdoin graduate Thomas H. Hubbard, and for whom the school's Hubbard Hall is named.

Hubbard petitioned Congress on Chamberlain's behalf. "Chronologically Hubbard would have been a student of Chamberlain's," Lindemann said, although he added that no records exist to confirm the tutelage.

Hubbard also served as a member of college overseers and trustees, and donated the plaque in Memorial Hall that lists the names of Bowdoin men who served in the Civil War.

"Our gratitude to the donor who discovered this treasure and knew of its importance to us and to the State of Maine knows no bounds," Blanchard said. 🇺🇸



Joshua Chamberlain gravestone (flickr.com/photos/brianhendrix)



# THE LONG SHADOW OF LINCOLN'S GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

By Jared Peatman

Though some historians have argued that the nation periodically forgot about the Gettysburg Address, the words never passed from view. But Lincoln's meaning did. In his 1992 Pulitzer Prize-winning *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America*, Gary Wills contends the Gettysburg Address "not only put the Declaration in a new light as a matter of founding law, but put its central proposition, equality, in a newly favored position as a principle of the Constitution." Wills was certainly correct; Abraham Lincoln intended the Gettysburg Address as his most eloquent statement that a democracy could only persist with equality at its core. But Wills implies that this shift, "[o]ne of most daring acts of open-air sleight-of-hand ever witnessed by the unsuspecting," was almost immediately effective and "remade" America in the 1860s. Gabor Boritt's 2006 *Gettysburg Gospel* slightly revises Wills, and as Boritt notes, his "final chapter considers how Lincoln's speech rose to be American Gospel, the Good News, for it was not that at birth." According to Boritt, that rise began in 1876. *The Long Shadow of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address* posits a different trajectory.

Since the nation as a whole was unready to commit to equality in 1863, neither was it ready to accept Lincoln's full message. In the ensuing century, groups wishing to advance a particular position utilized specific parts of the speech that echoed their stance while ignoring the rest, hijacking Lincoln's meaning for their own ends. Despite that, as the nation slowly moved toward fulfilling the promise of a democracy with equality, those invoking Lincoln's speech came ever closer to recovering his true purpose. That process culminated in 1963 at the height of both the Cold War and Civil Rights Movement when Americans rediscovered the central message of the Gettysburg Address as they increasingly accepted in their everyday life the inextricable link between a commitment to equality and the continuance of democratic government.

Thus, the Gettysburg Address did not "remake" America in the 1860s, nor did it "rise" beginning in 1876. Rather, from the beginning, the words had been in the public eye but not until the 1960s would popular uses of the speech recapture Lincoln's original message and, thus, become a revered document essential to American national identity.

Scholars, including Wills and A. E. Elmore, have expertly and convincingly explored the ideas and words that shaped Lincoln's philosophy behind the Gettysburg Address, while William Barton, Louis Warren, Boritt, and others have examined the events that occurred in Gettysburg before, during, and after the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery. *The Long Shadow of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address* covers those two topics but focuses on later invocations of the speech, predominantly in the twentieth century. Rather than covering every time period, the focus is on key moments that illustrate the evolving place of the Gettysburg Address in both American and international discourse. In his landmark work on French history, Pierre Nora comments that memories "buttress our identities, but if what they defended were not threatened, there would be no need for them."

Consequently, the Gettysburg Address has been most frequently invoked when the United States faced some type of turmoil, whether during domestic crises like the Populist, Progressive, or Civil Rights Movements or international affairs like the world wars or Cold War. In each case, historical actors introduced the Gettysburg Address to establish a connection between their position and Lincoln's iconic speech. In the 1960s, with the United States facing domestic issues dealing with race and international issues over democracy, the Address was referenced in the *New York Times* on 208 occasions. Over the next decade, when those issues receded, the Address was referenced just 96 times.

Before looking at those critical moments, the book reviews the events that took place in Gettysburg from the end of the battle through the dedication ceremonies on November 19, 1863, arguing that one cannot understand the significance of Lincoln's words and the extent to which his message was lost for nearly a century without knowing what led him to Gettysburg and the specific words he and the other orators spoke that day. That Lincoln was likely asked to speak at the cemetery as early as August 28, 1863, and that his most famous line was pulled from an abolitionist orator are two revelations that should challenge how we think of both the organizers' and Lincoln's goals for his speech. The immediate responses to the day's events in New York, Gettysburg, Confederate Richmond, and London show how intensely parochial concerns and political affiliations shaped initial coverage of all the speeches delivered that day and even led to the censoring of Lincoln's words in some locales. The regional divisions established in this era persisted throughout the period under study.

After discussing the immediate responses to the speech, the book moves to 1901, the last time for over seventy years that a Southern African American would serve in Congress, and considers responses in the first twenty-two years of the twentieth century, closing with the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial in 1922. In this era, the dominant message was one of reunification (though not necessarily reconciliation), and the parts of the Gettysburg Address that could be used to advance that objective were invoked while the others were largely ignored. This was the first time since the end of the Civil War that a systematic use for the Gettysburg Address toward a particular end can be perceived. During the world wars, the speech was used to promote American democracy and rally the citizenry to defend that institution. As a result of the global nature of the period, it was during this time that the speech truly gained international status. In 1921, people from both sides of the Irish independence issue invoked the speech as supporting their side; in the 1940s, China's two competing leaders, Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Tse-tung, also saw the document as buttressing their particular beliefs against the other. Together, these two stories reveal the incredible reach of the speech and illustrate that those co-opting Lincoln's intended message did not solely reside in America.

An international lens is essential to understanding the status of the Address during the Lincoln birth sesquicentennial and Civil War centennial commemorations from 1959 to 1963. The era suffered from strife at home due largely to the Civil Rights Movement and abroad with the Cold War, and interpretations of the Gettysburg Address depended on the speaker, audience, and subject. However, it was during this period that those invoking the speech began to do so in a way that preserved the coherent whole of Lincoln's argument rather than focusing on one component to the exclusion of others. In addition to these dominant narratives, each era featured one or more counter-narratives—in some cases, African Americans or their supporters who encouraged the nation to remember Lincoln's first line, in other cases unreconstructed Southerners who disavowed the speech's lines about democracy even in eras when most Americans supported Lincoln's call for "government of the people, by the people, for the people." The dominant narrative was ultimately controlled by those who were most successful in appropriating Lincoln for their cause, while the counter-narratives came from those whose invocations of Lincoln had not gained mainstream acceptance. Finally, an epilogue looks at the diversity of ways the speech has been interpreted and used since 1963, an era in which the speech has been invoked everywhere from the Camp David Summit of 1978 to the Hollywood movie *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*.

(Jared Peatman is the author of the new book, *The Long Shadow of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*.) 📖

*continued from page 2*

of glory: Pickett’s Charge, and Chamberlain’s heroic defense. Strategically, of course, it meant even more. Had Lee succeeded at Gettysburg, just as Lincoln’s poem suggested, the Confederacy might have taken direct aim at the nation’s cradle of liberty: Philadelphia. And had Lee’s bold invasion led him on past Gettysburg to occupy or destroy the city where American independence had been consecrated in 1776, the North might have abandoned the war effort altogether—with no choice but to sue for peace and allow the Confederacy to maintain a separate government unopposed. So strongly did Lincoln feel about protecting Philadelphia that, on a visit to Independence Hall just two weeks before his inauguration, his voice choking with emotion, he had declared: “I would rather be assassinated on this spot than to surrender it.”



**Wills House** (Henry F. Ballone)

Civil War Pennsylvania is more than one or two locations, however sacred—more than Gettysburg or Philadelphia—but in fact a series of historic towns and villages, and vast areas of surrounding countryside, where the fate of the Union was in large measure decided. Here, state militia answered the first call to arms, civilians bravely endured relentless threats and the occasional destruction of their private property, home front women raised funds to support the war and care for its casualties, publishers issued broadsides and prints to support the Union cause, and skirmish and battle raged with surprising frequency—culminating, of course, in the biggest battle of the rebellion. By the end of the war, Pennsylvania had more than made up for those first bedraggled volunteers. In all, the state sent 427,000 enlistees into the ranks during the Civil War, and organized 270 army regiments.

Their service earned high honor. The 13<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Reserves, for example—known as the “Pennsylvania Bucktails” for the deer tail trophies its soldiers affixed to their hats—fought heroically on the Peninsula, at Second Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Antietam, Gettysburg, and the Shenandoah Valley. At one point, its members were assigned to guard President Lincoln at his summer retreat outside Washington, the Soldiers’ Home. Another flashy and eccentric company, the elite Rush’s Lancers—officially the 6<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry—featured the best athletes of Philadelphia. Until 1863, they proudly went into battle carrying archaic nine-foot-long lances festooned with scarlet pennants. Even after they were ordered to replace their weapons with carbines, General Philip Sheridan attested that “no organization in either the regular or volunteer service enjoyed a more enviable reputation.”



**Devils Den, Gettysburg Battlefield** (Henry F. Ballone)

As the war dragged on, the state’s women made their own crucial contributions to the Union cause. Organizing a Sanitary Commission charity to feed its soldiers at a “refreshment saloon” when they went off to battle, collect their wages when they were away, and care for them if they came back wounded or sick, the organization raised more than \$1 million at a giant 1864 Sanitary Fair in Philadelphia. In June of that year, Lincoln himself, who rarely traveled outside Washington, visited the Great Central Fair in the hopes, he said, of “swelling the contributions for the benefit of the soldiers in the field.” He threw in a visit to the City’s Union League Club, recently organized along with sister organizations in New York and Boston, to marshal support for emancipation, the raising of “colored” regiments, and the expected campaign for re-election by the President. Here, Lincoln received a “great demonstration” of affection and support at a members’ reception in his honor. But newly published, signed editions of his Emancipation Proclamation failed to sell out!



**Soldiers Cemetery, Gettysburg Battlefield** (Henry F. Ballone)

As historian Joseph E. Stevens has observed, “Pennsylvania looked like paradise to the invading Confederates” in June 1863. The hungry Southern soldiers found themselves in fields overflowing with corn, wheat, and fruit. They generously helped themselves. The region’s barns were so strongly built and beautifully whitewashed that one Texas soldier admitted they were “positively more tastily built than two-thirds of the houses in Waco.” The famished soldiers feasted on chicken and guzzled fresh milk as the region’s peace-loving Amish farmers looked on with helplessness.

# 150 YEARS AFTER...

indifference. Their lack of resistance—or even demonstrable hostility—to the invaders led some Confederate officers to mistakenly believe they could continue rampaging through the entire state unmolested. They ultimately clashed with the Army of the Potomac in the sleepy college town where 9 roads converged—the crossroads village of Gettysburg.



**Dedication Day, Soldiers Cemetery, Gettysburg** (Henry F. Ballone)

For the next three days, in a hellish outpouring of shot, shell, suffering, North and South met in the biggest and bloodiest military battle to ever shake the continent. When it was over, more than 50,000 Americans had been killed, wounded, or gone missing. It was the most devastating carnage in the history of the hemisphere.

No battle of the Civil War—or any war—has generated as much literature as the Battle of Gettysburg, and few have inspired as lavish a living memorial. The Gettysburg National Military Park (run by the National Park Service since 1895) is one of the nation's most popular tourist attractions. This was the site in 1913 of an extraordinary 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion of some 50,000 of its surviving combatants, Union and Confederate alike, attended by President Woodrow Wilson. The spectacular reunion—which managed to stress the concept of valor on both sides while submerging any mention of slavery or African Americans—was funded by more than \$2 million in federal and state appropriations to provide travel expenses for veterans and build a tent city to house them on the hallowed field. Boy Scouts were recruited to guide the old men, governors arrived in town to orate on the field where Pickett's Charge had taken place, and a full five minutes of silence was observed as tribute to "Our Honored Dead." One newspaper in Ohio marveled: "You may search the world's history in vain for such



**Round Tops, Gettysburg Battlefield** (Henry F. Ballone)

a spectacle." In 2013, visitors returned en masse for a Gettysburg Foundation historians' marathon, a grand illumination, a concert, and a keynote address by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

Nearby, stands the new visitor center housing artist Paul Philippoteaux's massive, 25-foot-high, 375-foot-long cyclorama. In the days before motion pictures outdid them in spectacle, such behemoth artworks attracted a flood of excited visitors. Philippoteaux's masterpiece earned rave reviews and high attendance in Boston, Chicago, and ultimately in Gettysburg, but later faded from view. Now the painting has undergone a thorough, desperately needed restoration, and has been reinstalled in the large new Gettysburg Visitors' Center.

When one visits manicured, impeccably maintained Gettysburg today, it is difficult to imagine the conditions that residents experienced when they reclaimed it following the battle. Dead soldiers and animals littered streets and fields, rotting in the torrid summer sun, attracting vermin and insects and making life miserable for the civilian population. Within a few weeks, however, they had organized an ambitious plan to handle the crisis by creating a national cemetery to house the dead. To dedicate this new hallowed ground, the town fathers invited Edward Everett to deliver a major speech. Then, almost as an afterthought, they asked the President of the United States to add "a few appropriate remarks." Undeterred by the slight, the commander-in-chief, who rarely traveled outside Washington, determined to go to Gettysburg and interpret the human sacrifice in his own terms. The result was not



**Pennsylvania Monument, Gettysburg Battlefield** (Henry F. Ballone)

only the rhetorical triumph of Lincoln's long career as a public speaker, but arguably the greatest speech ever given in America.

Today, visitors can still walk the route that Lincoln traveled when he arrived in Gettysburg. The railroad tracks that brought him here from Washington the evening before no longer carry trains, but the depot still stands. Lincoln strolled up the street, past the Gettysburg Hotel (a modern version of which still occupies the spot), and headed to the handsome home of Dedication Day organizer David Wills across the town square, where he spoke briefly to a crowd of well-wishers from the doorway, then retired to his room to polish his talk. The Wills House has been restored and reimagined, and features exhibits dedicated to the Lincoln visit.

On the morning of November 19, Lincoln mounted a horse in the square outside and rode off in a long procession toward the cemetery. Here he listened patiently as odes were sung, dirges played, and Everett intoned for more than two hours. Finally, Lincoln stood up and in two minutes revolutionized American political discourse. 🪦

## LINCOLN'S "FLAT FAILURE": THE

A century and a half ago, Abraham Lincoln brought forth at Gettysburg a speech universally remembered as one of the greatest ever written, a gem not only of American political oratory, but of American literature.

Tributes have been devoted to it, re-creations staged of it, and books written about it. It is surely fair to say that no other American speech has ever inspired so much writing and so many more speeches. This paper may be the latest, but it certainly will not be the last.

Perhaps what make the speech especially appealing to modern Americans are the handicaps Lincoln faced in delivering it: a late invitation to appear; a rude reminder that he should deliver no more than "a few appropriate remarks;" the distraction of a sick child at home; an unenviable spot on the program that day—following a stem-winder by the greatest orator of the era; and Lincoln's deep aversion to public speechmaking of any kind once he became president. We have come to love the Gettysburg Address, in part, because, in spite of all these obstacles, Lincoln somehow composed a masterpiece.

We also love it because, as Lincoln described it, it was "short, short, short"—decidedly not in the tradition of our current chief executive, whose famously interminable 1996 speech at the Democratic National Convention and 1997 State of the Union address, to name two examples, have tested the endurance of increasingly impatient American audiences.

But we love the Gettysburg Address, too, because we sense that Lincoln wrote it in a burst of passion and genius. And perhaps some Americans learned to love it because they still believe that Lincoln summoned the divine inspiration to write it on a railroad train en route to Gettysburg, at the last possible minute.

We love it because we have heard that the press hated it, and everybody in 21<sup>st</sup>-century America seems to hate the press. And maybe, most of all, we love it because we have learned that Lincoln himself thought it was a failure. In fact, we have been taught that most of Lincoln's contemporaries failed to appreciate it, too, just as they failed to appreciate Lincoln himself until he was gone. It only makes us love the Gettysburg Address the more.

If it is true that all or any of these myths have inspired our affection for Abraham Lincoln's greatest speech, then we may well love the Gettysburg Address for the wrong reasons.

The fact is, the reputation of no other speech in all American history has ever been so warped by misconception and myth. True enough, Lincoln was invited late, he was told to keep it brief, he did have a challenging spot on the program that day, and he did have a sick child at home whose suffering surely reminded his worried parents of the illness that had taken the life of another son only a year-and-a-half before. But much of the rest of the legend that makes the Gettysburg Address so appealing was conceived in liberties with the truth and dedicated to the proposition that you can fool most of the people most of the time.

Take the myth of its creation on board the train from Washington. The legend originated with newspaperman Ben Perley Poore, who contended that the address was "written in the car on the way from Washington to the battlefield, upon a piece of pasteboard held on his knee."

Another passenger contended that Lincoln finished the entire manuscript by the time he reached Baltimore. Even

more impressive was the claim by a corporal traveling with the President that not until their train reached Hanover—just 12 miles from Gettysburg—did Lincoln stand up after hours of story-telling and declare: "Gentlemen, this is all very pleasant, but the people will expect me to say something to them tomorrow, and I must give the matter some thought. But the most absurd recollection of all came from Andrew Carnegie, of all people, then a young executive with the B & O Railroad, who claimed that not only did Lincoln write the Gettysburg Address on the train, but that *he* had personally handed Lincoln the pencil he used to do the writing.

The fact is, Lincoln had been "giving the matter some thought" since at least November 8, 1863, eleven days before Dedication Day at Gettysburg. On the 8th, newspaperman Noah Brooks asked the President if he had written his remarks. "Not yet," Lincoln replied — quickly adding: "Not finished anyway." This means that he had already started writing. According to Brooks, Lincoln further explained: "I have written it over, two or three times, and I shall have to give it another lick before I am satisfied."

In the week-and-a-half that followed, Lincoln anguished over Tad Lincoln's precarious health, worked on his correspondence, held a cabinet meeting, watched a parade, met with Italian sea captains, and took time to see a play starring—of all people—John Wilkes Booth. Yet by November 17 he was able to tell his attorney general that fully half his address was in final form. Not long afterward, former Secretary of War Simon Cameron got to see a copy, written, he remembered, "with a lead pencil on commercial notepaper." Ward Hill Lamon, the Marshall of the District of Columbia who would travel to the event with the President, claimed that Lincoln read him the entire speech before they left together for Gettysburg on the 18th. But the notoriously self-serving Lamon could not help adding froth to the legend by claiming that the President confided: "It does not suit me, but I have not time for any more." By this time, of course, he had devoted a good deal of time, as well as thought, to his Gettysburg Address.

The idea that Lincoln did not take his Gettysburg opportunity seriously is preposterous. He did not even want to travel to the village on the same day as the ceremony, as originally planned by the War Department, for fear of missing the event, as he put it, "by the slightest accident." It was Lincoln who insisted on starting out for Gettysburg the day before, to make certain that he was rested and prepared for the ceremonies. This was not a man who left things to the last minute.

Besides, anyone who has seen the autograph copy of his February 11, 1861 farewell address to Springfield, truly written on a train, knows how difficult Lincoln found it to take pen in hand on the rocking, rolling railroad cars of the 1860s. He had agreed to write out the farewell remarks he had just given extemporaneously for reporters traveling with him to his inauguration. But midway through the effort, he gave up. The jostling of the cars was transforming his usually precise penmanship into an indecipherable scrawl. Perhaps the effort was making him queasy. So he asked his secretary, John G. Nicolay, to take over the task. The rest of the surviving document is in Nicolay's handwriting. If Lincoln did write anything en route to Gettysburg it has not survived. But chances are he recalled his Springfield experience and did not

# GETTYSBURG MYTH REVISITED

even try. Lincoln was too careful when it came to writing speeches in advance, too poor an impromptu speaker—and well aware of his shortcomings in that department—to make plausible the idea that he waited until the last minute to write his Gettysburg Address.

The most stubborn of all the Gettysburg myths is the resilient legend that holds that the speech was poorly received when Lincoln delivered it—that, at best, only a few enthusiasts appreciated it, while most eyewitnesses did not. Such conclusions are inherently suspicious. In truth, eyewitnesses to Gettysburg disagreed about almost everything to do with Lincoln's appearance here, even the weather.

One spectator remembered November 19, 1863 as “bright and clear.” Yet the *Washington Chronicle* reported rain showers. Some said 15,000 people crowded the town for the event. Others counted 100,000. Some went to their deaths insisting that Lincoln took a tour of the battlefield in the early morning hours on dedication day. Others swore that he stayed inside the Wills House until it was time to mount up for the procession to the ceremony.

People even disagreed about the president's horse. One visitor gushed that Lincoln looked “like Saul of old” that day as he sat astride “the largest...Chestnut horse” in the county. Another testified that he rode “a diminutive pony.” And yet another thought the horse was so small that Lincoln's long legs practically dragged along the ground — inspiring one old local farmer to exclaim at the sight of him: “Say Father Abraham, if she goes to run away with yer...just stand up and let her go!” People on the scene did not even agree on the color of the horse. Surviving recollections state with equal certainty that it was “a white horse,” a “chestnut bay,” a “brown charger,” and a “black steed.”

When such wildly diverse recollection becomes the rule—not the exception—how seriously should we take the claims of those who asserted that Lincoln's speech fell on deaf ears at Gettysburg? This is especially so when it comes to the crucial question: did the listeners appreciate the address? True, they had just heard a two-hour-long speech from the principal orator of the day, Edward Everett. Drained and likely exhausted, they may not have been ready to focus on another major speech. Then again, they were about to see and hear the President of the United States, some for the first and only time.

Did Lincoln's speaking style prevent the audience from appreciating the novelty of his appearance and the beauty of his words? Presidential assistant secretary John Hay remembered that Lincoln spoke “in a firm free way.” But a journalist from Cincinnati complained about his “sharp, unmusical, treble voice.”

Then there is the issue of whether Lincoln read from a text or spoke from memory. Private secretary Nicolay maintained he “did not read from a manuscript.” A student in the audience, on the other hand, remembered that Lincoln kept a “hand on each side of the manuscript” while he spoke, though he “looked at it seldom.” And yet another eyewitness recalled that Lincoln “barely took his eyes” off the speech while he read it.

There is the testimony from the Associated Press reporter, Joseph L. Gilbert, who said he was so transfixed by Lincoln's “intense earnestness and depth of feeling” as he spoke that he stopped taking notes just to gaze “up at him.” He had to borrow Lincoln's manuscript afterwards to fill in the gaps, inserting several interruptions for “applause” plus “long

continued applause” at the conclusion. Did he really remember such outbursts of enthusiasm? Or did he add them charitably to an address that otherwise elicited no reaction at all? Whom do we believe?

Stenographer-correspondents were both imprecise and partisan in the Civil War era. The real Lincoln-Douglas debates, to cite the most famous casualty of their work, are irrevocably lost to us, since all we have left are the Republican-commissioned transcripts that make Lincoln sound perfect and Douglas bombastic; and the Democratic-commissioned transcripts that make Lincoln sound hesitant and Douglas eloquent.

Political stenography had not advanced much toward non-partisanship by 1863. One Chicago shorthand reporter at Gettysburg, for example, heard Lincoln say “our poor attempts to add or detract,” not “our poor power” [emphasis added]. And three New York papers heard Lincoln dedicate Americans not to “the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly advanced,” but the “refinished work” [emphasis added], as if he was a home-remodeling contractor. Another stenographer recorded not “we here highly resolve,” but “we here highly imbibe.” And one Democratic paper claimed that Lincoln could not even count; he had started his speech referring not to the events of “four score and seven years ago,” but to “four score and *ten* years ago” [emphasis added].

There was more than sloppy stenography at work here. There was highly partisan stenography as well, just as in the days of the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Thus, to no one's surprise, the *Illinois State Journal*, the old pro-Lincoln paper from Springfield, reported that “immense applause” had greeted the president at Gettysburg. But a far less sympathetic observer reported “not a word, not a cheer, not a shout.”

Which version of the audience reaction was correct? We may never know for sure. The truth is buried within the 19th-century tradition of partisan journalism. The question boils down to the credibility of the Republican vs. the Democratic party press.

That is why it seems so foolish that biographers have made so much of the fact that many of the newspapers commenting immediately on the Gettysburg Address failed to realize its greatness. In fact, it was Lamon who fueled this most stubborn of legends by insisting “without fear of contradiction that this famous Gettysburg speech was not regarded by...the press...as a production of extraordinary merit, nor was it commented on as such until after the death of its author.”

Perhaps Lamon was thinking of one of the most frequently quoted criticisms from the *Chicago Times*:

The cheek of every American must tinge with shame as he reads the silly flat and dishwatery utterances of the man who has to be pointed out to intelligent foreigners as the President of the United States.

On the other hand, the rival Chicago newspaper, the *Tribune*, quickly appreciated, and announced, the importance of the speech, countering:

The dedicatory remarks by President Lincoln will live among the annals of the war.

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# LINCOLN'S "FLAT FAILURE": THE GETTYSBURG MYTH REVISITED

continued from page 13

As genuine evidence of Lincoln's performance at Gettysburg, however, both appraisals were in a sense totally insignificant. Of course, the *Tribune* predicted great things for the Gettysburg Address. They had been a pro-Lincoln paper since at least 1858, when they hired the stenographer who recorded the Republican version of the Lincoln-Douglas debates and filled their pages daily with attacks on Douglas and praise of Lincoln. Why would they not cheer the speech at Gettysburg? They had cheered nearly every speech Lincoln ever made.

And of course the Chicago *Times* hated it. They hated Lincoln! They hated him when he ran against Douglas, charging that "the Republicans have a candidate for the Senate of whose bad rhetoric and horrible jargon they are ashamed." And surely the *Times* had not grown fonder of Lincoln after his army closed the newspaper down in 1863—the same year as the Gettysburg Address—even if it was Lincoln who later countermanded the order. "Is Mr. Lincoln less refined than a savage?" the *Times* taunted in its comment on the address.

Nor is it surprising that the Democratic party newspaper in Harrisburg declared: "We pass over the silly remarks of the President; for the credit of the nation, we are willing that the veil of oblivion shall be dropped over them and that they shall be no more repeated or thought of." Those lines are probably the most frequently quoted by historians seeking to prove that the press, in general, did not appreciate the Gettysburg Address. Seldom is the paper's political affiliation mentioned, only its ambiguous name: the *Patriot and Union*. And almost never are the first few lines of its review quoted, which seem far more revealing of its motives than a disdain for Lincoln's literary style. "The President," it began, "acted without sense and without constraint in a panorama that was gotten up more for the benefit of his party than for the glory of the nation and the honor of the dead." *For the benefit of his party!* There, in a nutshell, is the Harrisburg Democratic party newspaper's grievance with the Gettysburg Address: to the *Patriot & Union* it represented Republican party propaganda.

In fact, the Address elicited a number of prompt, rave reviews at the time it was delivered. They came from Republican papers like the *Providence Journal*, which pointed out: "The hardest thing in the world is to make a five minute's speech... Could the most elaborate, splendid oration be more beautiful, more touching, more inspiring, than those thrilling words?"

It is true that the *London Times* did complain that the ceremony at Gettysburg was "rendered ludicrous by some of the luckless sallies of that poor President Lincoln." But the *London Times* seldom praised Abraham Lincoln. Interestingly, a quote from the same review that several historians have used to illustrate the period press's foolhardy dismissal of the Gettysburg Address—that it was "dull and commonplace"—has long been quoted inaccurately. The paper actually used those words to criticize not Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, but Edward Everett's.

As for Everett, his own assessment, sent to Lincoln the day after the ceremonies, conceded: "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." Thus, even if we cling to the ultimate Gettysburg legend—that Lincoln himself thought he missed a golden opportunity on November 19—we can at least be satisfied that he knew better by

November 20, the day he received Everett's letter of praise and replied modestly that he was "pleased to know" that what he said "was not entirely a failure."

We probably owe the legend of Lincoln's lack of enthusiasm for his own performance at Gettysburg almost entirely to Ward Hill Lamon, one of the most consistently undependable sources in the annals of Lincoln biography. It was Lamon who claimed that when Lincoln took his seat after the address, he confided sadly: "That speech won't scour! It is a flat failure, and the people are disappointed." And it was Lamon who added that when they returned to Washington, Lincoln repeated: "I tell you, Hill, that speech fell on the audience like a wet blanket. I am distressed about it. I ought to have prepared it with more care."

As historians Don E. Fehrenbacher and Virginia Fehrenbacher pointed out, however, the original personal notes from which he adapted this recollection show that it was Lamon who claimed the speech fell on the audience like a "wet blanket." Lincoln himself never uttered the statement. Later, Lamon simply put his own words in Lincoln's mouth. In short, we have no authentic, reliable reason to believe that Lincoln ever felt that he failed at Gettysburg.

Of nearly equal importance, even if audience reaction was as disappointing as Lamon claimed, Lincoln knew that he was delivering the Gettysburg Address that day to two audiences: the relatively small crowd at the cemetery, whether it was 15,000 or 100,000; and the millions who would read the text in the press.

For several years Lincoln had perfected the art of delivering state papers and political messages through the newspapers. He made few formal speeches as president. But he made sure that when he greeted special visitors with important remarks, they were quickly printed in the newspapers. Or if he wrote an important letter—like the one to Erastus Corning and other Albany, New York Democrats defending his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus—they too were published for the benefit of other readers.

The Gettysburg Address would live because Lincoln made certain that it lived: By lending his transcript to the Associated Press; by writing additional copies for souvenir albums and charity auctions; by basking in the knowledge that it would be reprinted worldwide and praised at least in the Republican journals.

From the beginning, the Gettysburg Address would be recognized, and applauded, because the brilliant public relations strategist who made certain his remarks were widely read, was also a consummate literary craftsman who enjoyed his finest hour during his two minutes at Gettysburg.

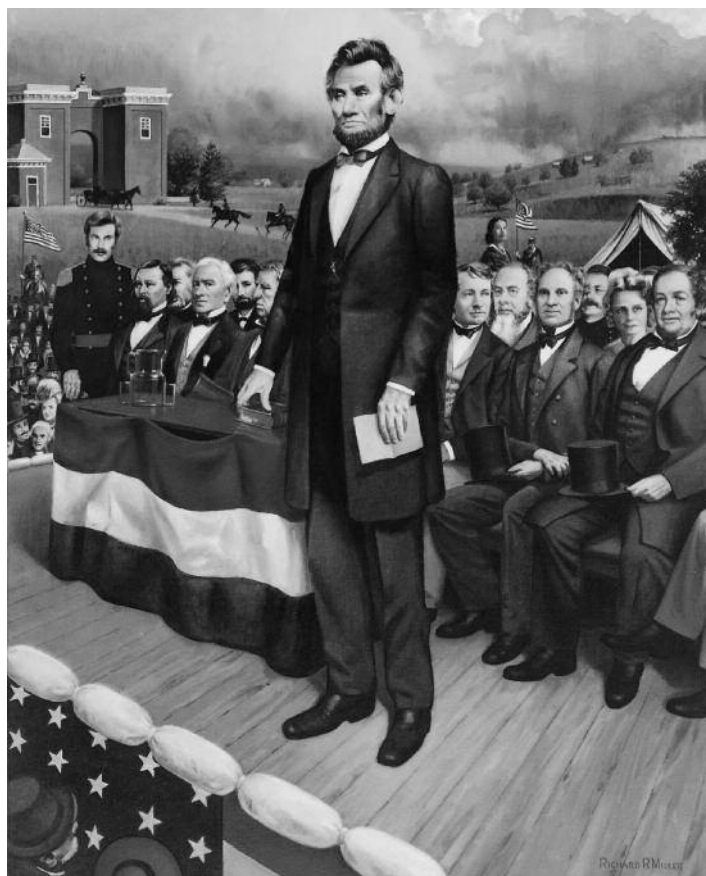
It is therefore fitting and proper to here highly resolve that Lincoln did indeed triumph at Gettysburg, not just in history, but on the very spot where he summoned all his great powers to re-consecrate a scene of death into an unforgettable metaphor for birth: a new birth of freedom. 🏛️

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## THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

*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 battlefield 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 poor 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 gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain [applause]; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom; and that Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth. [Long-continued applause.]* 📌

Although he rewrote the document several times in the months after the November 1863 ceremony, providing copies to charity fairs to raise funds for war wounded, Lincoln's original words, as recorded by the Associated Press and then checked by AP reporter Joseph Gilbert against the President's own handwritten text, perhaps offer the best idea of the words he spoke that day—and the crowd reaction they elicited (notwithstanding the legend that Lincoln was greeted in silence):



The Turning Point - Lincoln's Gettysburg (richardmiller.com)

The Lincoln Forum Bulletin welcomes contributions from members and historians—articles and photos alike. Send to editor Harold Holzer at [harold.holzer@metmuseum.org](mailto:harold.holzer@metmuseum.org). The editor particularly thanks the contributors to the current issue.

# KUSHNER EARNS RICHARD NELSON CURRENT AWARD FOR 2013

continued from page 1



**Doris Kearns Goodwin, Harold Holzer, & Tony Kushner, Dedication Day, 2012, Soldiers Cemetery, Gettysburg (Henry F. Ballone)**

Added Doris Kearns Goodwin, the 2005 winner of the Current Award whose acclaimed book, *Team of Rivals*, was adapted by Kushner for the Spielberg film: "I am so delighted that my friends at the Lincoln Forum are honoring my beloved movie partner Tony Kushner for his great accomplishments in writing the screenplay for *Lincoln*. He was not only a constant delight and inspiration as a collaborator, but emerged as a genuine expert with a strong point of view, a gift for the dialogue and the drama of the Civil War era, and of course a magical gift for generating unforgettable screen moments. I am so proud of and grateful to Tony for the chance to work together, and for the brilliant result of his talent and dedication. He should win every award in the book for *Lincoln*, but I'm especially thrilled that, thanks to the Forum, he's winning one that I treasure so much."

Commented Steven Spielberg, the award-winning director of *Lincoln*: "Great screenplays are of course the foundations of successful films, and for *Lincoln*, the amazingly gifted Tony Kushner produced a script that was almost too good to be true. It was a great pleasure to work with him, and a thrill to film his riveting dialogue and to bring to life the characters he re-imagined. I congratulate Tony on this well-deserved honor, and salute the Lincoln Forum for extending it. Thank-you, Tony, for helping to create the Lincoln for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and hopefully for as long as films are seen and loved."

Tony Kushner began his theatrical career as a director, and later turned to writing plays. His best-known work, the seven-hour-long *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes (Millennium Approaches and Perestroika)*, opened in New York in 1992, and ultimately won for Kushner a Pulitzer Prize and two "Tony" Awards. The epic was later adapted (by Kushner) for HBO

mini-series starring Meryl Streep, for which he won an Emmy Award for outstanding writing.

Kushner also won a 2007 Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Musical for *Caroline, or Change*, which also earned him 2004 nominations for "Tony" and Drama Desk awards for Outstanding Book of a Musical. He was nominated for both the Golden Globe and the Academy Award for his screenplay for Steven Spielberg's *Munich*, and has also earned a number of literary awards, including the Lila Acheson Wallace/Reader's Digest Fellowship, and the Cultural Achievement Award of the National Foundation of Jewish Culture. He has also won a number of honorary degrees from colleges and universities across the country.

Earlier this year, President Obama awarded Tony Kushner the National Arts Medal at ceremonies at the White House.

Kushner has written a number of books, including *A Meditation from Angels in America* (2004), *Plays by Tony Kushner* (1999), *Death & Taxes: Hydriotaphia and Other Plays* (1998), *Wrestling with Zion* (coauthored with Alisa Solomon, 2003), and with the late Maurice Sendak, the children's book *Brundibar* (2003). In 2013, Kushner published the full screenplay of *Lincoln* with an introduction by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

The annual Lincoln Forum Award of Achievement is named for the late dean of Lincoln scholars, Richard Nelson Current (1912-2012), the beloved Bancroft Prize-winning author of *The Lincoln Nobody Knows*, *Lincoln and the First Shot*, and many other classics in the field. The award comes in the form of Decatur, Illinois sculptor John McClarey's acclaimed impressionistic statuette, *Freedom River*.

Previous winners of the Current Award have included historians, artists, and public figures: Gettysburg College professor Gabor Boritt (1996), C-SPAN founding chairman Brian Lamb (1997), scholar John Hope Franklin (1998), former U. S. Senator and Lincoln scholar Paul Simon (1999), historian David Herbert Donald (2000), historian Garry Wills (2001), historian James M. McPherson (2002), actor Sam Waterston (2003), Grant Association President and documentary editor John Y. Simon (2004), sculptor John McClarey (2005), biographer Doris Kearns Goodwin (2006), novelist Jeff Shaara (2007), documentary filmmaker Ken Burns (2008), Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (2009), incomparable battlefield guide Ed Bearss (2011), and historian Eric Foner (2012). In addition, honorary awards went to Professor Richard Nelson Current in 2000, to Chairman Frank Williams on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Forum in 2005, and to founding Forum Treasurer Charles D. Platt in 2006. 🏛️

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