

*Wm Lee came North
again in 1863*

"Lincoln's Gettysburg Remarks"

On July 1, 1863, the two finest armies on the planet stumbled into one another at a cross-roads town in south-central Pennsylvania.

For three days Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, 75,000 strong (w/ over 140 artillery pieces) went up against General Meade's Army of the Potomac, a force of about 97,000 men with over 100 artillery pieces of its own. For three days these armies engaged in the most intense and bloody combat of the Civil War. When it was over some 51,000 men from both sides were either killed, wounded, or missing. One out of every three men who took part in the three- -days of Gettysburg were casualties of this engagement.

^There was much celebration in the North over this stunning "victory" by Union men and arms. Meade was an instant hero in northern hearts. His stock was up.

But a contemporary could also take a critical (and Lincoln did) view at what happened at this small town of 2500 people. Not taking anything away from the incredible dedication and embattled courage demonstrated by both sides nevertheless the Three Days of Gettysburg were three days of of muddle, missed chances, and unparalleled death and mayhem on the battlefield.

For Lee it was ultimate folly to assault the Union lines on the Third Day. He offered to resign his command.

On the Union side, Meade's failure to counterattack after the repulse of Pickett's charge meant that the Union had thrown away an almost certain opportunity to destroy Lee's army, march on Richmond, and in conjunction with the crushing news of the fall of Vicksburg on July 4, bring down the Confederacy. Instead Meade hunkered down and refused to move before Lee ghosted his army across the flooded Potomac and escaped back into Virginia.

The war received a reprieve and would go on for another two ^{years} years.

*Lincoln
reads -*

"Lincoln's Gettysburg Remarks"

On July 1, 1863, the two finest armies on the planet stumbled into one another at a cross-roads town in south-central Pennsylvania. For three days Union and Confederate forces engaged each other in a universe of battle that was the bloodiest sustain combat in the history of the Civil War.

For three days in July Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, some 75,000 strong (w/ over 140 artillery pieces) went up against General Meade's Army of the Potomac, a force of 197,000 w/ more than 100 field pieces of its own. When it was over 51,000 men from both sides were either killed, wounded, or missing. One out of every three men who took part in the engagement were casualties.

Why did Lee Come North again in 1863?

Lee's main purpose in invading the North in 1863 was as straightforward as it was unabashedly ambitious. His immediate military purpose was to engage the Union Army of the Potomac in one "Big Battle" and wreck upon it a humiliating and disasterous defeat. He was not looking for another battlefield victory like those in December 1862 at Fredericksburg and then again in May 1863 at Chancellorsville. He was intent on administering a disasterous whooping. He was convinced that if Lincoln's eastern army was soundly defeated again that the Army of the Potomac would disintegrate and the North's resolve to continue the war would wither away. There would be a wave of political panic in the North, a search for scapgoats, and a massive loss of confidence in Lincoln as war president and commander-in-chief. (This is what happened to some degree after the Union defeat at Fredericksburg).

Lee saw clearly that ~~if he could that~~ the only hope for the Confederacy was to parlay back-to-back Confederate battlefield triumphs into earth shattering political benefits. When the 1864 presidential elections came around in the North in 1864 disillusioned Northern voters would replace Lincoln with "a peace at any price" candidate in the White House.

Lee's reasoning was sound. The fact that his military-political strategy failed to accomplish its designed ends meant that Gettysburg would be the turning point in the war providing that the North was willing to persevere until final victory.

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Add on to Meade's failurer to pursue.

Lincoln was outraged at Meade's failure to pursue Lee before he crossed the Potomac and was out of reach of Union arms. He pleaded with Meade implored Meade to counterattack. To strike while Lee was vulnerable. Meade would not move. He was amazed at hos own good fortune in besting Lee at Gettysburg and did not want to tst his luck again.

Lincoln was beside himself. He would have fired Meade except for fear that to remove him would have tarnished the "victory" at Gettysburg northern eyes. Gettysburg was another one of those displays of the cvhronic inability of Civil War armies to effectively pursue defeated enemies. It was Antietam all over again. This puzzled Lincoln as it has puzzled military historians to this day.

Meade's failure to grasp the main chance played havoc with Lincoln's mind. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles recalled an incident about ten days after Gettysburg that Lincoln broke up a Cabinet meeting in mid-course explaining that he was too distraught to continue. Lincoln caught up with Welles ast he was crossing the lawn of the executive mansion and poured out his pent up frustration and suspicions about Meade's timidity. According to Welles Lincoln erupted:

"There is bad faith somewhere. Meade has been pressed and urged, but only one of his generals was for an immediate attack, was ready to pounce on Lee; the rest held back. What does it mean, Mr. Welles? Great God! what does it mean?"

Speculate on what he meant by "bad faith" and connect it to the interoduction of the second war aim in 1863--the Emanciupation Proclamation. Did he believe that his generals were covertly opposed to the war now that it had become a social revolution and were attempting to sabatoge this new war aim by perpetuating a stalemated war— *to Rein his presence.*

find Understand that by mid-1863 Lincoln--if not most of the generals he had names to lead the Army of the Potomac--that sad list of mediocrities like McClellan, Burnside, Pope, Hooker, and Meade--had gained a profound grasp of war.

Do I want to develope here (Neely p. 74?)

II. The Occasion

The November 19 gathering at Gettysburg was to commemorate the founding of the Soldiers' National Cemetery.

After the armies had departed the battlefield was littered with at least 5,000 dead horses and mules. Some 8,000 human bodies were either still scattered over the fields or barely covered in shallow graves. The cleanup was a monumental task that was well beyond the capacities of a town whose population was no greater than 2,500 people. Farmers had to plow around shallow graves and women of the town were finding bits and pieces of bodies while they tended their gardens and sometimes found decaying bodies in outlying barns or in haystacks where fatally wounded men had crawled to escape the shelling and to die unattended.

There was a common complaint about relatives of missing men (most of the 8,000 bodies left behind were Confederate dead/7,000) who were digging up the shallow graves to find missing loved ones. There were more sinister outsiders who came to Gettysburg over the summer to rifle the graves.

David Wills, a lawyer and prosperous banker in town, wrote to Pennsylvania Governor Curtin, "In many instances arms and legs protrude and my attention has been directed to several places where the hogs were actually rooting out bodies and devouring them."

Clearly something had to be done. The upshot of this severe environmental and public health emergency was the establishment of a commission made up of representatives of the various northern states whose young men fought at Gettysburg to come up with funds to get the unclaimed bodies into permanent grave sites. Wills found a "rural architect" to create the proposed cemetery's LAYOUT (Wm. Saunders). Wills canvassed among the more prominent wordsmiths of the time to prepare a dedication of appropriate words to "sweeten the poisoned air of Gettysburg." (Wills, p. 23). Longfellow, Whittier, and Bryant all passed on the invitation.

Wills turned to Edward Everett,** the then current heavyweight champion of declamatory occasions (now that Daniel Webster was gone). Commemorating battlefields was one of Everett's specialties. he had added fame to Lexington and Concord and Bunker Hill with his oratory. Everett snapped at Wills' invitation to come to Gettysburg.

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Lincoln took no offense at the invitation and his assigned role in the ceremonies. He meant to use the opportunity. The war president had important business at Gettysburg.

There was expected to be a large turnout for the dedication. (Some 20 to 25,000 crowded into the cross-roads town. Most of the northern governors and their political entourage were expected. It was a prize opportunity for Lincoln to do some fence-mending with the divided Pennsylvania Republicans who happened to be split into Curtin and Cameron factions. Lincoln hoped to pour balm on these political troubled waters in view of the fact that the presidential election was only a year away.

His secretaries Hay and Nicolay had a marvelous opportunity to do some political intelligence-gathering as they circulated among the governors and other state politicians.

Lincoln left nothing to chance. He personally took control over his own schedule and insisted that he leave for the 80-mile November 18th, a day earlier, not trusting to an itinerary that involved transfers at Baltimore and Hanover Junction. He told Senator Sumner that he wanted to avoid "the slightest accident . . . and at best the whole to be a mere breathless running the gauntlet"

I think we can dismiss the silly myth that Gettysburg was sort of a casual outing for the president and his remarks took no more effort and preparation than some inspired jottings on the back of an envelop while he passed the time (6 hours) while riding the train to Gettysburg. (or as that fictional middle American history student who wrote "Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address while travelling to Gettysburg on the back of an envelop.")

It is certain that Lincoln used his time in Washington to carefully prepared his remarks. He may have polished them after he arrived at Gettysburg but there was little time for any serious last minute composition or rewrite.

His remarks were to be "short, short. short," as he explained to Secretary of State Seward. As we know they were short. His speech was less than 300 words (272 to be exact). But he was going to leave nothing to chance because he intended to use the occasion to Reinvent American History.

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1776 1787

1863

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1863
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1776

"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."

The first line is the most important in the speech. It dates, in Lincoln's "political science," the country's founding not with the Constitution in 1787 but from the Declaration of Independence of 1776.

For Lincoln the Dec. of Ind. was the true title deed of American liberties. The nation's founding document and not the Constitution.

[Say something about Lincoln's view of the Constitution]

Lincoln had consistently defined the war's purpose as saving the Union. (Original and only war aim when the war broke out in 1861). Then by 1863 the Union had added a second war aim--the ending of slavery. At Gettysburg, Lincoln laying the ground work pointing toward a possible third war aim--equality for the blacks.

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Mississippi
not empty

Survival of the nation was not enough. The war had to stand for a higher purpose in the face of the obscene costs of the war just to prove that secession was unconstitutional. For Lincoln, the Gettysburg dead gave their lives to assure the continuation of national life, a national life dedicated to the proposition that all men were created equal

Lincoln reinvented America at Gettysburg in that he put the Declaration of Independence in a new light as a matter of founding law; the founding doctrine and the ideal expression of the American creed. He also slipped in the Declaration's central proposition, **equality**, as a principle of the Constitution and as a national commitment.

The Naysayers. The original intent boys who Borked the issue. Who argued along the lines of original intent of the Founding Fathers. That intent, they insist(ed), was not to make equality a national commitment.

And ther states' rights advocated who insisted that the founding doctrine was the Constitution. The basic law of the land that was ratified by the states.

By accepting the Gettysburg Address, its concept of a single people dedicated to a proposition, we have been changed. Becuase of it, we live in a different America.

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1763

D. Gettysburg Address 1. Spoken Text (?)

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

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final-resting place of those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. [Applause] The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. [Applause] It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. [Applause] It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us,—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to the cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion,—that we here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain [Applause], that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth. [Long continued applause]

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** Everett had a distinguished career. He was an Ivy League professor, president of Harvard, Governor of Massachusetts, a US senator, minister to England, and Secretary of State.

Everett, of course, was the featured speaker at the dedication of the National Cemetery. His address was expected to take about two hours. That was expected; it was standard during this Age of Exposition (recall the Lincoln/Douglas debates). His address was about 9 to 10,000 words long. Everett's own personal style was to commit his addresses to memory. He would ostentatiously lay the folder holding his text on the lectern so the audience could glimpse its robust nature. Then he would refrain from ever looking at during the course of his presentation. He was like a high-wire acrobat who waved off the safety net. It was probably great theatre.

Since the whole affair was a state activity Federal responsibility was not assumed. However, to round out the program the President, cabinet members, and other celebrities were invited to attend.

Lincoln was invited to come and deliver "a few appropriate remarks" if the press of duties would permit him to attend.

The Program for the Dedication

Music, by Birgfield's Band

Prayer, by Rev. T. H. Stockton, D.D.

Music, by the Marine Band

Oration, by Hon. Edward Everett

Music, Hymn composed by B.B. French, Esq.

**Dedicatory Remarks, President of the United States

Dirge, sung by Choir selected for the occasion

Benediction, by Rev. H. L. Baugher, D.D.

**Impression that Lincoln's remarks were intended to make the occasion formal (something like ribbon-cutting at modern "openings").