

Virginians' Responses to the Gettysburg Address, 1863-1963

Jared Elliott Peatman

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In
History

James I. Robertson, Jr., Chair
William C. Davis
Kathleen W. Jones
Neil L. Shumsky
Peter Wallenstein

April 14, 2006
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords:
Civil War
Virginia
Gettysburg Address
Abraham Lincoln
Memorial Day
Textbooks
Memory

Copyright 2006, Jared Peatman

Virginians' Responses to the Gettysburg Address, 1863-1963

Jared Peatman

ABSTRACT

By examining Virginia newspapers from the fall of 1863 this paper will bring to light what Civil War-era Southerners thought of the Gettysburg Address. This work is confined to Virginia not because that state is representative of the Confederacy, but because Southern reporting on the Address was wholly shaped by the Richmond papers. The first two chapters of this thesis reveal that Southern editors censored reporting on the Gettysburg Address because of Lincoln's affirmation that "all men are created equal."

The final chapter traces Virginians' responses to the Address up to 1963. Drawing on newspaper editorials, textbooks adopted by Virginia's schools, coverage of the major anniversaries of the Address in the state's newspapers, and accounts of Memorial Day celebrations, this chapter makes clear that Virginians largely ignored the Gettysburg Address in the twentieth-century while Northerners considered it an essential national document. In 1963, as in 1863, it was the assertions about equality that Southerners could not abide. This divergence of response, even in 1963, lays bare the myth of a completed sectional reconciliation and shared national identity.

Table of Contents

Introduction	Page 1
Chapter 1 “The final resting-place”: The Creation and Dedication of the Gettysburg Soldiers’ National Cemetery	Page 7
Chapter 2 “Lincoln acted the clown”: Virginians’ Responses to the Gettysburg Address, 1863	Page 28
Chapter 3 Virginians’ Twentieth-Century Responses to the Gettysburg Address	Page 47
Conclusion	Page 64
Bibliography	Page 68

Introduction

“The ignorance and coarseness of this man would repel and disgust any other people than the Yankees.”

Lynchburg Virginian
December 4, 1863

As Abraham Lincoln began to speak, his eyes surveyed the crowd. He may not have noticed a handful of Southerners interspersed with the 15,000 Northerners surrounding the speaker’s podium. They certainly noticed him. It was November 19, 1863, and the president was in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to help dedicate the new Soldiers’ National Cemetery.

A few days later one of those Southerners, a captain in the Confederate army who was wounded during the battle and was still in the town recuperating, wrote to his father. Lincoln’s words made such an impression on the young man that he now believed,

“we’ve got to stop fighting that man!” In his mind the Gettysburg Address was aimed at Southerners and was an attempt to bring the war to an end through oratory.¹

Another Confederate officer offered a similar complimentary appraisal of the Address. Confined to a hospital bed in Washington, D.C., at the time, Carter Hampton Blair was not at the dedication ceremonies in Gettysburg. The captain read the morning papers on November 20, however, and was taken with Lincoln’s short oration. Blair immediately formed the impression that, “not six times since history began has a speech been made which was its equal.” Thinking about the future, Blair noted, “It will live, that speech. Fifty years from now American school-boys will be learning it as part of their education.”²

Junius Remensnyder was a student at the Gettysburg Theological Seminary in 1863 and attended the dedication with many of his classmates. One of those classmates was from the South, and upon the completion of the Address, Remensnyder asked the man what he thought. “Mighty good, for Father Abe,” was the reply.³

* * *

The preceding stories are all works of fiction. The first was related by Alexander Woollcott in a 1941 pamphlet about the legacy of the Gettysburg Address entitled *For Us the Living* and has no supporting evidence. Furthermore, Confederate prisoners were removed from Gettysburg long before November 1863. The second account is from

¹ Alexander Woollcott, *For Us the Living* (Radio City, N.Y., 1941), 9.

² Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, “The Perfect Tribute,” *Scribner’s Magazine* XL (July 1906): 23.

³ William E. Barton, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: What He Intended to Say; What He Said; What He Was Reported to Have Said; What He Wished He Had Said* (New York, 1950), 176.

Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews' fictional *The Perfect Tribute*. There was no Carter Hampton Blair in the Confederate army. Lastly, in two other accounts of the dedication ceremonies Junius Remensnyder identified his companion as D. J. Burrell, a lifelong Northerner.⁴

Alexander Woollcott, Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews, and Junius Remensnyder may have invented a Southerner to comment on the Gettysburg Address simply because they could not find an authentic Southern response to the Address. While the dedication ceremonies of the Soldiers' National Cemetery were covered in Southern newspapers ranging from Richmond to New Orleans, oftentimes the editors of those papers excluded any mention of Lincoln or his address. Twentieth-century Southern responses to the Address continue this pattern. A survey of the Richmond newspapers in the century after the Address reveals only a handful of articles on the Gettysburg Address and even fewer that were complimentary to the speech. Perhaps more significantly, the articles appearing in these papers focus on the part of the speech that dealt with government, not the lines dealing with issues of equality and freedom. Even scarcer than White Virginians who commented on the Gettysburg Address are Black Virginians who did so. In fact, the only Black voice on the Gettysburg Address found in this entire period was from the 1913 *Richmond Planet*.

This dearth of Southern accounts is seen throughout the historical literature on the Gettysburg Address. In the 140 years since Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg there have been many excellent books on the Address; these include William Barton's *Lincoln at Gettysburg: What He Intended to Say; What He Said; What He Was Reported to Have*

⁴ It is possible that the writer of the book in which this account appeared, William E. Barton, decided to spice up his book by turning Burrell into a Southerner.

Said; What He Wished He Had Said, published in 1930, and Louis Warren's *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration: "A New Birth of Freedom,"* published in 1964, a year after the centennial of the Address. The capstone of this scholarship is Gary Wills' *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America*, a book that won the Pulitzer Prize in 1993. In addition to these works there have been over one hundred other attempts at telling the story of the Gettysburg Address.⁵ However, none of these books offer more than a cursory glance at Southern responses to the Address.

Books about the Gettysburg Address tend to follow one formula and use the same dozen or so accounts. While some historians have analyzed the comments of important people who attended the ceremonies, such as Ward Hill Lamon and Edward Everett, others have reviewed editorials in the national newspapers of the day and attempted to reconcile the contradictory reporting of party organs such as the Republican *Chicago Tribune* and Democratic *Chicago Times*. It seems as though most historians feel they must balance every positive account with a negative one. Other than a passing reference or two, Southern responses to the Gettysburg Address have been ignored.⁶

So why did Southerners ignore the Address? It surely has received plenty of attention in the North, and in the rest of the world. In 1863 newspapers across the country, even those opposed to Lincoln, reprinted the Address with extensive commentary. Philadelphia's only Democratic paper, *The Age*, reprinted the Address and noted that "the speech of the President is the best he has ever made." In 1922 a New Jersey boy caught vandalizing railroad property was ordered to memorize and recite the Address. In 1946 President Harry Truman declared November 19 "Dedication Day" and

⁵ Library of Congress, www.loc.gov, accessed March 1, 2006.

⁶ For a prime example of this see David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York, 1995), 465-66, or Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 2005), 586.

called on Americans to celebrate the day by reading and reciting the Address. In 1978 President Jimmy Carter, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin traveled to Gettysburg during a break in the Camp David Peace Accords. According to Rosalynn Carter, “Begin, an admirer of Abraham Lincoln, recited the Gettysburg address to us as we neared the famous battle site.”⁷ The Southern response to the Address is not, then, typical of the country as a whole, or of the world. From 1863 through 1963 White Southerners disdained and largely ignored the Gettysburg Address because Lincoln used the speech to declare his belief in the principle that “all men are created equal” and to call for “a new birth of freedom.”⁸ The Gettysburg Address was the eloquent version of and moral justification for the Emancipation Proclamation, and as such was not something that White Southerners were willing to discuss in 1863 or 1963.

The first chapter of this thesis is an overview of the creation and dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery. Southern accounts of the dedication of the cemetery were often inaccurate, making it necessary to establish a narrative of these events by which to judge the Southern accounts. Showing that Lincoln had an important role at Gettysburg and that those present were impressed by his speech proves that the Address had meaning and significance in 1863.

The second chapter examines responses to the Address in Virginia in 1863. Because of the dominance of the Richmond press, this thesis will not seek to explore responses to the Gettysburg Address throughout the Confederate states, but will instead confine itself to Virginia. The argument is not that Virginia was representative of the

⁷ *The Age* (Philadelphia), Nov. 21, 1863; *New York Times*, Mar. 12, 1922; *New York Times*, Oct. 13, 1946; Rosalynn Carter, *First Lady from Plains* (Boston, 1984), 253.

⁸ Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1953-1955), 7:19-21.

Confederacy, but that Virginia so dominated the rest of the Confederacy when it came to this particular event that there is little need to look beyond the borders of the state to discuss Southern responses to the Gettysburg Address. By comparing the coverage of the ceremonies and Lincoln's Address in Richmond's newspapers with the information available to those editors, it becomes clear that the editors intentionally shaped their stories of the ceremonies to leave out Lincoln's words about equality and freedom. The later parts of the chapter trace the spread of reporting on the dedication ceremonies throughout the rest of the Confederacy to show how Richmond controlled the reporting on the event.

The last chapter examines Virginians' responses to the Gettysburg Address in the twentieth-century. Newspapers, texts, and Memorial Day ceremonies make it clear that Virginians ignored the Gettysburg Address as much in 1963 as they had a century earlier. The reason was quite simple; in the 1960s White Virginians still retained their discomfort with Lincoln's declarations of racial equality.

Though the following thesis is an examination of a nineteenth-century speech it is also relevant to the twentieth century. This work uses the example of the Gettysburg Address to talk about communications during the Civil War, about historical memory, and about the politics of race, both in the nineteenth and twentieth-century. How Virginians felt about the Address expresses how they felt about issues of race and the position of the South in the post-Civil War union.

Chapter 1

“The final resting-place”: The Creation and Dedication of the Gettysburg Soldiers’ National Cemetery

“It is the desire that, after the Oration, You as Chief Executive of the Nation formally set apart these grounds to their Sacred use by a few appropriate remarks.”

David Wills to Abraham Lincoln
November 2, 1863

On June 26, 1863, the Civil War arrived in the small crossroads town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. A raiding column of two thousand Confederates fought a brief engagement with a local emergency militia unit on the outskirts of the town, routed the largely untrained volunteers, and occupied Gettysburg for the night. Apart from destroying a railroad bridge and burning some rolling stock, the Confederates did little damage. The next morning they left town, but five days later both the Confederate Army

of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac converged on the town. For three days Gettysburg was as close to hell on earth as one could get. At the end of those three days the Union army emerged victorious, but it had suffered 23,000 casualties, nearly as many as the 28,000 Confederate casualties. Between July 4 and 7, both armies pulled out of Gettysburg and carried their conflict back into the Old Dominion. Left behind were roughly 7,000 corpses, and many thousands more wounded who were not well enough to travel with their armies. The wounded (both Union and Confederate) were treated in various aid stations and eventually brought to Camp Letterman, a centralized hospital established east of Gettysburg.

Initially, the dead were buried where they fell, at first by their comrades before the armies retreated from Gettysburg and then by Union burial parties left behind to inter the fallen soldiers. The burials were far from ideal. In many cases the bodies were identified poorly, or not identified at all. The graves were frequently no more than two feet deep, and they were literally everywhere. Farmers who returned to their lands after the battle found their fields pockmarked by graves. Clearly, the bodies could not long remain in their hastily dug graves. On July 10, just a week after the battle, Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin visited Gettysburg and appointed local lawyer David Wills to act as his “special agent” to arrange for “removal of all Pennsylvanians killed in the late battles.”⁹

Wills’ efforts toward that end over the ensuing four and a half months are the subject of this chapter. In November of 1863 Virginia’s newspapers published several columns about the culmination of Wills’ efforts, the dedication of the cemetery on

⁹ *Revised Report of the Select Committee Relative to the Soldiers’ National Cemetery Together with the House of Representatives and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1865), 161-65.

November 19. Those reports indicated that Lincoln was a minor speaker at Gettysburg whose words were silly and meaningless. In the twentieth-century some Virginia newspapers clung to those myths, and added that the Address was not appreciated by those present at the ceremonies. This chapter disproves all three assertions. Lincoln was in fact the main speaker at Gettysburg, not Edward Everett. His words were infused with the lofty concepts of racial equality and freedom, and were far from meaningless. Lastly, those in attendance were greatly moved by Lincoln's speech, and immediately hailed it as a masterpiece.

Before the cemetery could be dedicated, it had to be created, and the man responsible for that task was David Wills. In 1863 the thirty-year-old Wills was one of Gettysburg's leading citizens. A graduate of Pennsylvania College, Wills studied law under the noted abolitionist and Congressman Thaddeus Stevens before being admitted to the bar in 1854. That same year Wills was selected to be the first superintendent of the Adams County Public Schools. His abolitionist leanings were well-noted.¹⁰

In those first few weeks after his appointment by the governor Wills attempted to locate and identify the remains of Pennsylvania's soldiers so that they could be returned to their families. As late as July 20, no plan existed to create a national cemetery in Gettysburg.¹¹ Between July 20 and July 24, Wills and the other state agents decided it preferable to create a cemetery in Gettysburg for all of the Union dead rather than return them to their home states. Theodore Dimon, one of the New York agents, later declared that the concept for a national cemetery in Gettysburg had been his, while Wills

¹⁰ H. C. Bradsby, *1886 History of Adams County, Pennsylvania: Containing History of Their Counties, Their Townships, Towns, Villages, Schools, Churches, Industries, etc.; Portraits of Early Settlers and Prominent Men; Biographies* (Gettysburg, Pa., 1992), 375-76.

¹¹ *Pennsylvania Daily Telegraph* (Harrisburg), July 20, 1863.

maintained that it was his idea. Who first imagined the cemetery will probably never be known for certain, but on July 24, 1863, Wills submitted a plan for the cemetery to Governor Curtin. Wills identified East Cemetery Hill, the key to the Union position during the battle, as the ideal location for the cemetery. Wills urged Curtin to act quickly as he “was afraid the owners of the land might be operated on by speculators.” Curtin accepted the plan, and Wills began trying to purchase the land.¹²

Wills’ fear that the land might be sold to others soon became a reality. On July 25 David McConaughy, a Republican lawyer and the superintendent of the Evergreen Cemetery in Gettysburg, told Curtin he had bought the land Wills was looking at and was attaching it to the town cemetery. McConaughy suggested that Curtin contract to bury the soldiers in that cemetery at a cost of \$5 per body. Additionally, McConaughy announced a plan to raise a monument in the cemetery and boldly asked the governor to make the first contribution.¹³

Over the next several weeks, numerous meetings were held and messages sent back and forth between Curtin, Wills, and McConaughy. On August 3 Wills notified Curtin that he and the other state agents agreed that the cemetery needed to “be independent of local influences and control” such as those McConaughy was trying to exert. Once he realized that Curtin had no intention of interring Pennsylvania’s dead in the local cemetery, McConaughy offered the land to the state at cost. On August 13 Wills notified Curtin that he and the other state agents had agreed that the expense of the cemetery would be shared by all the states according to their representation in Congress. This method probably appealed to the state agents, since it meant that western states

¹² Kathy Georg Harrison, *This Grand National Enterprise*, TMs, 7, 15, Gettysburg National Military Park Library, Gettysburg, Pa.

¹³ *Ibid*, 16, 20.

would share a large part of the financial burden for the cemetery even though they had a minimal number of soldiers in the battle. By mid-August Wills had purchased five parcels of land comprising seventeen acres atop Cemetery Hill and adjacent to the Evergreen Cemetery. Having procured a location for the cemetery, Wills called on William Saunders, a landscape gardener and rural architect from the Department of Agriculture, to design the cemetery. By arranging the graves in a semi-circle Saunders was able to take advantage of the oddly shaped parcels that Wills had cobbled together and also ensure that no state received a more privileged position than any other.¹⁴

While Saunders was designing the cemetery, Wills gave serious thought to the dedication ceremonies. In late August Governor Curtin implored Wills to see to “the proper consecration of the grounds.”¹⁵ On August 28 Curtin visited President Lincoln in Washington, D.C. Newspapers the following day noted that the two discussed draft quotas for Pennsylvania. However, if the same method was employed to ask Lincoln to participate in the ceremonies that would be used with Edward Everett in September, it is likely that Curtin broached the topic with Lincoln at this late-summer meeting. On November 2, Wills sent Lincoln a formal letter that asked Lincoln “to be present, and participate in these ceremonies.” Wills noted, “it is the desire that, after the Oration, You as Chief Executive of the Nation formally set apart these grounds to their Sacred use by a few appropriate remarks.” Between August 28 and November 2 this was the only meeting between Lincoln and anyone in a position to ask him to speak at Gettysburg, increasing the likelihood that the two men discussed the dedication ceremonies and Lincoln’s potential role in them. Lincoln never responded in writing to Wills’ letter of

¹⁴ Ibid, 16, 20, 31; *Revised Report*, 6, 9, 147.

¹⁵ Ibid, 167.

November 2, probably because he had already committed himself to attending the ceremonies. Furthermore, on October 13, nearly three weeks before the formal invitation, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported that David Wills had told its Baltimore correspondent that Lincoln was “expected to perform the consecrational service” at the cemetery’s dedication.¹⁶ If, as it appears likely, Abraham Lincoln was asked to participate in the dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery on August 28, 1863, he was asked nearly a month before Edward Everett, and makes a strong argument for considering Lincoln the main speaker at the ceremonies. Rarely during the war did Lincoln leave Washington, D.C., making his acceptance of the invitation to speak at Gettysburg somewhat extraordinary and underscoring the argument that Lincoln viewed this as an important opportunity.

There was little question as to who should give the dedicatory oration; seventy-year-old Edward Everett was the first and only choice. Everett had had a long career in government service. After graduating from Harvard University at the age of seventeen in 1811, Everett served five terms in the House of Representatives, won four terms as the governor of Massachusetts, was the Secretary of State in 1850, and served in the United States Senate for eighteen months. A staunch Whig and Unionist, Everett was the vice-presidential candidate on the Constitutional Union Party ticket that opposed Lincoln in 1860. Everett was invited to Gettysburg because he was the foremost orator of the day. He had delivered his oration on George Washington 134 times, earning more than \$69,000 for the Mount Vernon Memorial Committee. All told, Everett had received over

¹⁶ The only other person who may have been in a position to speak with Lincoln about participating in the dedication ceremonies was Massachusetts Governor John Andrew. Andrew visited Lincoln at the White House on September 14, 1863. It is not known what they discussed. Earl Schenck Miers, ed., *Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology, 1809-1865* (Washington, 1960), 3:204, 207; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Oct. 13, 1863.

\$100,000 in royalties for his speeches. Everett combined oratorical excellence with political insight, making him an ideal choice to deliver the dedicatory address.¹⁷

On September 23, F. W. Lincoln, the mayor of Boston, visited Everett and privately inquired whether he would be willing to prepare and deliver an oration at the dedication of the cemetery. Everett indicated his acceptance and that same day David Wills sent a formal invitation. In response to Wills' letter Everett replied that he would be happy to be a part of the ceremonies but could not possibly prepare an appropriate address by October 23, suggesting instead that he could be ready by November 19. Wills agreed to change the date of the dedication.¹⁸

The days leading up to the dedication at Gettysburg were busy with preparations. On October 15, Wills requested proposals to contract for the removal of the bodies from the battlefield, and Frederick W. Biesecker won the contract with a bid of \$1.59 per body. Wills employed Samuel Weaver to oversee and record the process. The task of exhuming the remains from the battlefield and reburying them in the cemetery began on October 27. Originally Wills had planned to move the bodies to the cemetery after the dedication ceremonies, but since Everett moved the date back by nearly four weeks, the work had already begun before the dedication ceremonies in mid-November.¹⁹

As the burials began, the town prepared for visitors. David Wills invited the key figures to stay at his house, and soon was preparing for more than thirty houseguests. Henry Sweney, a Gettysburg resident living on the town's main street, noted, "Nothing scarcely could be heard but the loud snort of the iron horse and the rumble of the long

¹⁷ Louis A. Warren, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration* (Fort Wayne, Ind., 1964), 93-4; _____, *Edward Everett at Gettysburg* (Boston, 1963), 1.

¹⁸ *Revised Report*, 184; *Edward Everett*, 1.

¹⁹ *Revised Report*, 8, 14-5.

and heavy trains . . . every building public or private was filled and for miles around town the houses were filled with the congregated throng.” The little town of Gettysburg, with a population of only 2,400, was overflowing with visitors. “All the rooms in the hotels were engaged several weeks ahead but our old town roused up to action . . . Churches, public schools, town halls, all the private dwellings, barns, etc. were thrown open to receive them,” Sweney wrote.²⁰

Back in Washington, Lincoln worked through the morning of November 18 before boarding the train for Gettysburg at noon. Accompanying the President were several of his cabinet members, including Secretary of State William Seward, Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, and Secretary of the Interior Caleb Smith, as well as secretaries John Nicolay and John Hay, Charlotte Everett Wise (the daughter of Edward Everett), and several lower ranking public officials and military personnel. The special train carried the party from Washington to Baltimore, switched tracks, and then ran up to Hanover Junction. There the train again switched tracks before continuing on to Gettysburg, reaching the town at about 6:00 p.m. It was an uneventful trip.²¹

Lincoln was met by a mob eager to get a glimpse of the chief executive. David Wills, Edward Everett, and a receiving committee guided the President one block to Wills’ house. Lincoln had been in the house for just a few moments when citizens started calling for a speech. After several minutes Lincoln appeared, briefly acknowledged their presence, and ducked back inside the house. Dinner was on the table, and it would have been rude to keep the hosts and other guests waiting. The crowd was not discouraged,

²⁰ Henry Sweney to Andrew Sweney, November 29, 1863, Gettysburg National Military Park Library, Gettysburg, Pa.

²¹ Warren, *Lincoln’s Gettysburg Declaration*, 56.

and during dinner even more well-wishers congregated on the square.²² J. Howard Wert, a Gettysburg citizen at the time (and a future historian of the era) remembered, “The square upon which the [Wills] house fronted was one dense mass of people eagerly awaiting the appearance of Mr. Lincoln. And when he did appear, never did mortal have a more enthusiastic greeting.”²³ After the crowd quieted, Lincoln spoke a few words:

I appear before you, fellow-citizens, merely to thank you for this compliment. The inference is a very fair one that you would hear me for a little while at least, were I to commence to make a speech. I do not appear before you for the purpose of doing so, and for several very substantial reasons. The most substantial of these is that I have no speech to make. [Laughter.] In my position it is somewhat important that I should not say any foolish things.

A VOICE – If you can help it.

Mr. LINCOLN – It very often happens that the only way to help it is to say nothing at all. [Laughter.] Believing this is my present condition this evening, I must beg of you to excuse me from addressing you further.

This short little speech is called “The First Gettysburg Address” by some historians, but in truth it was nothing more than some off-the-cuff remarks. Lincoln had suffered through several embarrassing situations in the early years of his presidency after making extemporaneous remarks. He was not going to make a fool of himself the night before the dedication ceremonies. One Gettysburg newspaper, the *Adams Sentinel*, reported favorably on the remarks, noting that Lincoln “made but a few remarks, but they were characteristic of the pure and honest President.”²⁴

After listening to Lincoln, the crowd went next door to where Secretary of State William Seward was staying, and called for the statesman to speak a few words. Seward leaped at the chance. According to Henry Jacobs, a student at the local college, he

²² Ibid, 65.

²³ J. Howard Wert, “Lincoln at Gettysburg,” *The Patriot* (Harrisburg, Pa.), Feb. 12, 1909.

²⁴ *New York Herald*, Nov. 20, 1863; Barton, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, 59-61; *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg, Pa.), Nov. 24, 1863.

managed to offend the townspeople. “By some strange fatuity [Seward] seemed to take it for granted that those whom he addressed had been southern sympathizers. He expressed his gratitude that ‘You are willing to hear me at last.’” After hearing Seward’s speech that night and the Gettysburg Address the following day, Jacobs concluded, “There is, we think, a trace of [Seward’s] having been apprised of what Mr. Lincoln was to say the next day . . .”²⁵

After leaving the Secretary of State, the crowd sought out other officials and listened to their thoughts. While hundreds of people made their rounds, Lincoln remained at the Wills House. After passing time in the parlor, Lincoln went to his room, accompanied by William Johnston, his African-American servant. According to Wills:

Between nine and ten o’clock the President sent his servant to request me to come to his room. I went and found him with paper prepared to write, and he said that he had just seated himself to put upon paper a few thoughts for to-morrows exercises, and had sent for me to ascertain what part he was to take in them, and what was expected of him. After a full talk on the subject I left him.

An hour later Lincoln left his room and made his way next door to talk with Seward about what he had written. Wills stated, “The next day I sat by him on the platform when he delivered his address, which has become immortal, and he read it from the same paper on which I had seen him writing it the night before.”²⁶

For years controversy has surrounded the question of when Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address. Did he compose it in Washington before November 18, on the train on November 18, at the Wills house on the night of November 18, or did he deliver it extemporaneously? The current theory is that Lincoln wrote a rough draft in

²⁵ Henry Eyster Jacobs, *Lincoln’s Gettysburg World-Message* (Philadelphia, 1919), 62. In fact both the borough of Gettysburg and Adams County gave more votes to Lincoln than any other candidate in 1860, and again in 1864.

²⁶ David Wills to Louisa A. W. Russell, March 1893, reprinted in *Gettysburg Times* (Gettysburg, Pa.), Feb. 12, 1941.

Washington, put the finishing touches on it at the Wills house, and added a few words while he was actually giving the Address. Jacobs' statement lends support to this timeframe. Ward Hill Lamon, a close friend of Lincoln, noted:

When Mr. Lincoln had a speech to write, which happened very often, he would put down each thought, as it struck him, on a small strip of paper, and, having accumulated a number of these, generally carried them in his hat or his pockets until he had the whole speech composed in this odd way, when he would sit down at his table, connect the fragments, and then write out the whole speech on consecutive sheets.²⁷

The issue is an important one since the amount of time that Lincoln spent preparing his remarks gives us a sense of the importance with which he rated the occasion.

The nineteenth of November was a beautiful day in Gettysburg, with a blue sky and a thermometer reading of fifty-two degrees. At 7:00 a.m. artillery pieces on Cemetery Hill fired a salvo and inaugurated a day of festivities. Already many visitors were out on the battlefield touring and looking for mementos. The official procession to the cemetery lined up at 9:00 a.m. President Lincoln made his appearance on the square. Gettysburgian William Storrick, eight years old at the time, remembered the scene well. The square was "rife" with people who were "awed by the appearance of the great tall man," he wrote seventy-five years later. "We and others shook hands with him and then Mr. Lincoln walked to the curb and mounted a horse . . ." ²⁸

The horse, one observer remembered, was tiny, creating a situation that "was next to the humorous, and no one seemed more conscious of it" than Lincoln. Daniel Skelly, a local boy who ran next to Lincoln as the procession made its way to the cemetery, believed that "Mr. Lincoln was the most peculiar-looking figure on horseback I had ever seen . . . but he was perfectly at ease." Directly behind Lincoln was a contingent of

²⁷ Ward Hill Lamon, *Life of Abraham Lincoln* (Boston, 1872), 2:471.

²⁸ Jacobs, *Lincoln's Gettysburg World-Message*, 63; Warren, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration*, 74; Henry Sweney to Andrew Sweney, Nov. 29, 1863; *Gettysburg Times* (Gettysburg, Pa.), Nov. 20, 1938.

college and seminary students, including many men who would eventually write down recollections of that day.²⁹

The program of events called for music, a prayer, more music, Edward Everett's oration, more music, and then the dedicatory remarks of President Lincoln. Reverend Thomas H. Stockton, chaplain of the House of Representatives, began the ceremonies by offering a particularly moving prayer. According to the *Adams Sentinel*, "The President evidently felt deeply, and with the venerable statesman and patriot, Hon. Edward Everett, who was by his side, seemed not ashamed to let their sympathetic tears be seen."³⁰ After Stockton's prayer, Edward Everett rose. His speech opened with a call for patience:

Standing beneath this serene sky, overlooking these broad fields now reposing from the labors of the waning year, the mighty Alleghenies dimly towering before us, the graves of our brethren beneath our feet, it is with hesitation that I raise my poor voice to break the eloquent silence of God and Nature. But the duty to which you have called me must be performed; - grant me, I pray you, your indulgence and your sympathy.

For the next hour and fifty-seven minutes Everett treated the crowd to a wonderful oration. Beginning with an explanation of funerals in ancient Athens, Everett then discussed the causes of the war, the first two years of the struggle, the three days at Gettysburg, and finally offered some thoughts as to the meaning of the great events. Everett's oration was exactly what the state officials had envisioned when they asked him to speak. Around 2:00 p.m. Everett finished his oration. Lincoln stood immediately, grasping Everett's hand and exclaiming, "I am grateful to you."³¹

²⁹ *The Compiler* (Gettysburg, Pa.), Nov. 21, 1914; Daniel Skelly, *A Boy's Experiences During the Battles of Gettysburg* (Gettysburg, Pa., 1932), 26-7.

³⁰ *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg, Pa.), November 24, 1863.

³¹ Gary Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America* (New York, 1992), 213; Warren, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration*, 99.

Those present enjoyed Everett's speech, though many of them felt it to be too long for the occasion. Henry Jacobs wrote that "the [length], however, would have been pardoned, and the speech have been commended as being what its author intended, viz. the crowning effort of his life, if President Lincoln had not been there." After a brief musical selection, Ward Hill Lamon, chief marshal for the event and a personal friend of Lincoln, rose and announced "The President of the United States!"³²

Charles Baum later remembered that Lincoln rose clutching a piece of paper in his hand. Baum, who was only nine years old and suffering from an attention span diminished by Everett's marathon of an oration, thought "now we are in for it again."³³ An older and more perceptive Henry Sweney sensed "the dreadful responsibility that this nation and this wicked rebellion has cast upon him, has had its marked effect, and that he feels the terrible responsibility that rests upon him." The dedication ceremonies gave Lincoln a chance to share that burden of the war with the nation, and he took full advantage of it.³⁴

Lincoln's law partner, William Herndon, writing about the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, penned a vivid description of Lincoln's manner of speaking:

When he began speaking, his voice was shrill, piping, and unpleasant. His manner, his attitude, his dark, yellow face, wrinkled and dry, his oddity of pose, his different movements – everything seemed to be against him, but only for a short time . . . For a few moments he displayed the combination of awkwardness, sensitiveness, and diffidence. As he proceeded he became somewhat animated, and to keep in harmony with his growing warmth his hands relaxed their grasp and fell to his side . . . He did not gesticulate as much with his hands as with his head. He used the latter frequently, throwing it with him this way and that.³⁵

³² Henry E. Horn, ed., *Memoirs of Henry Eyster Jacobs* (Gettysburg, Pa., 1974), 63.

³³ Charles Baum, *President Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg, Pa., November 19th, 1863*, Gettysburg College Library, Gettysburg, Pa.

³⁴ *Ibid*; Henry Sweney to Andrew Sweney, Nov. 29, 1863.

³⁵ William Herndon, *Herndon's Life of Lincoln, The History and Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 1965), 328.

The address at Gettysburg followed this pattern. In a high-pitched, squeaky voice, Lincoln began to speak.

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 that 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; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom; and that Governments of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from this earth. [Long-continued applause].³⁶

As Lincoln spoke, Associated Press reported Joseph Gilbert recorded the Address in shorthand. However, Gilbert was so taken with the speech that soon he stopped writing and just listened. The frequent breaks for applause in Gilbert's account indicate that the audience was similarly impressed.³⁷

Lincoln's address had a clear purpose. On January 1, 1863, Lincoln had issued the Emancipation Proclamation, ending slavery in the areas under Confederate control. Emancipation was identified as a necessary war measure and the document was constructed to withstand legal challenges. At Gettysburg Lincoln took the opportunity to put moral force and eloquence behind the legalistic language of the Emancipation Proclamation. After opening by asserting that the nation's founders were correct in

³⁶ Basler, *Collected Works*, 7:19-21.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 19-21.

declaring “all men are created equal,” Lincoln closed by calling for “a new birth of freedom.” In the middle of a war whose direction consumed all of his waking minutes, Lincoln took nearly two days to travel to Gettysburg and speak those few words. In 1864 Lincoln wrote, “If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel.” Gettysburg allowed Lincoln the opportunity to infuse emancipation with that sentiment.³⁸

The Address was a marked contrast to the two-hour oration that had preceded it, and it was not at all what the people were expecting. No one knew exactly what Lincoln would say, or for how long he would speak, but his theme and brevity left everyone in shock. This was, after all, the man who had delivered an Address more than 15,000 words long during the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Furthermore, after hearing a two hour narrative of the battle it must have been shocking to hear a speech containing so much philosophy and morality. Many historians have argued that the audience did not applaud when Lincoln finished his speech. However, the recollections recorded by the citizens of Gettysburg overwhelmingly indicate that there was applause. Gettysburg resident T. C. Billheimer simply noted the Address was met with applause, but Henry Jacobs and nine-year-old Charles Baum both noted the applause was “hearty.” Gettysburgian H. C.

Holloway noted that the applause was delayed, but for a good reason:

The speaker had, as we thought, but barely commenced when he stopped. That clear, ringing voice ceased before we were ready for it. There was a pause between the closing of the address and the applause because the people expected more; but when it was apparent that the address was really concluded, the applause was most hearty . . .³⁹

Charles Baum, agreed, stating, “To my great surprise, after a few sentences, he completed his remarks.” Even those who argued that there was no applause gave the seriousness of

³⁸ Ibid, 281.

³⁹*The Compiler* (Gettysburg, Pa.), Nov. 21, 1914.

the occasion as the reason and not any dissatisfaction with the oration. Baum perhaps best summarized the reaction of the crowd when he noted that the Address was met with “profound silence, followed by hearty applause.”⁴⁰

After the ceremony, Gilbert looked at Lincoln’s original manuscript and completed his transcription of the Address. There are actually five copies of the Gettysburg Address in the hand of Abraham Lincoln. The last one, known as the Bliss copy, is currently accepted as the most accurate. However, for the purposes of this paper, what Lincoln is reported to have said is most important. As it was Gilbert’s report that was the most widely circulated at the time, it is his transcription of the Gettysburg Address that is quoted above.⁴¹

After a dirge and closing prayer, the crowd dispersed. Lincoln retired to the Wills house for a late lunch. Shortly thereafter, the President made an appearance on the square to shake hands with the many well wishers. With the train back to Washington not scheduled to leave for a few more hours, Lincoln had one special request. He wanted to meet John Burns, the citizen who had taken up arms and joined the Union forces during the July 1 fighting. A committee quickly brought Burns to the Wills residence. After talking with the old man for a short while, Lincoln, Seward, and Burns walked two blocks to the Presbyterian Church to listen to an address by Governor-elect Charles Anderson of Ohio. The journey to the church was, according to T. C. Billheimer, a most humorous one. “I laughed and laughed aloud. Lincoln took enormous strides and Mr. Burns could not take strides like that. He could not keep step with the President.”⁴²

Attending the church service with President Lincoln was the most cherished moment of

⁴⁰ Baum, *President Lincoln’s Speech*.

⁴¹ Basler, *Collected Works*, 7:19-21.

⁴² *The Compiler* (Gettysburg, Pa.), Nov. 21, 1914.

John Burns's life, but apparently not cherished enough to keep the old man awake, for within minutes he fell sound asleep next to President Lincoln. Before Anderson's address was finished, Lincoln and his party arose and left. As Lincoln returned to Washington the reporters at Gettysburg scrambled to find a telegraph office from which to send their stories to their employers.⁴³

Just three decades earlier the press had entered a new era. In an attempt to speed the transmission of news, a service using carrier pigeons connected London and Paris in 1835, greatly reducing the time required for news to travel between those cities. That same year, Samuel Morse invented the famous code that would eventually transmit news rapidly over telegraphic wires. Also in 1835, James Gordon Bennett pioneered the first modern newspaper: the *New York Herald*. Before Bennett, the news covered by the press was largely parochial. The *New York Herald* editor began the trend of gathering news from far and wide, even assigning reporters to cover the city of Washington, D.C. In 1844 the telegraph was used to successfully transmit a message from Baltimore to Washington, D.C., making it easier for reporters to provide stories for distant papers. Within two years the telegraph connected Richmond and Washington, D.C.⁴⁴

Although the telegraph was a tremendous tool, it was prohibitively expensive to transmit messages over the lines. To send a 2,000-word column from Washington to New York cost about \$100, or about \$450 from New Orleans to New York. In order to combat these high costs, several New York newspapers formed the New York Associated Press in 1849, which was reorganized in 1856 as the General News Association of the

⁴³ *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg, Pa.), Nov. 24, 1863; Sara McCullough interviews with local citizens in 1925, Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pa.

⁴⁴ Brayton Harris, *Blue & Gray in Black & White: Newspapers in the Civil War* (Washington, 1999), 3-6; James Melvin Lee, *History of American Journalism* (Boston, 1923), 196; Lester J. Cappon, *Virginia Newspapers: 1821-1935: A Bibliography with Historical Introduction and Notes* (New York, 1936), 9.

City of New York. Subscribers were allowed to use of any of the AP reports in their papers as long as they paid part of the telegraph fees, thereby dividing the expense among many papers and making the service affordable for all. By 1860, some 50,000 miles of telegraph wires existed in the United States. In the South, the telegraph connected Richmond, Virginia, with Raleigh, North Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina, Macon, Georgia, and Montgomery and Mobile Alabama. Another line extended from Louisville, Kentucky, to New Orleans, Louisiana.⁴⁵ The telegraph was not without its opponents, however. President James Buchanan was worried that the telegraph would increase the instances of inaccurate reporting, with disastrous consequences: telegrams “are short and spicy, and can easily be inserted in the country newspapers. In the city journals they can be contradicted the next day,” a possibility that was not, Buchanan indicated, likely to occur in the country weeklies. The reporting of the Gettysburg Address in 1863 would support Buchanan’s assertion.⁴⁶

By 1860 2,500 newspapermen worked in the United States, a third for Southern papers. There were 387 daily newspapers (eighty in the South) that printed 1.5 million copies per day. At that rate, approximately 5 percent of the nation subscribed to a paper. An even larger percentage read the papers of friends or family members who subscribed. The paper chosen by each family was usually determined by political affiliations, as 80 percent of the papers were political in nature. These political affiliations were an economic necessity for many newspapers. Because subscription prices were so low,

⁴⁵ Ford Risely, “The Confederate Press Association: Cooperative News Reporting on the War,” in *Civil War History* 47 (2001): 224.

⁴⁶ Harris, *Blue & Gray*, 6-8; Lee, *American Journalism*, 275-76.

proprietors could only make money by winning government contracts to print legislative journals and state laws – contracts distributed to loyal party members as political pork.⁴⁷

The account of the dedication ceremonies written by Joseph Gilbert appeared in the *New York Herald* on November 20. The *Herald* had the largest circulation of any paper in North America with a daily subscription rate of 75,000, about half again that of the *London Times* and more than four times that of the *Richmond Dispatch*. What makes the *Herald* significant is that Richmond papers frequently excerpted its stories.

Therefore, to understand the reports of the dedication ceremonies that appeared in Richmond’s newspapers, it is essential to know how the event appeared in the *Herald*.⁴⁸

On November 20, 1863, the *Herald* covered the dedication ceremonies on pages three through five before breaking and finishing the coverage on page ten. A large map on the third page was entitled “The American Necropolis,” with the ensuing column entitled “The National Necropolis.” That column included the following subheads:

THE NATIONAL NECROPOLIS

Our Heroic Dead at Gettysburg.

Consecration of a National Cemetery for the Union Soldiers who Fell There.

Arrival of the President and Cabinet.

Speeches by Mr. Lincoln, Mr. Seward and Gov. Seymour.

SOLEMN AND IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY

Imposing Civil and Military Procession.

THE CROWDS OF THE BATTLE FIELD.

ORATION BY EDWARD EVERETT.

History of the Three Days’ Fighting at Gettysburg.

⁴⁷ Harris, *Blue & Gray*, 9, 15; Richard A. Schwarzlose, *Newspapers: A Reference Guide* (New York, 1987), xxv.

⁴⁸ Lee, *American Journalism*, 284.

Upon Whom the Responsibility of the War Rests.

The Question of the Restoration of Concord Between the North and the South,

&c., &c., &c.,

On page four the *Herald* reported Lincoln's brief remarks of November 18 under the headline, "SERENADE TO THE PRESIDENT – HIS SPEECH." An account of the procession to the ceremony followed this brief report. Six columns contained the text of "MR. EVERETT'S ORATION." With the conclusion of Everett's speech, the paper announced that coverage of the events continued on page ten. Not until the tenth page did President Lincoln's remarks of November 19 appear, accurately and with breaks for applause. However, the editor made no comment on Lincoln's speech.⁴⁹

Papers throughout the North hailed the speech as a masterpiece. In Philadelphia, the *Evening Bulletin* predicted that those who read Lincoln's speech would not "do it without a moistening of the eye and swelling of the heart." *The Press* declared Lincoln's speech to be "immortal." Even the city's lone Democratic paper, *The Age*, declared the speech to be "the best [Lincoln] has ever made." The *Detroit Advertiser & Tribune* suggested, "He who wants to take in the very spirit of the day, catch the unstudied pathos that animates a sincere but simple-minded man, will turn from the stately periods of the professed orator to the brief speech of the President." The *Providence Journal* asked, "Could the most elaborate, splendid oration be more beautiful, more touching, more inspiring, than those thrilling words of the President?"⁵⁰

Within a week Southern editors would argue that Lincoln was a minor player at the dedication ceremonies, that his words were silly remarks with no significance, and

⁴⁹ *New York Herald*, Nov. 20, 1863.

⁵⁰ George, "Philadelphia," 391, 394, 397; Harold Holzer, "'Thrilling Words' or 'Silly Remarks': What the Press Said About the Gettysburg Address," *Lincoln Herald* 90 (Winter 1998): 144-45.

that not even Northerners were impressed by his speech. They were wrong on all three accounts. As evidenced by his early invitation to speak at the dedication, Lincoln was the main speaker at Gettysburg. His oration was far from silly, and in fact proved that his heart as well as his head was behind the Emancipation Proclamation, and even went a step further by declaring equality among all men. Lastly, those present at the Address immediately recognized and proclaimed the greatness of the speech. Having established what happened in Gettysburg, now we can examine how the Southern press portrayed the day.

Chapter 2

“Lincoln acted the clown”: Virginians’ Reponses to the Gettysburg Address, 1863

“President Pericles, or rather Abe, made the dedicatory speech; but had to limit his observations within small compass, lest he should tell some funny story over the graves of the Immortals.”

Richmond Enquirer
November 27, 1863

By the fall of 1863, Richmond, Virginia, was the heart and soul of the Confederacy. Richmond housed the Confederate government, was the home to the South’s most famous and successful army, and was economically the most important city in the eleven seceded states. During the war Richmond’s population swelled from 37,000 in 1860 to over 100,000 at the peak of the war. Throughout the war the newspapers of the city dominated those of the Confederacy, particularly when it came to reporting Northern events. However, in the fall of 1863 the Richmond press failed their brethren

by inaccurately reporting the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. While early reports of the event confused Lincoln's role at Gettysburg, later editorials omitted the words that Lincoln spoke. An analysis of what the editors said, how they covered Lincoln's other major speeches, and the individual biographies of the editors and papers, indicates that the Richmond press disdained the Gettysburg Address because of his statements on equality and freedom. Examining the spread of reporting about the dedication ceremonies throughout the South shows that the rest of the Confederate press relied almost totally on the coverage in the Richmond papers, allowing those five editors to shape the reporting on the event throughout the entire region.

On November 24, 1863, the *Richmond Dispatch*, *Richmond Examiner*, *Richmond Sentinel*, and *Richmond Whig* all carried the exact same account of the ceremonies at Gettysburg.

Several columns of the *Herald* are occupied with a description of the "National Necropolis," or cemetery at Gettysburg. Lincoln, Seward, several foreign ministers, and other dignitaries were present. Lincoln was serenaded the night preceding the day on which the ceremony took place. He declined to make a speech on the ground that "in his position it was somewhat important that he should not say foolish things." A voice – "If you can help it." Lincoln – "It very often happens that the only way to help it is to say nothing at all." [Laughter.]

Seward was also serenaded and responded in an anti-slavery speech. He thanked God for the hope that when slavery is abolished the country will be again united.

The notorious Forney was also serenaded. In his speech he declared that he was in favor of Lincoln's election in 1860, but did not want it to appear so, that he might the better accomplish the breaking up of the Democracy.

Everett's oration is published at length in the *Herald*, occupying six columns of small type. He predicted the reconstruction of the Union.⁵¹

⁵¹ This account is from the November 24, 1863, editions of the *Richmond Examiner*, *Richmond Sentinel* and *Richmond Whig*. The *Richmond Dispatch* carried the exact same account with one exception; it noted the year as 1864. The only Richmond daily that did not carry the account was the *Richmond Enquirer*.

The coverage of that event was part of a much longer column of general news from the North. It is difficult to know exactly where this account originated, but the author may have been John Graeme, Jr., the Richmond agent of the Confederate Press Association.

In 1860 the major Southern newspapers belonged to the Associated Press, but the inauguration of war, and the June 1, 1861, suspension of telegraphic service between Richmond and Washington, D.C., ended that affiliation. Within a short-time the Southern Associated Press came into existence. Yet, a combination of high costs and poor reports led to its demise.

In the fall of 1862 the Richmond papers formed the Richmond Press Association. This organization provided reporting that was cheaper but little if any better than that of the Southern Associated Press. Finally, in the early spring of 1863, several major Southern daily newspapers formed the Press Association of the Confederate States of America (also known as the Confederate Press Association). By May, 1863, forty-four of the Confederacy's papers belonged, including all the Richmond newspapers except the *Sentinel*. Because of the importance of Richmond, the Confederate Press Association hired John Graeme, Jr., to be their Richmond agent to facilitate the gathering of news in the Confederacy's most important city. The article in the Richmond papers on November 24 was clearly a product of the Confederate Press Association, making it likely that it was Graeme who wrote the piece.⁵²

But where did Graeme get his story? One of the main ways Richmond newspapers received information from the North was through the Exchange Bureau. When prisoners of war were exchanged, newspapers were also traded. Through this system, Richmond editors were able to procure Northern papers. According to the

⁵² Risely, "Confederate Press Association," 224-28; Andrews, *South Reports*, 44, 56-57.

Richmond Dispatch of November 24, 1863, the accounts of the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery in the Richmond papers that day were taken from "Northern papers . . . through the courtesy of the officers of the Exchange Bureau." Assuming the Northern papers arrived by the night of November 23 in order to be included in the Richmond papers of November 24, Richmond editors received Northern newspapers within two days of their publication. This was astonishingly fast considering that the papers had to pass through enemy lines to reach Richmond. This exchange also worked in the opposite direction, and the *New York Times* and *Chicago Times* in particular frequently reprinted items from the *Richmond Examiner*.⁵³

Graeme's account was less than 200 words in length and spent all but two sentences discussing the events that occurred on the night of November 18. Nearly all of the information discussed in this account came directly from the subheads at the top of the *New York Herald's* coverage. The serenade of President Lincoln outside of the Wills house appeared, along with a line or two of his utterances that night. However, no comment was made on his role in the ceremonies the next day. The only mention of the November 19 ceremonies was a statement that Everett "predicted the reconstruction of the Union."

It is difficult to escape the impression that Graeme did no more than skim the report in the *New York Herald*, relied mainly on the subheads, and did not read the tenth page which discussed Abraham Lincoln's part in the ceremonies.⁵⁴ Perhaps the sentence

⁵³ For example, the *Chicago Times* of December 8, 1863, reprinted the *Richmond Examiner's* November 28, 1863, article on the dedication ceremonies.

⁵⁴ Graeme is not the only person to have missed the part of the *New York Herald* containing Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. In his 1963 work on the Gettysburg Address, *The Beacon that Was Lit at Gettysburg: Words that Live and Grow*, Herman Blum said that the *Herald* "mentioned the address as the 'dedicatory remarks of the President,' without reporting what he said." (Page 10).

that Everett's oration consumed "six columns of small type" in the *New York Herald* explains how the writer missed the small column on Lincoln. The editor of the *Richmond Dispatch* commented that the news from the North, including Graeme's account, was "not of much interest."⁵⁵

The *Richmond Examiner* of November 25, 1863, offered some of the most extensive reporting of the events accompanying the dedication ceremonies. Noting an abundance of coverage in the "Yankee papers," the *Examiner* promised "to give only the portion of their accounts likely to interest our readers."⁵⁶

The *Examiner's* article on the ceremonies was a reflection of its editor, John Moncure Daniel. On October 24, 1825, Daniel was born in Stafford County, Virginia. After stints reading the law in Fredericksburg and serving as a librarian in Richmond, Daniel found his true calling as a journalist, first for *The Southern Planter* and then for the *Richmond Examiner*. He was a polarizing figure; and as a result of his staunchly Democratic editorials, Daniel fought several duels before and during the war.⁵⁷

In 1853 Daniel became minister to the court of Victor Emmanuel in Turin, Italy. While in Turin, Daniel was sued for libel by a New Yorker on the basis of an editorial he had written before leaving Richmond. Daniel lost the case and was forced to pay several thousand dollars in damages. The outcome of the trial unfavorably disposed Daniel to the North and its citizens, a prejudice that frequently appeared in his writings. The Virginian returned home at the beginning of the Civil War and cast his lot with his native state. He joined the Confederate army and was eventually assigned to General A. P.

⁵⁵ *Richmond Dispatch*, Nov. 24, 1863.

⁵⁶ *Richmond Examiner*, Nov. 25, 1863.

⁵⁷ Lyon Gardiner Tyler, "John Moncure Daniel," *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* (New York, 1915) 3:153.

Hill's staff, where he served until wounded during the Seven Days battles in June 1862. His injury made it impossible for Daniel to continue to serve in the field, and he returned to the editors' desk at the *Richmond Examiner*, a paper he owned. Daniel was an unorthodox editor in that he wrote few of the editorials that appeared in the *Examiner*. He preferred to let others compose the piece and then edited them so heavily that at times they were unrecognizable to their authors. Nothing made it into the *Examiner* that Daniel did not approve. Daniel was a known racist and supporter of slavery, leaving little doubt that he would have found Lincoln's assertion in the Gettysburg Address that "all men are created equal" repugnant and disdained the call for a "new birth of freedom."⁵⁸

Daniel's biases manifested themselves in his editorial on the Gettysburg Address. The first part of the editorial was a straightforward recounting, in remarkable detail, of the parade on the morning of November 19. The *Examiner* noted that Dr. Thomas Stockton's prayer, the oration by Edward Everett, and the address of Lincoln had already been reported. In fact nowhere in prior editions of any Richmond newspapers did these accounts appear. In contrast to the lack of coverage of these three central speeches is the full reprinting of a dirge that was sung at the conclusion of Lincoln's remarks and a verbatim recounting of the benediction that concluded the ceremonies. Following a description of the cemetery was "LINCOLN'S RECEPTION AT GETTYSBURG – HE MAKES A SPEECH." Yet rather than the Gettysburg Address, the subject of this section was Lincoln's few remarks of November 18. While complimenting the crowd that serenaded Lincoln for their respect and orderliness, Daniel chided Lincoln for behaving in a "humorous manner" despite the obvious "solemnity and reverence" that such a place

⁵⁸ Ibid; Andrews, *South Reports*, 29-30; Peter Bridges, *Pen of Fire: John Moncure Daniel* (Kent, Oh., 2002), 32, 100.

and occasion deserved. Three days later, the *Examiner* condemned the ceremonies as “the substitution of glittering foil and worthless paste for real brilliants [sic] and pure gold.” In Daniel’s opinion, Lincoln was fool’s gold. The paper added, “The Yankees have an invincible conviction that they are the successors of the Romans in empire, and of the Athenians in genius.” Edward Everett “‘took down his THUCYDIDES,’ and fancied himself a PERICLES . . . the play was strictly classic.” Classic, at least, until Lincoln took the stage.

A vein of comedy was permitted to mingle with the deep pathos of the piece. This singular novelty, and the deviation from classic propriety, was heightened by assigning this part to the chief personage. Kings are usually made to speak in the magniloquent language supposed to be suited to their elevated position. On the present occasion Lincoln acted the clown.

However, the following line asserted that Lincoln “declined to speak for fear he should perpetrate a folly,” revealing that the speech in question was that of November 18. The following sentences confirm that point by mentioning the disappointment of the crowd that Lincoln would not speak. The editorial also pointed out the comments of the heckler who joked that Lincoln “could only avoid talking nonsense by holding his tongue.” What at first appeared to be an evaluation of the Gettysburg Address quickly revealed itself instead as a reference to Lincoln’s November 18 remarks.⁵⁹

The *Examiner* purported to be fully aware of the speeches of both Everett and Lincoln. While the comments as to the classical style of Everett’s speech make it clear that his oration had been read, it appears again as though the *Examiner* was unaware of Lincoln’s speech. Rather than giving a magnificent address, Lincoln was portrayed to have only muttered a few insignificant words totally inappropriate for the occasion.

⁵⁹ *Richmond Examiner*, Nov. 25, 1863.

On November 25, the *Richmond Dispatch* published an account of “THE GETTYSBURG CEMETERY CELEBRATION – THE SPEECHES.” It appears that the *Dispatch* obtained a copy of the *New York Herald* the day after the initial report on the dedication. Derisively calling the ceremonies “entirely Yankeeish,” the paper gave a rundown of the speeches on November 18, including the full text of Lincoln’s comments and a summary of the speech by William Seward before reprinting parts of Edward Everett’s November 19 oration.⁶⁰

The *Richmond Dispatch* was founded on October 19, 1850. Unlike the other Richmond papers, the *Dispatch* was not affiliated with a particular political party, vowing that news would not be subordinated to politics. The *Dispatch* only cost a penny, and quickly attracted the younger crowd in the city and surrounding areas. By 1860 it had a circulation of 18,000, the largest of any paper in the state, and was probably the third largest daily in the South, just behind two of the New Orleans papers.⁶¹

The *Richmond Dispatch* focused most of its editorial on “Edward Everett, of ‘Boasting,’ [Boston, Massachusetts] that secondary and most disgusting edition and representative of the Pilgrim Fathers.” In his speech, Everett had contended that he did not believe “there has been a day since the election of President Lincoln when, if an ordinance of secession could have been fairly submitted to the mass of the people, in any single Southern State a majority of ballots would have been given in its favor.” This predictably drew fire from the editor of the *Dispatch*, who noted “the stiff corpses of one thousand two hundred and eight eighty [sic] men lying in a semi-circle around him, killed dead,” served the “purpose of giving the lie to all such statements.” The editor was

⁶⁰ *Richmond Dispatch*, Nov. 25, 1863.

⁶¹ Marvin Evans, “The Richmond Press on the Eve of the Civil War,” *The John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College* 1 (Jan. 1951): 25-6.

somewhat disingenuous in his assertion that Virginians were united on the question of secession. Virginia had been one of the last states to secede, and the *Dispatch* had not fully supported secession until 1861. Two years into the war, however, those past vacillations were glossed over in the name of Confederate unity. The account ended after discussing Everett's oration. It is not known if page 10 of the *New York Herald* was even read, for no mention of Lincoln's speech on November 19 appears.⁶²

Edward Everett was despised by many Virginians long before his comments at Gettysburg. In 1860 Everett had been the vice-presidential candidate on John Bell's Constitutional-Union ticket that sought to decrease sectional tensions and avoid war by a strict adherence to the Constitution. Bell and Everett won the electoral votes of two states: Kentucky and Virginia. However, once the war began Everett threw his support behind Lincoln and the government's war policies. The man that many Virginians had voted for as their choice to hold the second highest office in the nation had turned their back on them. In short, Southern comments about Everett's oration may have had as much to do with his past as his words at Gettysburg.⁶³

On November 27, Edward Everett was the subject of the editor's column in the *Richmond Dispatch*. "Everett's oration at Gettysburg is what might have been expected of that unreal, metaphorical, moonlight orator. It matters little to him what the facts . . ." The editor dedicated an entire column to further chastising Everett's statement questioning Southern support of secession. Much like the *Richmond Examiner*, the

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Mark R. Cheatham, "Constitutional Union Party (1860)," in David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History* (Santa Barbara, 2000), 1:490-91.

Dispatch editor censored any mention of Lincoln's role in the dedication ceremonies, and offered no commentary on his speech.⁶⁴

The *Richmond Enquirer* was the oldest of the Richmond newspapers, having been founded on May 9, 1804. A Democratic paper, in 1863 the *Enquirer* was owned and edited by Nathaniel Tyler and William J. Dunnivant.⁶⁵ On November 27 the paper reported that Lincoln had played a part in the dedication ceremonies, and was the first Richmond newspaper to print a direct reaction to Lincoln's speech of November 19. The paper identified Lincoln as the "stage manager and Edward Everett as the 'Orator of the day.'" It further commented that "Mr. Everett produced the expected allusions to Marathon and Waterloo, in the best style of the sophomores of Harvard." Edward Everett attended Harvard, taught at the university and served as its president for three years in the 1840s, making the reference personal and pointed. "After the Orator of the day, President Pericles, or rather Abe, made the dedicatory speech; but had to limit his observations within small compass, lest he should tell some funny story over the graves of the Immortals." In stating that Lincoln spoke after Edward Everett, the *Enquirer* demonstrated an understanding of Lincoln's role in the ceremonies on November 19. However, the *Enquirer* never discussed the words Lincoln spoke at Gettysburg, making it impossible to know which of Lincoln's short speeches they had seen. It was not what Lincoln said at Gettysburg that the *Enquirer* took issue with, but rather the brevity of his comments, or what he did not say.⁶⁶

Two of Richmond's daily newspapers, the *Whig* and the *Sentinel*, carried the Confederate Press Association account of the cemetery dedication on November 24 but

⁶⁴ *Richmond Dispatch*, Nov. 27, 1863.

⁶⁵ Evans, "Richmond Press," 17-8.

⁶⁶ *Richmond Enquirer*, Nov. 27, 1863.

offered no further reporting on the event. While the other three Richmond papers all printed at least one other substantial article on the dedication ceremonies, none of the papers reprinted the words that Lincoln spoke at the dedication ceremonies. This was a marked contrast to their coverage of Lincoln's two inaugural addresses. In both 1861 and 1865, the *Richmond Dispatch* reprinted Lincoln's inaugurals. In 1861, the paper offered substantial commentary on the event, while the reporting was more descriptive in nature in 1865. In both the inaugurals and the Gettysburg Address Lincoln advocated a strong national government and indicated his personal opposition to slavery, stances that most Southerners opposed, but only in the Gettysburg Address did Lincoln declare that Whites and African-Americans were "equal." Is it mere coincidence that Richmond's papers did not reprint the speech containing this assertion, even though the text was available to them? As is often the case, what the newspapers did not report is as important as what they did.⁶⁷

From Richmond, the news of the events at Gettysburg and Lincoln's role spread to the rest of the state and Confederacy. On November 27, 1863, the Lynchburg *Virginian* offered extensive reporting on "THE CEMETERY – SPEECH AND WIT OF LINCOLN." The account occupied a full column with details of the procession to the cemetery. After explaining the parade, the *Virginian* explained, "The dedication ceremonies were then performed, the oration being delivered by Edward Everett, after which the crowd dispersed." The article then gave an explanation of the cemetery itself. This account is full of details, making it remarkable that it contains no account of the part played by President Lincoln. The reference in the headline to the speech by Lincoln was to an entirely different event that had taken place on November 18 in Hanover,

⁶⁷ *Richmond Dispatch*, Mar. 5, 1861; *Richmond Dispatch*, Mar. 8, 1865.

Pennsylvania, before Lincoln even arrived in Gettysburg. Throughout this column there is no mention of the sources used to compile this account.⁶⁸

The editors corrected their earlier omission in the December 4, 1863, edition of the *Virginian*. In that paper, the editors discussed “Old Abe’s Last.” Taking their account from the *New York World*, the editors quoted the opening sentence of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. The *Virginian* was the only newspaper in the state to reprint any of Lincoln’s actual words on November 19. Despite reporting part of Lincoln’s oration, the Lynchburg editor thought no more of Lincoln than his Richmond colleagues: “Really, the ignorance and coarseness of this man would repel and disgust any other people than the Yankees . . . What a commentary is this on the character of our enemies.”⁶⁹

The *Staunton Vindicator* of December 4 provided additional comments on Everett and his “unkind criticism” of the South based wholly on the reporting of the *Richmond Dispatch*. Noting that “many of our contemporaries are much disturbed at the consecration of the field at Gettysburg as a huge Yankee Necropolis and give vent to unkind criticism of the part taken by Edward Everett,” the *Vindicator* editor admitted that he had not read the oration of Everett or a report of it. Yet he indicated distaste for the man whom they had once admired. The paper offered a sarcastic invitation for Everett to come dedicate the final resting places of Union soldiers who had fallen in Virginia. There were a good many, the editor noted, and there would be more if the North continued to try to subdue the Old Dominion. The entire column in the *Staunton Vindicator* centered on the role of Edward Everett in the dedication ceremonies. Not

⁶⁸ *Lynchburg Virginian*, Nov. 27, 1863.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, Dec. 4, 1863.

once did Abraham Lincoln's name appear. The other Staunton paper, the *Staunton Spectator*, offered no comment on the dedication ceremonies or Lincoln's Address.⁷⁰

As the news of the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery at Gettysburg made its way across the Confederacy, the Southern press followed Richmond's lead. The piece authored by John Graeme, Jr., of the Confederate Press Association appeared in many of the Southern newspapers over the following ten days. On November 24, the *Atlanta Daily Constitutionalist*, *Atlanta Southern Confederacy*, *Augusta (Georgia) Daily Chronicle & Sentinel*, *Macon Telegraph*, *Memphis Appeal*, *Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register*, and *Savannah Daily Morning News* carried an abbreviated version of Graeme's account that stated: "Several columns of the Herald are occupied with an account of the dedication of the national Necropolis at Gettysburg. Lincoln was serenaded the night previous, but declined to make any speech, saying that in his position it was important that he should not say any foolish things. [A voice – "If you can help it. Lincoln. It often happens the best way is to say nothing.]

The formatting of these accounts varied slightly, but the wording was the same. The November 24 *Daily Journal*, published in Wilmington, North Carolina, carried substantially the same account with a few changes in wording. That same day the *Daily South Carolinian* carried an even more abbreviated version. "Several columns in the *Herald* is [sic] occupied with an account of the dedication of the National Necropolis at Gettysburg." The *Charleston Mercury*, *Atlanta Daily Intelligencer*, and Atlanta's *Daily Constitutionalist* all carried Graeme's full account, the *Mercury* and *Daily Constitutionalist* on November 27 and the *Daily Intelligencer* on November 29. The November 27 edition of the Augusta, Georgia, *Daily Chronicle & Sentinel* carried an

⁷⁰ *Staunton Vindicator*, Dec. 4, 1863.

account so abbreviated it did not even mention the small detail that Lincoln had been present at the dedication.

A few days after these telegraphic accounts appeared, the other Southern newspapers began to receive copies of the Richmond papers. They were quick to plagiarize their Virginia brethren. This plagiarism was nothing new during the Civil War era. George Smalley's account of the Battle of Antietam originally appeared in the New York *Tribune* but was reportedly reprinted by 1,400 newspapers. According to one authority, in order to put together the paper for each day's edition, the editor "would first select two important newspapers from each of the larger cities represented among his newspaper exchanges and clip a dozen or so small articles . . . then he would clip articles for solid matter, leaving just enough space for the lead editorial. When the printer told him that enough material had been found for the day's edition, he would knock off the editorial rapidly . . ." Most editors saw no need to rewrite an article that had appeared in another paper.⁷¹

In its edition of November 30, the *Memphis Appeal* reprinted the *Richmond Enquirer's* account of three days earlier. On December 2, the *Atlanta Daily Intelligencer* carried that same account. The *Macon Telegraph* reprinted the account from the November 25, 1863, *Richmond Dispatch*. The *Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register* reprinted another account from the *Richmond Dispatch*. That version focused entirely on Edward Everett and his oration, and did not mention either Lincoln or the Gettysburg Address.

None of these papers bothered to write their own editorials about the events surrounding the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery and Lincoln's Gettysburg

⁷¹ Harris, *Blue & Gray*, 182; Andrews, *South Reports*, 25.

Address. Instead, they simply reprinted articles written by the Richmond newspapers. It was a telling indication of the influence the Richmond editors had over the Southern press, particularly when it came to reporting events originating in the North. When it comes to Southern reporting on the Gettysburg Address, one need look no farther than the city of Richmond.

In many ways this is not surprising. Following the battle of Chancellorsville in May, 1863, two papers, the *Savannah Republican* and the *Wilmington Daily Journal*, both complained that the Richmond papers had not printed the casualty lists from out-of-state regiments or discussed their roles in the battle. Rather, they focused on Virginia regiments. It is clear that these two papers thought the Richmond press should be national in scope, much like today's *New York Times* or *Washington Post*.⁷²

A footnote to this story is the New Orleans press. By the fall of 1863 that city had been in Union hands for a year and a half. Southern editors ran most of the city's papers, but there was one exception. When Union General Benjamin Butler took command of New Orleans, the editor of the *New Orleans Crescent*, J. O. Nixon, was serving in the Confederate Army. Butler confiscated the paper and had it sold. The new editors were Unionists, and rechristened the paper the *New-Orleans Times*.⁷³

Because of the distance from Richmond and the Union occupation of the city, New Orleans editors frequently received New York papers sooner than those from other places in the Confederacy. On December 3, the daily *New Orleans Bee* noted that it had received the *New York Herald* of November 21, probably courtesy of a Union ship. The editor, much like many of his counterparts in Virginia, ignored the role Lincoln had

⁷² Andrews, *South Reports*, 299-300.

⁷³ Chester Hearn, *When the Devil Came Down to Dixie: Ben Butler in New Orleans* (Baton Rouge, 1997), 100.

played in the dedication ceremonies and focused on Edward Everett. Calling Everett a “wet blanket,” the paper asserted that Everett was no Daniel Webster, and had not performed well during his dedicatory oration. The *Bee* did not comment on Lincoln’s speech. The *Daily True Delta* likewise had harsh words for Everett. “There are many points in his speech at Gettysburg which call for criticism,” most importantly, “his arguments against State sovereignty and reserved rights.” The *Daily True Delta* went so far as to reprint the actual words of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. On December 2, 1863, the only Union paper in the city, *The New-Orleans Times*, noted; “The President’s speech at the Gettysburg inauguration excites universal remark and commendation.”⁷⁴ Memphis, Tennessee, was also in Union hands during the fall of 1863, a fact clearly reflected by the extensive, positive coverage given to the ceremonies by the *Memphis Daily Bulletin*. Like the New Orleans *Daily True Delta*, the *Memphis Daily Bulletin* reprinted Lincoln’s address.⁷⁵

While all the Richmond papers mentioned the events in Pennsylvania, it seems as though few people paid any attention to those stories. Jefferson Davis offered no preserved comments on the Address. The same can be said for John B. Jones, the famous Confederate war diarist who wrote about nearly everything newsworthy during the war. Josiah Gorgas, head of Confederate ordnance, was also silent on the Gettysburg Address, as were the famous women diarists Mary Chesnut and Judith McGuire.⁷⁶ Yet Southern

⁷⁴ *New Orleans Bee*, Dec. 3, 1863; *Daily True Delta* (New Orleans, La.), Dec. 4, 1863; *New Orleans Times*, Dec. 2, 1863.

⁷⁵ *Memphis Daily Bulletin*, Nov. 26, 1863. The previously mentioned *Memphis Appeal* was an itinerant paper at this point in the war, publishing outside of the city, and therefore not under Union influence.

⁷⁶ Haskell M. Monroe, Jr., and James T. McIntosh, eds., *The Papers of Jefferson Davis* (Baton Rouge, 1971-); John B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk’s Diary at the Confederate States Capitol* (Philadelphia, 1866); Frank E. Vandiver, ed., *The Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas* (Tuscaloosa, 1947); C. Vann Woodward, ed., *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War* (New Haven, 1981); Judith W. McGuire, *Diary of a Southern Refugee During the War* (New York, 1867).

readers were used to news stories about Abraham Lincoln. Virginia newspapers mentioned Lincoln in nearly every issue, eventually desensitizing their readers to stories about the Union president. One such example is a December 8, 1863, article from the *Richmond Dispatch* titled “Lincoln Sick.” The article noted, “Yankee papers say that ‘Lincoln has got the varioloid,’” and wondered, “What the varioloid has done that Lincoln should ‘get it,’ we cannot imagine, but it is just like Lincoln to seize some harmless object, and just like the Yankee papers to make a grand fuss over it.” With daily articles like this, it is little wonder that most readers found Southern reporting of the dedication ceremonies to be nothing out of the ordinary.⁷⁷

One Virginia woman present at the dedication ceremonies recorded her thoughts in a diary. Josephine Forney Roedel, born in Gettysburg in 1825, spent the first thirty years of her life in Pennsylvania. In 1855 her husband, William D. Roedel, became president of the Wytheville Female Seminary in southwestern Virginia, and the couple relocated to the Old Dominion. In late October, 1863, Josephine Roedel returned to Gettysburg so that she might spend time with her ailing mother. During her trip, Roedel kept a diary.⁷⁸

At the parade to the cemetery Roedel got “a good look at Father Abraham and his retinue.” Then, Roedel made a smart move. “I was one of the fortunate ones, seeing all the mass of people who passed through the town in procession and then getting on the ground in advance of the procession.” Looking back on the day, Roedel noted, “The great day is over and I am so glad I have been here . . . everything passed off very pleasantly and scarcely one drunken man was to be seen . . . Such homage I never saw or

⁷⁷ *Richmond Dispatch*, Dec. 8, 1863.

⁷⁸ Elsie Singmaster, “Notes and Documents: The Diary of Josephine Forney Roedel,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 67 (1943): 390.

imagined could be shown to any one person as the people bestow upon Lincoln . . . the very mention of his name brings forth shouts of applause . . . even his enemies acknowledge him to be an honest man.”⁷⁹

Though the reason for her presence in Gettysburg was not a pleasant one, Roedel was happy to have seen the dedication ceremonies. “At first I wished my visit had occurred at any other time as my heart is so sad, but never in my life will I have the same opportunity of seeing so many of the great men of the nation.”⁸⁰

William Roedel died in December, 1865, and Josephine immediately returned to Gettysburg where she lived until her death in 1904. Though she resided in Virginia, the overall tone of her diary, specifically her obvious reverence for Abraham Lincoln and her return to Pennsylvania in 1865, make it clear that her heart remained with the Union.⁸¹

In summary, as a result of the censorship by the Richmond editors, Southerners in 1863 had no idea what Lincoln said at the dedication of the cemetery in Gettysburg. The November 20, 1863, edition of the *New York Herald* that arrived in Richmond on November 23 carried five full pages of coverage on the dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery in Gettysburg, including the full text of Lincoln’s speech. While the Richmond papers reprinted Lincoln’s inaugurals in both 1861 and 1865, they never provided their readers with any hint of what Lincoln said in his Gettysburg Address. Lincoln’s affirmation “that all men are created equal” and call for “a new birth of freedom” linked his words at Gettysburg to the Emancipation Proclamation. As a result, the Richmond editors lampooned Lincoln’s appearance and words without ever telling their readers what those words were. The domination of the Richmond press ensured that

⁷⁹ Ibid, 397-98.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid, 390.

it was their version of the ceremonies that would be disseminated throughout the Confederacy.

Chapter 3

Virginians' Twentieth-Century Responses to the Gettysburg Address

“Every school child, adopting Lincoln’s Gettysburg speech, can now speak glibly of ‘government of the people, by the people, and for the people.’”

Lloyd T. Everett
*Confederate Veteran*⁸²

The censorship of the Gettysburg Address started by the Richmond editors in 1863 continued in the twentieth-century. While White Virginians were aware of the speech, they did not embrace it. If the Address was discussed, the line about equality was conspicuously absent. In *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, historian David Blight argues that by the early twentieth-century “the moral crusades over slavery . . . and the promise of emancipation that emerged from the war,” had been

⁸² Lloyd T. Everett, “Davis, Lincoln, and the Kaiser,” in *Confederate Veteran* 25 (1917): 405-6.

set aside in favor of sectional reconciliation. Nowhere is this more evident than in White Virginians' twentieth-century responses to the Gettysburg Address.⁸³ An examination of the state's newspapers, textbooks used in the public schools, and the records of Memorial Day celebrations in Virginia from 1900 to 1963 reveal a surprising lack of coverage of the Gettysburg Address. This dearth of coverage appeared in Virginia's African-American newspapers as well. In the North, meanwhile, the Address was revered. This contrast in response to the Address reveals the social and cultural divides that still separated the North and South as late as 1963.

When the Army of Northern Virginia officially surrendered at Appomattox Court House on April 12, 1865, Abraham Lincoln was the most hated man in the South. The Southern bid for independence had clearly failed, and White Virginians hated Lincoln as the symbol of that failure. Three days later, Abraham Lincoln was as dead as the Confederacy, laid low by assassin John Wilkes Booth. It is impossible to know how Lincoln would be viewed today had he lived; martyrdom has a way of skewing history's perceptions of men. We do know that the South experienced a Reconstruction that Whites considered harsh and vindictive. In 1928 the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* offered their opinion of Lincoln and his legacy over sixty years after his death:

Lincoln even yet is not one of the heroes of the South. We are a little too near the War Between the States to get wholly away from the bitterness which characterized that conflict. But the South does feel ever so kindly toward the man who guided the destinies of the Union in the early sixties. It is the general impression here that, if Lincoln had lived, many of the horrors of reconstruction days, if not all of them, would have been obviated. The President was a bigger, a more generous, a more charitable man than the petty tyrants who wielded power over the South after he had gone.⁸⁴

⁸³ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass., 2001), dust jacket.

⁸⁴ *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, Feb. 12, 1928.

Many believed that had Abraham Lincoln lived he would have treated former Confederates “with malice toward none; with charity for all,” as he promised at the end of the war.⁸⁵ From 1865 through 1963 Lincoln’s reputation among White Southerners grew tremendously. Despite the occasional controversy, the passing years saw more and more people come to view Lincoln in a positive light. Even with the increasing respect for Abraham Lincoln, White Southerners continued to disparage or ignore his most famous speech.

The first place to find responses to the Gettysburg Address and Lincoln in Virginia during the twentieth-century is in the state’s two most famous papers, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and the *Richmond News Leader*. During much of the early twentieth-century the *Richmond News Leader* was edited by Douglas Southall Freeman. A noted Civil War historian, Freeman shaped that paper’s coverage of Abraham Lincoln and his Gettysburg oration.

On November 25, 1913, under a section titled “Fifty Years Ago,” the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reprinted its account from the November 24, 1863, *Richmond Dispatch*. The errors in this initial reporting have already been discussed in the previous chapter, and by reprinting this article without commenting on the mistakes and omissions from the 1863 piece the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* clung to that flawed report long after they knew it to be inaccurate. Just as in 1863, the actual text of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address was omitted. This article was the only coverage the paper gave to the Gettysburg Address on its fiftieth anniversary. The *New York Times* did not provide much more coverage, only offering one article on the Gettysburg Address and a full reprinting of the speech.

⁸⁵ Basler, *Collected Works*, 8:333.

By contrast, Richmond's African-American paper, the *Richmond Planet*, carried a large picture of Lincoln under the caption "Fiftieth Anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address." The paper also reprinted the speech and offered a short explanation of the event. This article is the only African-American voice on the Gettysburg Address offered in this thesis. In the other major anniversaries in 1938 and 1963 Richmond's African-American newspaper (then called the *Afro-American*) did not mention the Gettysburg Address. The article from the *Richmond Planet* indicates that Whites and Blacks had a different response to the Address, but with no further evidence that is not something that can be explored.⁸⁶

A little over three years later the United States declared war on Germany, officially entering World War I. Though the nation had fought in the Spanish-American War nearly two decades earlier, World War I was the nation's first major military conflict since the Civil War. Both the image of Abraham Lincoln and the lines of the Gettysburg Address were frequently employed to encourage all Americans, including Virginians, to support the war effort. Barry Schwartz, the author of *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*, argues that during World War I "belligerent nations convened their past heroes to mobilize wartime motivation, but not as often as Americans convened Lincoln." Additionally, Schwartz asserts that the image of Lincoln was used because it "infused the war effort with an egalitarian individualist legacy no other American hero so well embodied."⁸⁷

In *Lincoln in American Memory*, Merrill Peterson argues that the North and South united around Lincoln during the First World War. One of the first posters to appear

⁸⁶ *Richmond Planet*, Nov. 15, 1913.

⁸⁷ Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago, 2000), 227, 231.

after the United States officially declared war featured the last lines of the Gettysburg Address, and encouraged the purchase of Liberty Bonds. Another poster produced later in the war carried a similar excerpt of the Gettysburg Address and again encouraged Americans to buy war bonds. Barry Schwartz argues that “as fatalities mounted the Gettysburg Address grew more popular, and every recitation of it made the war more understandable.”⁸⁸

The President of the United States during World War I, and the most famous Virginian of the time, was Woodrow Wilson. In addition to being a politician and the President of the United States, Wilson was a professionally trained historian who wrote a multi-volume history of the United States in 1902. In the section of Wilson’s history dealing with the Civil War he included a facsimile of the Gettysburg Address, but made no comment on the speech. However, Wilson was an unabashed admirer of Lincoln, and told one dinner guest that he rated the Gettysburg Address “*very very high.*” As a progressive, Wilson wanted to expand federal authority, and admired Lincoln’s ability to seize so much power for the presidency.⁸⁹

Wilson frequently lectured at events commemorating the Civil War, and on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg he composed and delivered a speech that mirrored Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. In remarks at a 1916 dinner after he won a second presidential term Wilson noted, “This, then, to repeat that beautiful phrase of Lincoln’s in his Gettysburg Address, ‘is not a time of congratulation, but a time of rededication.’” While the wording was incorrect, the sentiment is clear.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Merrill Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York, 1994), 119; Schwartz, *Forge*, 236, 239, 241.

⁸⁹ Woodrow Wilson, *History of the American People* (New York, 1918), 4:308-9; Arthur S. Link, ed., *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, 1966-1994), 29:55, 40:121.

⁹⁰ Blight, *Race*, 8; Link, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 29:55, 40:121.

Throughout his presidency Wilson was frequently compared to Lincoln, sometimes in a complimentary fashion, other times as an insult. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson* contain several letters from people complimenting Wilson by comparing various speeches he made with the Gettysburg Address. All of these comparisons were made by Northerners, none by Southerners. While Northerners considered comparisons to the Gettysburg Address a compliment to Wilson, it appears that Southerners did not.⁹¹

At least one Virginian would have considered such a comparison insulting to Woodrow Wilson. Lyon Gardiner Tyler was one of Virginia's most outspoken critics of Abraham Lincoln during the early twentieth-century. Tyler, a son of former President John Tyler, was born in Virginia a decade before Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. In 1892 Tyler, who had a masters degree in history from the University of Virginia, began the *William & Mary Quarterly*, further underscoring his interest in American History. In 1917, Tyler published an article in the *William & Mary Quarterly* entitled "The South and Germany" in which he commented on the Gettysburg Address. Tyler's article was a response to a piece in the *New York Times* of April 22, 1917, titled, "The Hohenzollerns and the Slave Power." The author of that piece, in Tyler's words, claimed, "the spirit of the Old South to 1861 is said to have been essentially analogous to that of Germany."

Tyler commented:

The writer in pointing the moral to his story quotes Lincoln's Gettysburg address and states that these last words of his speech, "That the nation shall under God have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth," described the great cause for which Lincoln sent armies into the field. Here is the same lack of logical and historical accuracy.

⁹¹ See: Lillian D. Walden to Woodrow Wilson, Jan. 24, 1917, in Link, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 41:7-8; Diary of Thomas W. Brahany, April 6, 1917, in Link, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 41:558; Edward Wright Sheldon to Woodrow Wilson, Mar. 9, 1917, in Link, *Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, 41:38.

Tyler clarified what he meant by that statement a few paragraphs later:

In his Gettysburg speech Lincoln talked about popular rule, but this was a kind of oratory in which South and North had both indulged for one hundred years, and we are told that the speech made no particular impression at the time. It was not until long afterwards that its literary merits were recognized, and from praise for its sentiments the Northerners have passed to regarding it as presenting a historical concept of the war.

Tyler's tacit admission that the "literary merits" of the speech had been "recognized" was tempered by a footnote he inserted part way through the paragraph. In that footnote Tyler commented, "In his work, 'Some Information Respecting America,' published in 1794, Thomas Cooper, the celebrated philosopher, writes on page 53, referring to the United States: 'The government is the government *of* the people and *for* the people.'"⁹² Tyler seems to be telling his readers that while the Address was no doubt laudable, it was not totally the creation of Abraham Lincoln. Additionally, while the Address was respectable for its "literary" qualities, it was not history, and twisted the meaning and causes of the war. Furthermore, Tyler argued that the Address was not appreciated until long after it was first delivered. Throughout his writings Tyler focused on aspects of Lincoln's speech concerning the government, ignoring that the Address was as much about race and equality as it was government.

Lloyd T. Everett, of Ballston, was another Virginian who took exception with a comparison between the Civil War era and World War I. A *Saturday Evening Post* article written by George Pepper and appearing on May 5, 1917, enraged Everett to the point that he offered a rebuttal in *Confederate Veteran*. Pepper contended, "In the Gettysburg speech Lincoln expressed our idea of popular government in words that may

⁹² Lyon Gardiner Tyler, ed., *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography* (New York, 1915), 5:859-61; Lyon G. Tyler, "The South and Germany," in *Confederate Veteran* 25 (1917): 506, 509, 511. Tyler's article from the *William & Mary Quarterly* was reprinted in *Confederate Veteran*.

become immortal. Every school child can now speak glibly about ‘government of the people, by the people, and for the people.’ Possibly the words are so familiar that we forget to consider their meaning.” Pepper went on to argue that in the popular and free government the citizens “have grown into an association for the establishment of justice, for the securing of common rights, and for the promotion of general welfare.” In Everett’s estimation, both Lincoln and Pepper were dead wrong:

Every school child, adopting Lincoln’s Gettysburg speech, can now speak glibly of “government of the people, by the people, and for the people.” But the true meaning of this phrase is not so easily grasped and retained, especially as applied to a “confederated republic,” as Washington termed the United States under the Constitution of 1789. . . all powers not granted to the newly formed central government . . . necessarily belonged to these several free, creating States.”

It is difficult to say with certainty whether Everett was blaming the misinterpretation of the phrase “government of the people, by the people, and for the people” on twentieth-century Northerners who sought to twist the martyred president’s words for their own gain, or if he blamed Lincoln himself. The tone of Everett’s response, however, indicates a universal condemnation of the man who originally uttered the phrase and also Progressives who sought to interpret it in a way that increased federal power at the expense of state power. Like Lyon Tyler, Everett focused solely on the aspects of the Gettysburg Address that dealt with government, not the parts dealing with equality.⁹³

In 1922 the Lincoln Memorial was dedicated in Washington, D.C. In a sign of how far sectional relations had come since the end of the Civil War, former Confederate soldiers, dressed in gray, attended the dedication of the memorial. Perhaps their attendance at the event should not surprise us, Barry Schwartz contends. After all, the memorial was constructed in a way that appealed to Southerners: “On the Southern wall,

⁹³ Everett, “Davis, Lincoln, and the Kaiser,” 405-6.

[is the] Gettysburg Address, which Southerners took to refer to Southern as well as Northern soldiers.” The construction of the memorial seemed to solidify the belief of those like author Alexander Woollcott and his fictional Texas captain that the Gettysburg Address had been aimed at a Southern audience.⁹⁴

In 1928 the Virginia General Assembly passed a resolution to adjourn early in observance of Lincoln’s Birthday. Predictably, the Assembly received some backlash due to the resolution, but the move was supported by the *Richmond News Leader*, which commented, “Whoever abuses LINCOLN soils himself.”⁹⁵ By the 1920s Virginians’ image of Lincoln was of a kind and well-meaning president who had nobly died for his beliefs.

The assertion that World War I went a long way towards raising Lincoln’s reputation among all Americans, Virginians included, is supported by a 1935 editorial in the *Richmond News Leader* on Lincoln’s birthday:

Even when they did not hate him as the despoiler of their civilization, Southern people long felt a contemptuous superiority to Abraham Lincoln because he lacked the social graces that R. E. Lee and Jefferson Davis so abundantly possessed . . . how different it is today, the 126th anniversary of his birth! . . . Lee and Lincoln were born within a little more than two years of each other, a century and a quarter ago. A nation that produced two such men for the second great crisis of its life need not fear, when the third crisis comes, that it will have lost its vitality and will be leaderless.

On the anniversary of his birth in 1936 the *Richmond News Leader* carried close to a half-dozen articles on Abraham Lincoln. Curiously, none of them made mention of his most famous words.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Schwartz, *Forge*, 5, 222.

⁹⁵ *Richmond News Leader*, Feb. 14, 1928.

⁹⁶ *Richmond News Leader*, Feb. 12, 1935; *Richmond News Leader*, Feb. 12, 1936.

In 1938, the 75th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, papers across the nation rushed to reprint the Address. Editors chimed in with their opinions of the speech, and commented on its continued relevance. The *New York Times* coverage included a reprinting of the Address, an editorial on the eloquence and greatness of the words, and a story about the commemoration exercises in Gettysburg, which included the recitation of the Address by a schoolboy and reminiscences by men who had heard Lincoln speak three-quarters of a century earlier. All told, the *Times* carried eight articles related to the Gettysburg Address. A Southern paper in the heart of the old Confederacy, the *Atlanta Constitution*, reprinted the text of the Address on the first page and followed that with a substantial article on the events surrounding the dedication and the speech as well as a commentary on the oration. In Richmond, however, no newspaper mentioned the Address.

The 1938 silence of the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* and *Richmond News Leader* becomes even more confusing when one considers two accounts published in the *Richmond News-Leader* in the early 1940s. In 1943 the *Richmond News-Leader* mentioned the publication of a diary by Josephine Forney Roedel in the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. The paper noted, “Not one word did Mrs. Roedel set down indicate that she was conscious of having heard in the ‘Gettysburg Address’ one of the most magnificent utterances of English speech.”

A year later the *Richmond News-Leader* carried an editorial entitled, “Too Short to be Taken Seriously.”

It begins to look as if unappreciated authors will have to abandon their reference to Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address as an example of the public’s failure to accept great literary art. In No. 762 of *Lincoln Lore* . . . appears a reprint of the Associated Press report of the address and its reception. Instead of silent,

unsympathetic audition, the report has five references to applause during the speech and, at the end, a note on 'long-continued applause.' Paradoxically, the crowd at Gettysburg did not fail to appreciate the speech until it was over. The Pennsylvanians felt they should not take it seriously because they did not think the speaker did. Before Lincoln, who had ever heard of a politician that found a great audience at hand and limited his "speech" to three minutes?

Though the editor gives the Associated Press reporter (Joseph Gilbert) credit for recognizing the greatness of the speech, he perpetuates the myth that the Address was not appreciated by Northerners at the time. In so doing, he implicitly excuses the dearth of coverage the Address received in the 1863 Richmond newspapers.⁹⁷

This explosion in coverage of the Address in the early 1940s did not continue. On the centennial of the Address in 1963 the *New York Times* again carried a reprint of the Address, extensive coverage of the commemorative ceremonies in Gettysburg led by former-President and Gettysburg resident Dwight Eisenhower, and six other articles. The only article in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* was an Associated Press account of the events in Gettysburg. That article devoted much more space to the role of Eisenhower in the 1963 ceremonies than the 1863 role of Lincoln. The *Richmond News Leader* of November 19, 1963, carried a substantial article titled, "Gettysburg Address: Unforgettable Words." The article was, from start to finish, a condemnation of the Address' literary style. Among the many faults the author pointed out were the repetition of verbs, the lack of punch, beginning the speech with a number, the brevity of the speech, the repetition of "great," and the use of various clichés. The writer then noted, "Today, 100 years later, the world acclaim[s] Lincoln's Gettysburg Address as one of the finest public utterances in English or any other language."⁹⁸ Yet this praise was not

⁹⁷ *Richmond News Leader*, Feb. 9, 1944.

⁹⁸ *Richmond News Leader*, Nov. 19, 1963.

offered in the first person, but rather was attributed to “the world” at large. The author had no comment on the substance of the speech, only on its style. This article, the only one in the *Richmond News Leader* on any of the first three major anniversaries of the deliverance of the Gettysburg Address, pointed out more reasons to disdain the speech than to admire it.

This dearth of coverage in the Virginia papers proves that sectional reconciliation was far from a completed thing by 1963. If the United States was truly one nation by that year, the Gettysburg Address should have been treated and covered in the same way throughout the nation. The comparison of coverage in the *New York Times* and the Richmond newspapers shows just how distinct the two sections remained.

Newspapers are not the only places to look for Virginians’ responses to the Gettysburg Address. By the 1890s, courses in United States History had become standard at most universities and colleges across the nation, including those located in Virginia. In 1906 the Virginia legislature enacted a law that every district must have a high school, putting the state on the road to a modern system of public education. In response to this new emphasis on education, presses across the nation began to publish textbooks on United States History. During the next several decades 90 percent of the textbooks on United States History were written and published in the North. The United Confederate Veterans (UCV) took exception to the “long-legged Yankee lies” they claimed these books were perpetuating, and formed committees whose sole purpose was to make sure that the books adopted in the former Confederate states agreed with the Southern interpretation of the war. The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) formed a committee with the same purpose, and in 1919 issued a pamphlet demanding

that states “reject a text-book that glorifies Abraham Lincoln and vilifies Jefferson Davis.”⁹⁹

In 1910 Roanoke College Professor Herman Thorstenberg “had the temerity to suggest that Lincoln was a better man than Jefferson Davis,” and used a textbook espousing a Northern point of view. That book was Henry Elson’s *History of the United States of America*. The *Roanoke Times* called for the book to be burned while Thorstenberg was threatened with mob violence unless he changed his ways. It was not simply the positive interpretation of Abraham Lincoln that White Virginians found distasteful, but rather the exaltation of Lincoln at the expense of Jefferson Davis. At the turn of the century former Confederates were very concerned that the succeeding generations would grow up with the “right” views on the Civil War. Though Henry Elson was a Northerner and his book was published in New York, the work contained no references or facsimiles of the Gettysburg Address.¹⁰⁰

In 1909 the Virginia Department of Public Instruction published a list of books that were approved for elementary schools to use in studying history. While there were dozens of books on Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, common soldiers of the Confederacy, and even Joel Harris’ *Uncle Remus* books, there was not a single approved book on Lincoln or the Gettysburg Address.

In 1928 Virginia initiated an audit of the state education system by M. V. O’Shea, a professor from the University of Wisconsin. O’Shea recommended that elementary schools spend 5.9 percent of the day on the study of history, while in high schools history was recommended to take up just one of the fourteen units of study. Despite the relative

⁹⁹ James McPherson, “Long-Legged Yankee Lies: The Southern Textbook Crusade,” Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds., *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill, 2004), 67, 72.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 74-75.

lack of history education in public schools, how those courses were taught came under increasing scrutiny.¹⁰¹

In 1932 the Sons of Confederate Veterans published a pamphlet entitled *A Protest Against Provincialism*. The pamphlet was published because, “Recently, in the secondary schools of the Old Dominion, Professor H. Latane’s ‘History of the American People’ was supplanted by a book of similar purport and title by Professor David S. Muzzey.” The Sons of Confederate Veterans felt that Muzzey’s book was too Northern, and that Latane’s pro-Southern work was much more appropriate for Virginia. Such complaints were nothing new. As early as the late-eighteenth-century White Southerners complained that Northern textbooks were biased against the South because of their system of slavery. Neither book contained any mention of the Gettysburg Address, so it cannot be said that the Sons of Confederate Veterans were protesting the adoption of Muzzey’s book because of anything related to Lincoln’s speech at Gettysburg.¹⁰²

Many textbooks during this time did reprint and analyze Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. In the *History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850 to the McKinley-Bryan Campaign of 1896*, James Ford Rhodes summed up the battle of Gettysburg by reprinting the Gettysburg Address, noting, “Nothing can so fitly close my account of the battle of Gettysburg.”¹⁰³ Rhodes’ book was used throughout the North, but the obviously pro-Northern slant of the book, evidenced by Rhodes’ inclusion of the Gettysburg Address, precluded the adoption of the book in Virginia’s schools.

¹⁰¹ M. V. O’Shea, *Public Education in Virginia* (Richmond, 1928), 129, 161; Edgar W. Knight, “An Early Case of Opposition in the South to Northern Textbooks,” *Journal of Southern History* 13 (May, 1947): 245-64.

¹⁰² Matthew Page Andrews, *A Protest Against Provincialism* (Richmond, 1932), 1.

¹⁰³ James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850 to the McKinley-Bryan Campaign of 1896* (New York, 1920), 297-98.

In the early-to-mid-twentieth-century the most common place to hear the words of Lincoln and see his image in action was during a Memorial Day celebration. Throughout the North the Gettysburg Address was typically recited by a student or a group of students in an attempt to remind the audience why it was important to honor the veterans. Southern Memorial Day celebrations, however, were quite different.

In 1866 Confederate Memorial Day began in the South as a way to honor the soldiers who had fallen defending the Confederacy. Memorial Day was celebrated on different days in the various states, and was far from a standardized celebration in its infancy. In the early years, Virginians celebrated the day sometime between mid-May and mid-June. Various cities across the nation claimed the honor of starting Memorial Day, including Petersburg and Richmond.¹⁰⁴

At one of the first Confederate Memorial Days celebrated in Richmond in 1875, former Confederate General Jubal Early was afraid that Blacks would wave “pictures of Lincoln and Fifteenth Amendment banners.” His fears came to naught. Historian David Blight notes, “Amidst a massive performance of Confederate remembrance on this day, neither the Gettysburg Address nor the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments existed.” While the Gettysburg Address became an increasingly integral part of Memorial Day celebrations in the North, recitations of Lincoln’s speech were not a part of Southern ceremonies. In 1912 the Virginia Department of Public Instruction issued a pamphlet, “For use as a source book of contemporary activities.” Nowhere in that document was the Gettysburg Address mentioned.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Blight, *Race*, 77.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 83-4; _____, *Memorial Day Annual 1912: The Causes and Outbreak of the War Between the States, 1861-1865* (Richmond, 1912), Cover.

During most of the twentieth-century, Confederate Memorial Services have been conducted at Arlington National Cemetery on the Sunday closest to Jefferson Davis' birthday. Every year "How firm a foundation," a hymn supposed to be a favorite of Jefferson Davis, Stonewall Jackson, and Robert E. Lee, was sung by those present. The singing of "Dixie" was also a perennial part of the ceremonies. In 1978 and 1979 Lee's Farewell Address was recited. But in the entire history of the ceremony, never once was the Gettysburg Address on the program. Even as late as 1999 the Address was still not a part of this Memorial Day celebration.¹⁰⁶

Close to Memorial Day in 1950 the *Richmond News Leader* carried an editorial relating the Gettysburg Address to contemporary issues. The article was entitled, "The Unfinished Work." One of the last lines of the editorial noted, "Out of the most eloquent passage of the American speech comes the higher aim: 'It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work . . . ' *The unfinished work!* The fight for men's freedom goes on."¹⁰⁷ The contradiction between the lack of notice of the Gettysburg Address on the perfect occasion to remember it, like Memorial Day, and the publication of an editorial about the Address in a Virginia newspaper is not one that is easily sorted through. Perhaps an editorial offered a less contentious space than a public ceremony in which to voice support for a Northern document. The comment was also vague enough that it could be taken to apply to foreign affairs, making it less contentious than a comment that was clearly addressing domestic racial issues.

¹⁰⁶ Sons and Daughters of the Confederacy, *Confederate Memorial Services* (Arlington, 1936-1999). The pamphlets from the following years are located in the Special Collections department of Virginia Tech's Newman Library: 1936, 1939, 1942, 1943, 1945-1948, 1950, 1952-1954, 1956, 1957, 1964, 1966-1968, 1971-1975, 1977, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1985-1989, 1995-1999.

¹⁰⁷ *Richmond News Leader*, May 30, 1950.

Despite a proclamation about the nation-wide celebration of Memorial Day in 1868 and a law in 1968 (that took effect in 1971), Memorial Day can hardly be considered a national holiday. As evidenced by the story of the Gettysburg Address, Memorial Day is celebrated in such divergent ways in the North and South that it is a national holiday in name only.

In 1963 the United States was in the midst of the centennial celebrations of the Civil War. While the North and South had largely reconciled politically by 1963, the story of Virginians' reaction to the Gettysburg Address indicates that cultural reconciliation lagged far behind. If cultural reconciliation had taken place, there should have been similar responses to the Address in both the North and the South. However, the great variance in coverage of the Address on the 1913, 1938, and 1963 anniversaries in the *New York Times* and the Richmond newspapers hints at something else. In fact, rather than drawing closer over time, the reporting in these two sections actually grew even further apart. Additionally, while the Address became an important part of Northern schooling and was included in many of the major textbooks used in that region, just the opposite was true in the South. Furthermore, while the Gettysburg Address became an integral part of Memorial Day celebrations in the North, it was not a part of the Southern celebrations, its place being taken by recitations of Lee's Farewell Address, the singing of "Dixie," and other recitations. Clearly, cultural reconciliation was far from completed by 1963.

Conclusion

“They pass over . . . statesmen and able men, and they take up a fourth rate lecturer, who cannot speak good grammar.”

New York Herald
May 19, 1860

Abraham Lincoln frequently read the Richmond newspapers, the *Richmond Examiner* and *Richmond Dispatch* in particular, and it is quite possible he read what those two papers had to say about his remarks at the dedication of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.¹⁰⁸ It might have amused him that they thought his impromptu remarks on November 18 were the only public words he spoke while in Gettysburg. Given Lincoln’s appreciation of comedy, he must have laughed heartily upon reading John Daniel’s assertion that the ceremonies were “the substitution of

¹⁰⁸ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 2005), 617.

glittering foil and worthless paste for real brilliants and pure gold,” and that Lincoln had acted like a clown.¹⁰⁹

However, if Alexander Woolcott is correct in his assertion that Abraham Lincoln intended the Gettysburg Address for Southerners as much as Northerners, an assertion that many others have echoed, the president must have regretted that not a single Confederate-controlled newspaper reported the actual words he spoke that day. The Richmond papers carried the text of both his inaugural addresses, but not that of the Gettysburg Address.

A combination of sloppy reporting by Confederate Press Association reporter John Graeme, Jr., and the brevity of telegraphic reports ensured that most Southern newspaper editors outside of Richmond never saw the text of the Gettysburg Address. The Richmond editors had access to a full account of the dedication ceremonies, including Lincoln’s speech, but censored their editorials to avoid reprinting Lincoln’s words and his reaffirmation “that all men are created equal.” Other than the initial telegraphic dispatch, few Southern newspapers reported the events surrounding the dedication ceremonies in Gettysburg, and those that did tended to reprint accounts from the Richmond papers.

This surprising dearth of coverage continued well into the twentieth-century. Newspaper editorials, textbooks adopted by Virginia’s schools, coverage of the major anniversaries of the Address in the state’s newspapers, and accounts of Memorial Day celebrations, reveal that the Gettysburg Address was virtually ignored in Virginia at least through the 1963 centennial of its deliverance.

¹⁰⁹ *Richmond Examiner*, Nov. 25, 1863.

There are several possible explanations for White Virginians' silence on the Gettysburg Address. The first is that the Address was too closely linked to the Battle of Gettysburg, a calamitous clash that no Virginian who embraced their Southern heritage would be fond of remembering. But, that explanation overstates the importance of the battle. The more likely explanation, though not one that is quantifiable in any way, is that Virginians attached the Address to the Emancipation Proclamation.

When Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation he argued that the proclamation was within his presidential powers as it was a war measure meant to deprive the enemy of manpower and shorten the war. The proclamation was a legal document designed to withstand challenges in court, and contained none of the beautiful phrases typical of Lincoln. At Gettysburg nearly a year later, Lincoln took the opportunity to put morality and eloquence behind his legalistic rationale for emancipation. Therein lies the problem.

In the aftermath of the Civil War sectional reconciliation seemed impossible. As long as the North protested Southern treatment of the freedmen and actively sought to change the social fabric of the South, reconciliation was impossible. As David Blight argues in *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, after the Civil War “the ensuing decades witnessed the triumph of a culture of reunion, which downplayed sectional division and emphasized the heroics of a battle between noble men of the Blue and Gray. Nearly lost in national culture were the moral crusades over slavery . . . and the promise of emancipation that emerged from the war.”¹¹⁰ The reconciliation famously exhibited with the handshake across the wall at Gettysburg on the fiftieth-anniversary of the battle is more accurately described as reconciliation between White Southerners and

¹¹⁰ Blight, *Race*, dust jacket.

White Northerners than as sectional, for African-Americans were clearly left out in the cold. Though there was room for Abraham Lincoln in this reconciliation – he was, after all, White – there was no room for his pro-emancipation, pro-freedmen sentiments. Just like African-Americans, the Gettysburg Address became the sacrificial lamb of sectional reconciliation. In 1913 a writer for the *Baltimore Afro-American Ledger* summed up the situation quite well, wondering “whether Mr. Lincoln had the slightest idea in his mind that the time would ever come when the people of this country would come to the conclusion that by the ‘People’ he meant only white people.”¹¹¹ But Southerners in general, and Virginians in particular, knew that Lincoln did not mean only White people, and so they consigned his Gettysburg Address to obscurity rather than deal with the moral indignation of his words. In the end, White Virginians in 1963 treated the Gettysburg Address and African-Americans quite similarly, marginalizing both. Northerners were silent on Southern abuses in both areas, a silence negotiated years before in the name of “sectional reconciliation.”

In 1858, Lincoln declared, “A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free* . . . It will become *all* one thing or *all* the other.” But Lincoln was wrong. The story of Virginians’ reaction to the Gettysburg Address shows that when it comes to issues of race, and the remembrance of the struggle for freedom, as of 1963 the United States remained divided, with no prospect of soon becoming “*all* one thing or *all* the other.”¹¹²

¹¹¹ *Baltimore Afro-American Ledger*, July 5, 1913.

¹¹² Basler, *Collected Works*, 2:461.

Bibliography

Newspapers

Adams Sentinel (Gettysburg, Pa.)
The Afro-American (Richmond)
The Age (Philadelphia)
Atlanta Constitution
Atlanta Daily Intelligencer
Baltimore Afro-American Ledger
Charleston Daily Courier
Charleston Mercury
Chicago Times
Chicago Tribune
Compiler (Gettysburg, Pa.)
Daily Chronicle & Sentinel (Augusta, Ga.)
Daily Constitutionalist (Atlanta)
Daily Journal (Wilmington, N.C.)
Daily Morning News (Savannah)
Daily Picayune (New Orleans)
Daily South Carolinian
Daily True Delta (New Orleans)
Gettysburg Times
Lynchburg Virginian
Macon Telegraph
Memphis Appeal
Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register
New Orleans Bee
New Orleans Crescent
New-Orleans Times
New York Herald
New York Times
Patriot (Harrisburg, Pa.)
Pennsylvania Daily Telegraph (Harrisburg, Pa.)
Richmond Dispatch
Richmond Enquirer
Richmond Examiner
Richmond News Leader
Richmond Planet
Richmond Sentinel
Richmond Times-Dispatch
Richmond Whig
Roanoke Times
Savannah Republican
Southern Confederacy (Atlanta)
Star and Banner (Gettysburg, Pa.)

Primary Sources

- _____. *Memorial Day Annual 1912: The Causes and Outbreak of the War Between the States, 1861-1865*. Richmond, 1912.
- _____. *Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Press Association Embracing the Quarterly Reports of the Superintendent, October and January*. Atlanta, 1864.
- _____. *The Press Association of the Confederate States of America*. Griffin, Ga., 1863.
- _____. *Revised Report of the Select Committee Relative to the Soldiers' National Cemetery Together with the House of Representatives and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*. Harrisburg, Pa., 1865.
- Andrews, Matthew Page. *A Protest Against Provincialism*. Richmond, 1932.
- Basler, Roy P., ed. *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. New Brunswick, N.J., 1953-1955.
- Baum, Charles. *President Lincoln's Speech at Gettysburg, Pa., November 19th, 1863*. Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa.
- Horn, Henry E., ed. *Memoirs of Henry Eyster Jacobs*. Gettysburg, Pa., 1974.
- Jacobs, Henry Eyster. *Lincoln's Gettysburg World-Message*. Philadelphia, 1919.
- Jones, John B. *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary at the Confederate States Capitol*. Philadelphia, 1866.
- McCullough, Sara. Interviews with local citizens in 1925. Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, Pa.
- McGuire, Judith W. *Diary of a Southern Refugee During the War*. New York, 1867.
- Monroe, Jr., Haskell M., and James T. McIntosh, eds., *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*. Baton Rouge, 1971-.
- O'Shea, M. V. *Public Education in Virginia*. Richmond, 1928.
- Reid, Whitelaw. *After the War: A Southern Tour*. New York, 1866.
- Singmaster, Elsie. "Notes and Documents: The Diary of Josephine Forney Roedel." *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 67 (1943): 390-99.

Skelly, Daniel. *A Boy's Experiences During the Battles of Gettysburg*. Gettysburg, Pa., 1932.

Sons and Daughters of the Confederacy. *Confederate Memorial Services*. Arlington, 1936-1999.

Sweney, Henry to Andrew Sweney. Nov. 29, 1863. Gettysburg National Military Park Library. Gettysburg, Pa.

Vandiver, ed., Frank E. *The Civil War Diary of General Josiah Gorgas*. Tuscaloosa, 1947.

Wills, David to Louisa A. W. Russell, *Gettysburg Times* (Gettysburg, Pa.). Feb. 12, 1941.

Woodward, ed., C. Vann. *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*. New Haven, 1981.

Secondary Sources

_____. *Edward Everett at Gettysburg*. Boston, 1963.

Andrews, J. Cutler. *The South Reports the Civil War*. Princeton, 1970.

Andrews, Mary Raymond Shipman. "The Perfect Tribute." *Scribner's Magazine* 40 (July 1906): 17-24.

Ayers, Edward. *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*. New York, 2003.

Barton, William E. *Lincoln at Gettysburg: What He Intended to Say; What He Said; What He Was Reported to Have Said; What He Wished He Had Said*. New York, 1950.

Blight, David. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*. Cambridge, Mass., 2001.

Bradsby, H. C. *1886 History of Adams County, Pennsylvania: Containing History of Their Counties, Their Townships, Towns, Villages, Schools, Churches, Industries, etc.; Portraits of Early Settlers and Prominent Men; Biographies*. Gettysburg, Pa., 1992.

Bridges, Peter. *Pen of Fire: John Moncure Daniel*. Kent, Oh., 2002.

Cappon, Lester J. *Virginia Newspapers: 1821-1935: A Bibliography with Historical Introduction and Notes*. New York, 1936.

Carter, Rosalynn. *First Lady from Plains*. Boston, 1984.

- Cheatham, Mark R. "Constitutional Union Party (1860)," in *Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History*. Santa Barbara, 2000.
- Dailey, Jane. *Before Jim Crow: The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia*. Chapel Hill, 2000.
- Davis, Michael. *The Image of Lincoln in the South*. Knoxville, 1971.
- Donald, David Herbert. *Lincoln*. New York, 1995.
- Elson, Henry. *History of the United States of America*. New York, 1906.
- Evans, Marvin. "The Richmond Press on the Eve of the Civil War." *The John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College* 1 (Jan. 1951): 5-54.
- Everett, Lloyd T. "Davis, Lincoln, and the Kaiser." *Confederate Veteran* 25 (1917).
- Foner, Eric. *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York, 1988.
- Fortenbaugh, Robert. *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Story of Abraham Lincoln's Immortal Address at Gettysburg*. Gettysburg, Pa., 1949.
- Furgurson, Ernest. *Ashes of Glory: Richmond at War*. New York, 1998.
- Hearn, Chester. *When the Devil Came Down to Dixie: Ben Butler in New Orleans*. Baton Rouge, 1997.
- Holzer, Harold. "'Thrilling Words' or 'Silly Remarks:': What the Press Said About the Gettysburg Address." *Lincoln Herald* 90 (Winter 1998): 144-45.
- George, Joseph, Jr. "The World Will Little Note? The Philadelphia Press and the Gettysburg Address." *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 114 (July 1990): 385-98.
- Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. New York, 2005.
- Harris, Brayton. *Blue & Gray in Black & White: Newspapers in the Civil War*. Washington, 1999.
- Harrison, Kathy Georg. *This Grand National Enterprise*, TMs. Gettysburg National Military Park Library. Gettysburg, Pa.
- Herndon, William. *Herndon's Life of Lincoln, The History and Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln*. New York, 1965.

- Holzer, Harold. “‘Thrilling Words’ or ‘Silly Remarks:’ What the Press Said About the Gettysburg Address.” *Lincoln Herald* 90 (Winter, 1988): 144-45.
- Knight, Edgar W. “An Early Case of Opposition in the South to Northern Textbooks,” *Journal of Southern History* 13 (May, 1947).
- Lamon, Ward Hill. *Life of Abraham Lincoln*. Boston, 1872.
- Latane, John. *History of the American People*. New York, 1930.
- Lee, Melvin. *History of American Journalism*. Boston, 1923.
- Library of Congress, www.loc.gov, accessed March 1, 2006.
- Link, Arthur S., ed. *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*. Princeton, 1966-1994.
- McPherson, James. “Long-Legged Yankee Lies: The Southern Textbook Crusade.” Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds. *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*. Chapel Hill, 2004.
- Miers, Earl Schenck, ed. *Lincoln Day by Day: A Chronology, 1809-1865*. Washington, 1960.
- Muzzey, David. *History of the American People*. Boston, 1927.
- Oates, Stephen. *Abraham Lincoln: The Man Behind the Myths*. New York, 1984.
- Peterson, Merrill. *Lincoln in American Memory*. New York, 1994.
- Risley, Ford. “The Confederate Press Association: Cooperative News Reporting on the War.” *Civil War History* 47 (2001): 222-39.
- Rhodes, James Ford. *History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850 to the McKinley-Bryan Campaign of 1896*. New York, 1920.
- Schwarzlose, Richard A. *Newspapers: A Reference Guide*. New York, 1987.
- Schwartz, Barry. *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory*. Chicago, 2000.
- Thomas, Emory. *The Confederate State of Richmond*. Austin, 1971.
- Tucker, Ruby F. “The Press Association of the Confederate States of America in Georgia.” MA Thesis, University of Georgia, 1950.
- Tyler, Lyon Gardiner. *Encyclopedia of Virginia Biography*. New York, 1915.

- Tyler, Lyon Gardiner. "The South and Germany," *Confederate Veteran* 25 (1917).
- Warren, Louis A. *Lincoln's Gettysburg Declaration: "A New Birth of Freedom."* Fort Wayne, Ind., 1964.
- Wert, J. Howard. "Lincoln at Gettysburg," *The Patriot* (Harrisburg, Pa.). Feb. 12, 1909.
- Wills, Gary. *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America.* New York, 1992.
- Wilson, Quintus C. "Confederate Press Association: A Pioneer News Agency." *Journalism Quarterly* 26 (June 1949): 160-66.
- Wilson, Woodrow. *History of the American People.* New York, 1918.
- Woollcott, Alexander. *For Us The Living.* Radio City, N.Y., 1941.