

The Gettysburg Address

Abraham Lincoln

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

November 18, 1863

Introduction

There are five known copies of the speech in Lincoln's handwriting, each with a slightly different text, and named for the people who first received them:

- [Alexander Bliss](#)
- [John G. Nicolay](#)
- [John Hay](#)
- [Edward Everett](#)
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Two copies apparently were written before delivering the speech, one of which probably was the reading copy. The remaining ones were produced months later for soldier benefit events. Despite widely-circulated stories to the contrary, the president did not dash off a copy aboard a train to Gettysburg. Lincoln carefully prepared his major speeches in advance; his steady, even script in every manuscript is consistent with a firm writing surface, not the notoriously bumpy Civil War-era trains. Additional versions of the speech appeared in newspapers of the era, feeding modern-day confusion about the authoritative text.

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[Return To Top of Page](#)

The Bliss Copy

Ever since Lincoln wrote it in 1864, this version has been the most often reproduced, notably on the walls of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. It is named after Colonel Alexander Bliss, stepson of historian George Bancroft. Bancroft asked President Lincoln for a copy to use as a fundraiser for soldiers (see "[Bancroft Copy](#)" below). However, because Lincoln wrote on both sides of the paper, the speech could not be reprinted, so Lincoln made another copy at Bliss's request. It is the last known copy written by Lincoln and the only one signed and dated by him. Today it is on display at the Lincoln Room of the White House.

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

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

1

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

[Return To Top of Page](#)

The Nicolay Copy

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

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

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do.

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[Return To Top of Page](#)

The Hay Copy

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

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1 <!DOCTYPE html >
2 <html >
3 <head>
4   <meta charset="utf-8">
5   <title>Anchor Demonstration</title>
6 <!--
7   File:  cssdweb.edu/StudentResources/CodeSamples/AnchorDemo.html
8   maintained by Jesse M. Heines
9   Copyright (c) 2022 by Jesse Heines. All rights reserved. May be freely
10  copied or excerpted for educational purposes with credit to the author.
11  updated by JMH on November 14, 2022 at 11:04 AM
12
13  Content Source:
14  https://www.abrahamlincolnonline.org/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm
15 -->
16 </head>
17
18 <body>
19 <!-- title information at the top of the page -->
20 <header>
21   <h1>The Gettysburg Address</h1>
22   <h2>Abraham Lincoln</h2>
23   <h3>Gettysburg, Pennsylvania</h3>
24   <h4>November 18, 1863</h4>
25 </header>
26
27 <!-- = = = = = -->
28
29 <!-- all of the page's main content is contained within the DIV defined below -->
30 <div id="content">
31
32   <!-- = = = = = -->
33
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35   <p>There are five known copies of the speech in Lincoln's handwriting, each with
36   a slightly different text, and named for the people who first received them: </p>
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39     <li ><a href="#Ni col ay">John G. Nicolay</a></li >
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57       target="_blank">
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60
61   <!-- = = = = = -->
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64 <p class="commentary">Ever since Lincoln wrote it in 1864, this version has been the
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New Hampshire State Prison for Men • November 15, 2022

```
1 <!DOCTYPE html >
2 <html >
3 <head>
4   <meta charset="utf-8">
5   <title>Anchor Demonstration with CSS</title>
6 <!--
7   File:  cssdweb.edu/StudentResources/CodeSamples/AnchorDemo_withCSS.html
8   maintained by Jesse M. Heines
9   Copyright (c) 2022 by Jesse Heines. All rights reserved. May be freely
10  copied or excerpted for educational purposes with credit to the author.
11  updated by JMH on November 14, 2022 at 11:18 AM
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13  Content Source:
14    https://www.abrahamlincolnline.org/lincoln/speeches/gettysburg.htm
15
16  CSS Reference:
17    http://www.java2s.com/example/html-css/css-layout/3-row-div-layout.html
18 -->
19 <style>
20   #wrapper {
21     position : absolute ;
22     top : 0 ;
23     bottom : 0 ;
24     width : 100% ;
25   }
26   header, footer, #content {
27     position : absolute ;
28     width : 100% ;
29   }
30   header {
31     top : 0 ;
32     background-color : black ;
33     color : white ;
34     padding : 0.5em 0 ;
35     height : 6em ;
36   }
37   header h1, header h2, header h3 {
38     margin : 0 ;
39     text-align : center ;
40   }
41   header h2 {
42     margin-bottom : 0.25em ;
43   }
44   #content {
45     top : 7em ;
46     bottom : 3em ;
47     overflow : auto ;
48     width : 99% ;
49   }
50   #content h2 {
51     margin-top : 0 ;
52     padding-top : 1em ;
53   }
54   footer {
55     bottom : 0 ;
56     background-color : black ;
57     height : 3em ;
58     color : white ;
59     text-align : center ;
60   }
61
```

```

62     #inner-content {
63         padding-right : 5px ;
64     }
65 </style>
66
67 </head>
68
69 <body>
70
71 <!-- the entire page is contained within the DIV defined below to allow -->
72 <!-- us to defined three embedded sections that all behave differently -->
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