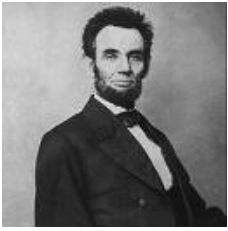


Abraham Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address



Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States. He was born on February 12, 1809 in a log cabin in Kentucky. Abe had one sister, Sarah who was two years older than him. He also had a brother Thomas, who died as a baby. The Lincoln family worked hard but did not have much money. There were no schools but lucky for Abe and his sister, his mother Nancy knew how to read and write and she taught them. They read the Bible over and over again until Abe could read it by himself. He grew to love books and would do whatever he could to borrow one. Books were very rare in the backwoods where they lived.

Sadly Abe's mom died when he was 9 years old. They now lived in the woods of Indiana and there were no churches nearby or ministers to speak words of comfort at her grave. Since Abe knew how to write, he wrote a letter to a preacher his family knew in Kentucky. Many months passed, but the preacher came. He had ridden 100 miles on horseback through dangerous woods all because a young boy wrote him a letter. Finally words of comfort and prayers were said at the grave under the Sycamore tree. From that time forward, Abe's mind was filled with a high and noble purpose because of the kind act of that preacher. His mother had taught him to love truth and justice, to be honest and follow God. These are lessons he never forgot. He said all he was or hoped to be, he owed to his angel Mother.

Abraham Lincoln's dad remarried Sarah Johnson. She treated Abe very well and encouraged him to attend school. He worked his way up to the State Legislature. He became a lawyer in Illinois and was elected to Congress in 1846. On March 4th 1861 he was inaugurated 16th president of the United States. The Civil war began on April 12, 1861, a month after he was elected. The war began about keeping the Union and stopping the Confederate Southern states from separating. It ended up being about Freedom. President Lincoln was against slavery. On January 1st, 1863 President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, it said that all persons held as slaves shall be free. This did not end the Civil war but it did change it to a war for freedom with a moral purpose.

The Battle of Gettysburg was fought on July 1-3, 1863 and it was the turning point of the war. The union won the battle but not before 51,000 Americans died in the 3 day battle. President Lincoln was invited to speak at the dedication ceremony for the Gettysburg National Cemetery. He used the time to honor the dead and redefine the purpose of the war with his Gettysburg Address. The main speaker, Edward Everett spoke for 2 hours. Abraham Lincoln spoke for two

minutes. His speech is now known as one of the greatest and most memorable speeches in United States history. Here is

what he said that day on the grounds of the cemetery:



Executive Mansion,
Washington, 1862

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

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. This we do, in all propriety. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow, this ground -- the brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here. It is rather for us, the living, to stand here,

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

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

altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

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

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