2013

Afterward

Abraham Lincoln

Gabor Boritt
Gettysburg College

James Daugherty

Roles

Author: Abraham Lincoln
Afterward written by: Gabor Boritt, Gettysburg College
Illustrator: James Daugherty

Follow this and additional works at: http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cwifac

Part of the Political History Commons, Social History Commons, and the United States History Commons

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.


This is the publisher's version of the work. This publication appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution. Cupola permanent link: http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cwifac/8

This open access book chapter is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact cupola@gettysburg.edu.
Afterward

Abstract
Caldecott Honoree and Newbery Medalist James Daugherty’s pictorial interpretation of President Abraham Lincoln’s famous speech, the Gettysburg Address, was originally published by Albert Whitman & Company in 1947. This book is available again in a fresh new edition just in time for the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address with a new introduction by Lincoln- and Civil War-scholar Gabor S. Boritt.

Keywords
Gettysburg Address, Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln, Civil War, famous speeches, James Daugherty, common core, WPA artwork, Art history, American history, War Between the States, slaves, slavery, 13th amendment

Disciplines
History | Political History | Social History | United States History

This book chapter is available at The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College: http://cupola.gettysburg.edu/cwifac/8
Afterward

ABRAHAM LINCOLN
DID NOT KNOW THAT HE
WOULD BE DELIVERING THE
GETTYSBURG ADDRESS ON
NOVEMBER 19, 1863, UNTIL
A FEW DAYS BEFOREHAND.

To be the president of the United States was
overwhelming, especially during the Civil
War. (Even in the twenty-first century,
the presidency is, at times, bewildering—and also
wonderful.) For the dedication of the National
Cemetery in Gettysburg, William Seward did come
prepared with a speech. He became the president's
closest friend and one of the best-known secretaries
of state—he later became known for buying Alaska.
Seward understood that Lincoln was a one-of-a-
kind individual. And they both believed that
the people could save the United States of America.

Seward wrote his speech for his own "Gettysburg
Address" ahead of time. He gave it the night before
Lincoln’s in Gettysburg, in a building right next to
the Wills House, where Lincoln stayed overnight,
as did dozens of others. It was a celebration for
many the whole night. In the end, when he gave
his speech, the secretary of state made it clear that
slavery was the central event of the war, and that
Abraham Lincoln understood that.

The president himself came to Gettysburg on
November 18—as did so many more, including
Seward. Lincoln left the White House at noon.
The train flew at 25 mph—an amazing pace for
that time. They got to the Gettysburg station at
dusk, and an immense crowd cheered him. He
and the dignitaries walked the short distance
to the Wills House, next to the town’s center.

Today it is called the Lincoln Square. Then
dinner came. It was repeatedly interrupted by
boisterous masses, military bands, and a singing
group. Loud voices called out, "Old Abe!" and
"Father Abraham!" At last, Lincoln obliged to
go outdoors.

"I do not appear before you for the purpose of
speechifying," he said; he had "several substantial
reasons. The most substantial of these is that I have
no speech to make." The crowd laughed. People
expected Abe to be funny; they liked what they
were getting. "It is somewhat important in my
position that one should not say any foolish things
if he can help it..."

"If you can help it," a voice rang out. The
delighted crowd laughed again heartily.

... and to help it is to say nothing at all.
Believing that that is my precise position this
evening, I must beg you from saying one word."

In 118 or so words, Lincoln acquitted himself:
his first Gettysburg “address.” The next day the
main speaker would be Edward Everett.

We should remember that Everett was the most
distinguished orator at the time: a New England
minister, professor, Harvard president, governor of
Massachusetts, congressman, senator, secretary of
state, and presidential candidate in 1860. But he
did not support Abraham Lincoln because there
were four candidates at that time, and Everett was
in some ways conservative. By November 1863, he
was ready to support the president.

Most people today think that orators are rather
boring. In those days, however, speeches were central
to political life—it was considered entertainment
in an era before television, modern sports, Internet,
phones, and more. So Everett spoke for two hours,
extraportaneously, in spite of the fact that he was
seventy years old and had had a stroke. Some said it
was his best speech ever. He spoke about the battle
at great length, but in the most important part of
the oration, he spoke about countries who fought
each other over long periods of time but in the end
made peace among themselves. That’s what Everett
hoped for: peace after the Civil War.
After Everett, and before we get back to Lincoln’s address, we need to pause. We need to talk a little about the artist and his work, which is not only about the Gettysburg Address but also about the second World War. The two wars are connected. One of the most respected American historians of the last fifty years, Arthur Schlesinger Jr. explained boldly that the American republic “has gone through two awful times of testing since the achievement of independence—two times when the life of the nation was critically at stake . . .” The two presidents were Lincoln and Franklin D. Roosevelt.

*Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address* was created by James Daugherty (1889, Asheville–1974, Boston), who wrote this book two years after the second World War. He was a painter and illustrator. One of his children’s works won the Newbery Award, and another was nominated for the Caldecott Award. Not surprisingly, his Gettysburg Address colors are bright and bold; adults and children can enjoy them equally.

The book begins with the early Puritans and Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, and ends after the second World War. His people are women, men, and children; black, brown, blond, and Asian. We haven’t seen a Gettysburg Address book like this since. The artist was a special man.

Then the address. The solemn tone changed totally in the morning by the people. Consecration.

Lincoln finished part of his text in the White House—the rest, that night in Gettysburg. The full second version was completed late that night or in the morning, though we cannot be entirely certain. Later there would be three revisions, but the most important change he made at the cemetery on the morning of the nineteenth: “under God.”

Earlier in the morning, Lincoln went on a battlefield tour with Seward, and he came back to the Wills House. Then the people and Lincoln were ready to go. He got on his horse and his text was with him.

 Funeral music. The cemetery. Respected silence for the president. Men and women were supposed to be separated, but the sexes were mixed together by the crowds. Then the music stopped. A Methodist minister stood up and gave a very long prayer. The ending finished with the Lord’s Prayer, and the multitudes joined spontaneously. Yet the president’s young secretary, John Hay, commented irreverently in his diary: The preacher made “a prayer which thought it was an oration.” Lincoln’s speech was four times shorter.

But then perhaps the most beautiful hymn followed: “The Old Hundred.” Next, Edward Everett. Two hours. Applause. Next, a consecration chant: “This is holy ground.” Lincoln would follow briefly. There would be a dirge and a short benediction. Amen.

“Four score and seven years ago”—Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address. He reminded people of the Declaration of Independence of July 4, 1776. “Liberty . . . All men are created equal. . . War . . . Great battlefield . . . The living and dead.” The future. Lincoln spoke to the world. We are the people. This is who we are. “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.”

— Gabor Boritt, Emeritus
Civil War Institute
Flaherty Professor of Civil War Studies
Gettysburg College

This afterword is dedicated to PAUL R. S. BORITT. He saved the lives of thousands of people at the end of the second World War in Hungary.