



2013

## Afterward

Abraham Lincoln

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James Daugherty

### **Roles**

Author: Abraham Lincoln

Afterward written by: Gabor Boritt, Gettysburg College

Illustrator: James Daugherty

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## **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



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

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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, extemporaneously, 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.



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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, Ashville–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.

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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.

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"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."

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*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.*