

# LINCOLN LORE

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## VARIATIONS IN THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

There are six transcriptions of the Gettysburg Address by Lincoln all different in some minor particulars, also many copied reports of what Lincoln actually said, and thousands of variations of these stenographic records due to typographical errors.

Three versions of the address may be used as examples of the sources from which verbatim copies are said to have been taken: first, a preliminary draft of the address prepared by Lincoln some time before its delivery; second, a report of what Lincoln actually said as recorded by an official commissioner at the dedication; and third, a final copy written in Lincoln's own hand.

The preliminary version used which is called the battlefield copy is the one which Lincoln is known to have had with him at Gettysburg. It was written on two separate sheets of paper, one in ink on the Executive Mansion stationery and the other in pencil on a piece of ruled paper. One theory affirms that Lincoln wrote out a somewhat different version before the delivery of the address. The battlefield copy appears on this sheet in light face type.

The account of what Lincoln actually said at Gettysburg which seems to be the most reliable is published in the official report of the commission appointed by the Governor of Massachusetts to represent the state at Gettysburg. In the foreword appears this observation, "The latter (Lincoln's address), which has not generally been printed rightly, having been marred from errors in telegraphing, is appended . . . in the correct form, as the words actually spoken by the President, with great deliberation, were taken down by one of the undersigned."

The variations in the copy of the spoken words as taken down by the Massachusetts commissioner, Charles Everett, brother of Edward Everett, are not so important as the paragraphing and punctuation which gives us the best idea of the phrasing of the address as delivered. This version is shown in the opposite column by the use of italics.

The copy of the address which is now accepted everywhere as the authoritative copy was prepared by Abraham Lincoln and written out by him for Bancroft, the historian, and published in lithograph facsimile in *Autographed Leaves of Our Country's Authors*. This is the version which should always be used for memorial inscriptions as the authentic copy of the Gettysburg Address. It appears in the opposite column in bold-face type occupying the third line in the series of reproductions.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth,  
*Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth*  
Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth  
upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty,  
*upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty*  
on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty.

and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal."  
*and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.*  
and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation,  
*Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation—*

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation,  
or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure.  
*or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated—can long endure.*  
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

*We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We are met*  
We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come

to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those  
*to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting-place of those*  
to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those  
who died here, that the nation might live.

*who have given their lives that that nation might live.*  
who here gave their lives that that nation might live.

This we may, in all propriety do.  
*It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.*

It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—  
*But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate,*

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,  
*we cannot hallow, this ground. The brave men, living and dead,*  
we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead,  
who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power  
*who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our power*  
who struggled here have consecrated it, far above our poor power

to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember  
*to add or to detract. The world will very little note nor long remember*  
to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember

what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.

*what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here.*

what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.

It is rather for us, the living, we here be dedicated to the great

*It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated, here, to the unfinished*

It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished

*work that they have thus far so nobly carried on.*

work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.

task remaining

*It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining*

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

*before us; that from these honored dead we take increased devotion*

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—

*to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion:*

to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—

that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain;

*that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain;*

that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—

that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom,

*that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom,*

that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—

and that government of the people by the people for the people,

*and that government of the people, by the people, for the people,*

and that government of the people, by the people, for the people,

shall not perish from the earth.

*shall not perish from the earth.*

shall not perish from the earth.