

# LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor  
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Number 911

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

September 23, 1946

## DEDICATION DAY, NOVEMBER NINETEENTH

A law has recently been enacted by Congress which calls upon the President to set aside by proclamation November 19, 1946 as Dedication Day. This is the anniversary day of Abraham Lincoln's famous speech delivered at the consecration of the soldier's cemetery at Gettysburg where one of the great battles of the Civil War was fought. As far as we can learn this is the first time any country has set apart a day to memorialize an address.

This will be the fourth special day in the calendar more or less associated with Abraham Lincoln: February 12, Lincoln's Birthday; May 30, Memorial Day; November 19, Dedication Day, and the fourth Thursday (formerly the last Thursday) in November, Thanksgiving Day. It was Abraham Lincoln who issued the first annual national Thanksgiving proclamation in 1863 and established the annual observance as a precedent by again setting the day apart in 1864.

The joint resolution to set aside Dedication Day was introduced by the Honorable Louis Ludlow, a Democratic Congressman from Indiana serving in the House of Representatives. The statement setting forth the purpose of the bill follows:

"Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, dedicating every loyal American to the service of our country for all time to come, is recognized by world authorities as one of the greatest patriotic documents of the ages.

"The purpose of this resolution is to designate the anniversary of the Gettysburg Address as Dedication Day. The President is requested to proclaim November 19, 1946, as Dedication Day and to suggest that the address be read on that day in public assemblages throughout the United States and its possessions, on our ships at sea, and wherever the American flag flies."

The bill as it came before the Senate on July 3, 1946 after having been twice read before the Judiciary Committee is here presented.

79th CONGRESS  
2d Session

H. J. RES. 35

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

July 3, 1946

Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

### JOINT RESOLUTION

Designating November 19, 1946, the anniversary of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, as Dedication Day. Whereas the Gettysburg Address of President Abraham Lincoln is the outstanding classic of the ages; and Whereas it will touch the hearts of men and inspire them with faith in our matchless democracy as long as time endures; and

Whereas in that address Mr. Lincoln adjured his fellow countrymen to dedicate themselves to the principles of democracy in order that government "of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth": Therefore be it

1 Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives  
2 of the United States of America in Congress assembled.

1 That November 19, 1946, the anniversary of the  
Gettysburg

2 Address, be, and hereby is, designated in our calendar  
of

3 special days as Dedication Day.

4 That the President of the United States is re-  
quested

5 to proclaim November 19, 1946, as Dedication Day  
and to

6 suggest that the address be read on that day in public  
assem-

7 blages throughout the United States and its posses-  
sions, on

8 our ships at sea and wherever the American Flag flies.

Passed the House of Representatives July 2, 1946.

Attest:

SOUTH TRIMBLE,  
Clerk.

The House Joint Resolution No. 35 having passed both houses was approved on August 7, 1946 and is noted as Public Law 645-79th Congress.

Dedication Day should encourage a new approach towards an appreciation of the Gettysburg Address. To merely recite it as a declamation or to read it as a literary composition will not fulfill the sentiment behind the Bill. It should be read with understanding as one would interpret the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, or the Bill of Rights.

The Charles E. Merrill Company of Columbus has just brought from the press a thirty-two page booklet by the editor of Lincoln Lore entitled: *Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, An Evaluation for America's New Dedication Day*. This publication has been especially prepared for use in the high schools of America and it is an attempt to encourage a more careful study of the preparation for the address and the argument which Lincoln developed.

The monograph first tries to make way for an intelligent understanding of the preparation and reception of the address by pointing out the folk-lore and tradition which has obscured the factual evidence relating to its composition and immediate appraisal. The background for the address presents the chief contributions to Lincoln's Literary Style, Oratorical Powers and Patriotic Fervor. Lincoln's advancement as an orator is traced until one would anticipate that someday he might speak as eloquently as he did at Gettysburg.

The evaluation of the speech itself is achieved by approaching the address as a composite whole rather than a collection of epigrams. The discussion attempts to point out the topic which Lincoln chose to consider by utilizing Biblical terms relating to the nativity scene. In developing his argument Lincoln stressed the origin and perpetuity of the nation.

An attempt to discover where Lincoln placed the emphasis in the conclusion of the address, calls for the consideration of four resolutions which Lincoln presented, and which are designated as the Political Emphasis, The Global Emphasis, The Casualty Emphasis and the Nativity Emphasis. Considering the developing of the thesis with its nativity introduction the climax would seem to be reached in the expression, "this nation, under God, shall have a new Birth of Freedom."

With a "new Birth of Freedom" the "dead shall not have died in vain" and it would also be assured "that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth."