

# LINCOLN LORE

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## THE CHRONICLE COVERS THE GETTYSBURG CEREMONIES

This year November 19th falls on the same day of the week as it did ninety years ago when Abraham delivered his famous address at Gettysburg. The *Washington Daily Morning Chronicle* seems to have given the most complete coverage of the ceremonies, although it is seldom quoted as a source for authentic information about the events associated with the dedicatory rites at the cemetery. Some excerpts from its pages with a few comments about the address itself in particular seem to be especially timely at this season.

The *Chronicle* was published by John W. Forney, secretary of the Senate. He also issued the *Philadelphia Press* and *Forney's War Press*, a weekly newspaper also published at Philadelphia. He had formerly been a Douglas Democrat but had become a supporter of the administration to such an extent that the *Chronicle* was often referred to as Lincoln's paper. When Lincoln prepared what he called "The President's last shortest and best speech" he requested that the copy be given to the *Chronicle*.

As early as November 5, Forney's Washington paper announced that Mr. William Sanders, director of the experimental gardens of the Agricultural Dept., had left Washington for Gettysburg with the plans he had drawn for the cemetery. A week later Ward H. Lamont, marshal of the District of Columbia, wrote the other marshalls appointed for the ceremonies some details about the program. With reference to Lincoln's speech he stated that after a dirge by the choir there would follow the "Dedicatory remarks by the President of the United States, setting apart the grounds for the sacred use for which it had been prepared." In the same issue of the *Chronicle* that carried the above information General Meade's report on the battle of Gettysburg was published.

The first contingent leaving Washington to make immediate preparations for the Gettysburg ceremonies, headed by Marshall Ward H. Lamont, left Washington on Tuesday morning at 11:15 A.M. in a special car. They arrived in Baltimore at 1:00 P.M. and were guests of Captain Smith at the Eutaw House. Leaving the city at 3:00 P.M. they reached Hanover Junction at 7 o'clock. Negligence in providing transportation to Gettysburg by railroad authorities made it necessary for the party to lay over until 7:00 A.M. Wednesday, de-

laying their arrival at their destination until 9:30 A.M.

The purpose of the *Chronicle* to give the dedication a thorough and extended coverage is indicated by this announcement, "We dispatched to Gettysburg on Wednesday, four special correspondents." This did not include Forney himself who had gone with the Marshall Lamont contingent and was an eye witness of the exercises, as well as a participant in the extemporaneous speeches the evening before the dedication. The *Chronicle* reporters picked up among the human interest incidents those especially which occurred the day before the celebration. They gave considerable space to the arrival of the President's train at dusk, the meeting of the marshalls at 8:00 P.M. in the court house, the serenade of the President at 10:00 P.M. and his comments, the speeches of some of the other celebrities called upon, and the arrival of the "Governor's Special" train at 11:00 P.M.

The major part which the *Washington Daily Morning Chronicle* was

"The President then delivered his address, which, though short, glittered with gems, evincing the gentleness and goodness of heart peculiar to him, and will receive the attention of all the tens of thousands who will read it."

to play in recording the proceedings of the eventful day was indicated at Washington by the draping of flags in front of their office by Mrs. D. C. Forney and Mrs. E. A. Smith. This tribute to the Chief Executive appeared in the columns of the morning paper on the day of the ceremonies: "His presence at the dedication will help to deepen the impressions of the scene, for what more noble spectacle could be presented to a nation struggling for its supremacy than to behold its chief magistrate an humble mourner at the grave of those who saved the country on the memorable days of July last from great peril, not to say destruction."

There is some indication that the President arose early on the morning of the 19th. One of the reporters who interviewed Seward later in the morning said the Secretary of the State commented: "I visited the ground around the Seminary this morning and Mr. Lincoln joined in." The weather conditions were set forth in

a statement by another representative of the *Chronicle*. While he observed that there was some rainfall in the early morning of Wednesday he described Thursday the dedication day in this language, "The sun never broke to life and warmth on a fairer fall day than this. A sharp night's frost was succeeded by one of the most beautiful Indian summer days ever enjoyed."

Issues of the *Chronicle* for Nov. 20 and Nov. 21 gave much space to the dispatches of its representatives at Gettysburg. Apparently two editions came from the press on Thursday morning, both featuring Everett's long address in toto, it was apparently set from a preliminary copy of the speech, possibly the copy Everett sent to Lincoln. One issue was an edition marked 5:00 A.M. In this dispatch the complete story of the ceremonies was published including the President's brief address as well as the comment about it which appears within the ruled lines on this page. The reaction of one of the reporters to Lincoln's display of emotion during the delivery of the address is couched in these words: "It seemed to us that the President sensibly felt the solemnity of the occasion and controlled himself by an effort. This might have been fancy but it was our impression, and as such we record it."

In preparing the pamphlet "Four Lincoln Firsts," it is to be regretted that Paul M. Angle did not have the 5:00 A.M. edition before him when he alleged that, "The *Washington Chronicle* failed to publish Lincoln's speech in its daily issues." The editorial column on Friday made the announcement: "Edward Everett's great oration and the proceedings of the dedication of the national cemetery at Gettysburg will be issued tomorrow in pamphlet form. For sale at the *Chronicle* office." This pamphlet entitled *The Gettysburg Solemnities* printed the Lincoln address verbatim as it appeared in the 5:00 A.M. edition on November 20.

We regret that the issues of the *Chronicle* consulted did not supply any leads for the discovery of the copy of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address said to have been made for Judge Wills, the President's host at Gettysburg. The Blumhaven Library at Frankford, Philadelphia has offered the sum of \$5,000 to any person who will produce the document for unrestricted examination and which could be certified as genuine by a unanimous vote of five named Lincoln students. The offer expires on December 31, 1953.