
Questions

1. What is the tone of Schurz's reminiscences at Gettysburg? Is he angry, repulsed by what he sees, resigned to the ordeal?
 2. How do you think civilian contemporaries might have responded to descriptions such as Schurz's? Were most of them knowledgeable about battlefield conditions? What is the significance of whether they were or not?
 3. Is Schurz's account credible? How reliable are memoirs or reminiscences as historical sources?
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14-9 The Gettysburg Address (1863)

Abraham Lincoln

The Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863 was the bloodiest of the Civil War. But the costly Union victory strengthened northern resolve and ended any hopes the Confederacy had of winning foreign recognition. Later that year, in a speech dedicating a cemetery at Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln helped define the modern concept of the American nation.

Source: "The Gettysburg Address" by Abraham Lincoln (1863).

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

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, who struggled here, have consecrated

it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. 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 to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—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.

Questions

1. Why did Lincoln say in 1863 that the United States had been founded on the "proposition that all men are created equal"?
2. Why did Lincoln want to tie the Union's cause so closely to that of the founders? Was Lincoln attempting to redefine the Union cause with the Gettysburg Address? If so, in what way?
3. Lincoln concluded his address with the thought "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom." What type of freedom did he mean?

Questions for Further Thought

1. Many historians have argued that at this point the Civil War changed character and became a struggle over fundamentally different issues than it had been