

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT

GETTYSBURG - Pa.

JULY 3, 1938.

I accept on behalf of the people of the United States
I accept this movement in the spirit of brotherhood and
Immortal deeds and immortal words have created here *peace.*

a shrine of American patriotism. We are encompassed by
"The last full measure of devotion" of many men and by the
words in which Abraham Lincoln expressed the simple faith
for which they died.

It seldom helps to wonder how a statesman of one
generation would surmount the crisis of another. A statesman
deals with concrete difficulties -- with things which must
be done from day to day. Not often can he frame conscious
patterns for the far off future.

But the fullness of the stature of Lincoln's nature
and the fundamental conflict which events forced upon his
Presidency, invite us ever to turn to him for help.

For the issue which he restated on this spot seventy-five years ago will be the continuing issue before this nation so long as we cling to the purposes for which it was founded -- to preserve under the changing conditions of each generation a people's government for the people's good.

The task assumes different shapes at different times. Sometimes the threat to popular government comes from political interests, sometimes from economic interests, sometimes we have to beat off all of them together.

But the challenge is always the same -- whether each generation facing its own circumstances can summon the practical devotion to attain and retain that greatest good for the greatest number which this government of the people was created to ensure.

Lincoln spoke in solace for all who fought upon this field, and the years have laid their balm upon its wounds.

Men who wore the Blue and men who wore the Gray are here together, a fragment spared by time. They are brought here by the memories of old divided loyalties, but they meet here in united loyalty to a united cause which the unfolding years have made it easier to see.

All of them we honor, not asking under which Flag they fought then -- thankful that they stand together under one Flag now.

Lincoln was commander-in-chief in this old battle; he wanted above all things to be commander-in-chief of the new peace. He understood that battle there must be; that when a challenge to constituted government is thrown down, the people must in self-defense take it up; that the fight must be fought through to a decision so clear that it is accepted as being beyond recall.

But Lincoln also understood that after such a decision, a democracy should seek peace through a new unity. For a democracy can keep alive only if the settlement of old difficulties clears the ground and transfers energies to face

responsibilities.
new ~~tasks~~. Never can it have as much ability and purpose as it needs in that striving; the end of battle does not end the infinity of those needs.

That is why Lincoln -- commander of a people as well as of an army -- asked that his battle end "with malice toward none, with charity for all".

To the hurt of those who came after him, Lincoln's plea was long denied. A generation passed before the new unity became accepted fact.

In later years new needs arose, and with them new tasks, worldwide in their perplexities, their bitterness and their modes of strife. Here in our land we give thanks that, avoiding war, we seek our ends through the peaceful processes of popular government under the Constitution.

It is another conflict, as fundamental as Lincoln's, fought not with glint of steel, but with appeals to reason and justice on a thousand fronts -- seeking to save for our common country opportunity and security for citizens in a free society.

We are near to winning this battle. In its winning
and through the years may we live by the wisdom and the
humanity of the heart of Abraham Lincoln.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

(Orig. reading copy)