

YOUR GETTYSBURG ADDRESS!

Abraham Lincoln spoke at the battlefield and graveyard of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania on November 19th of 1863.

The situation was that the United States was in conflict and divided into two parts, and actually at war with each other.

The question at hand was: Could the nation stay united and be free of the practice of slavery?

To Lincoln this was a test. A test of a proposition. The proposition was stated in the Declaration of Independence from 1776: That All people are created Equal and that they could set up a government without a King.

It proved impossible to settle the answer to that question without a mighty and terrible war.

Those who died in the Battle at Gettysburg had died trying to make their answer: Yes or No, could we stay together and not have slavery.

You could say that Lincoln's side had won because they won the Battle at Gettysburg and soon other places.

To Lincoln this was a victory for more than a union of people, more than an affirmation of the rule of the Constitution and Law, even more than just beginning to end slavery.

For him it was like Mother giving birth. "A new birth of freedom" he called it, for Black people and for white people. There would democracy, a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people" and that it would "not perish from the earth."

America is in a similar time of division. The question is:

Can democracy handle it? Can the people have a new birth of freedom both being together and moving forward with the idea of equality and democracy?

If there were a battle now, who would you want to win? And if there was great sacrifice, such as battlefield deaths, and a burial ground, what would you want to say to the people at the it's dedication?

And how would you use 272 words to do it?! That's all that Lincoln used in his Gettysburg Address.

Please write yours. Send it in to Rev. Dr. Duncan D. Newcomer marked "My Gettysburg Address!" c/o the Belfast Library. By June 20th.

If yours is the best you can read it at the "America Tonight!" event at the Alamo Theatre, July 3rd, from 6-8, and win \$75.

Also celebrating the publication of a new book entitled "Quiet Fire: The Spiritual Life of Abraham Lincoln" written by Belfast's, own Duncan D. Newcomer