

Our Second American Civil War – To Preserve

The American Civil War – 1861 to 1865

The great American Civil War caused the populations of the North and South to struggle both on the battlefields and in their communities from 1861 to 1865. It was for the sake of this discussion America's 'second' Civil War. It was fought in order "to save the Union." It was a domestic war that was engaged to determine if the United States would be held together as a sovereign nation, or would be split in two. It was an economic and societal war in which the South desired separation in order to maintain a way of life and the region's economic system.

President Abraham Lincoln's first responsibility and goal was to preserve the Union. The issue of ending slavery was a secondary issue and was not even a major concern at the start of the conflict.

President Lincoln signed the *Emancipation Proclamation* on September 22, 1862 and it was enacted on January 1, 1863 toward the middle of the war. The document declared that the slaves,

“shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free”

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When the Northern states prevailed over the Southern states, the nation remained united. Slavery in America was also ended. American-Blacks took their first big step toward equality at that point in time.

However, it would take another 100 years until the 1960s for them to take the final required step toward social and economic equality.

Again the Constitution had facilitated the correction of errors made in our nation's past — by way of legislative action that reflected changing public values and attitudes, and demonstrating the concern that Americans have for one another regardless of their differences. The nation was continuing to mature.

The conduct of the Civil War resulted in grim human numbers showing that the North suffered over 640,000 killed and wounded, while the South had over 335,000 killed and wounded on their side.

The Deadliest of American Days

In the first four days of July 1863 on the fields of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania over 50,000 Northern and Southern soldiers were killed. Close to the number lost in the entire Vietnam War (approx., 58,000) and even closer to those killed in action during the Korean War (approx 54,000). And all in only four (4) deadly days! It has been said since that war that we Americans are better at killing each other than anyone else.

In November 1863, President Lincoln traveled to Gettysburg to dedicate the new national cemetery and there delivered his inspirational *Gettysburg Address*.

This second American Civil War was also a physical and very bloody conflict followed by practical legislation designed to refine the National System for the Common Good of the people — and to *Preserve* the nation.

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The complete texts of the President Abraham Lincoln's *Emancipation Proclamation* and *Gettysburg Address* are presented next.

The Emancipation Proclamation

Emancipation Proclamation as reprinted here was issued on January 1, 1863, under the heading, “By the President of the United States of America: A Proclamation.”

Whereas, on the 22nd day of September, in the year of our Lord 1862, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

That on the 1st day of January, in the year of our Lord 1863, all persons held as slaves within any state or designated part of a state, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, **shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free**; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

That the executive will, on the 1st day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the states and parts of states, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any state or the people thereof shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such states shall have participated shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such state and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States.

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as commander in chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this 1st day of January, in the year of our Lord 1863, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of 100 days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the states and parts of states wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States the following, to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess

Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And, by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated states and parts of states are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President: Abraham Lincoln

William H. Seward, Secretary of State.

Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address

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 cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot 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.

Delivered on November 19, 1863

For the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

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Lincoln's address of just 267 words is considered one of the greatest political pieces ever written. Since then countless volumes have been written on the power of its message and the supreme humanity in its spirit.