in the House, Everett was elected governor of Massachusetts. He briefly returned to academia as president of Harvard from 1846 to 1849. Everett returned to Washington as secretary of state in 1852. The following year he entered the U.S. Senate. As one who had been schooled at the highest levels of public oratory for years, Everett—a man praised by former students such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and one of the nation’s most popular orators—seemed to be a natural selection for such an important occasion. In addition to Lincoln, those scheduled to join Everett at the podium were the Reverend T.H. Stockton, who would give the opening prayer; B. B. French, who composed a hymn for the occasion; and the Reverend H. L. Baugher, who was to deliver the benediction.

Shortly after noon on 18 November 1863, Lincoln boarded the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from Washington. In Baltimore, the President’s coach was switched to the North Central line, which made a brief stop in Hanover Junction, Pennsylvania. Arriving in Gettysburg at dusk, Lincoln was met by the principal organizers and participants of the dedication ceremonies. Coffins for the reinterment of soldiers still lined the station platform when the president disembarked from the train. That evening the leader of the Union dined with Everett, who spoke of the somber scenes he had witnessed two days earlier on a tour of the battlefield. Later that evening the Fifth New York Artillery band serenaded the president and shortly thereafter, the commander in chief retired to his room to put the finishing touches on his speech. Late the following morning, Everett, Lincoln, and other dignitaries gathered on the small raised platform near the partially completed burial grounds. Tens of thousands of onlookers gathered that morning, many of them family members of the dead who had traveled long distances, waiting to hear words of consolation that would somehow make sense of the personal tragedies that had befallen them. Spoken among the poignant realities of war, Lincoln’s remarks would soon transform this scene of despair and purposelessness into a symbol of national purpose and sacred cause.

“The World Will Little Note, Nor Long Remember What We Say Here”

Completing his speech, Lincoln purportedly returned to his seat suggesting to his bodyguard, Ward Lamon, that the remarks, like a bad plow, “won’t scour.” This myth, along with many others that emerged in the years following the address, suggest that Lincoln gave only scant time to prepare for his speech and subsequently was disappointed by its results. Lincoln’s words, however, were not the result of his simply jotting down notes on the back of an envelope during his train ride from Washington to Pennsylvania; instead, the Gettysburg Address was the product of a gifted writer who over time had carefully crafted his message to give it a power and resonance that extended beyond the local residents, mourners, and curious spectators who gathered on that fall afternoon. With the exception of his contemporary partisan detractors, Lincoln’s efforts were enormously successful on this account.

Historians have suggested that the president accomplished this objective by employing three principal literary techniques. The first was a compression of style. Lincoln’s economy of the written word modeled itself after some of the great political orations of antiquity. This style, harkening to the past, appealed to Americans who were schooled in the classics. A second and related technique employed by Lincoln was a suppression of particulars. Despite what we assume to be the subjects of the Gettysburg Address, the speech never refers to Gettysburg or the battle in particular and it avoids any mention of the institution of slavery, the South, the Union, or the Emancipation Proclamation. Instead, these issues are addressed indirectly by the speech with the theme of preservation of self-government at its center. Finally, Lincoln expressed ideas about the current crisis by using polarities. The juxtaposition of themes—for example, the acts of dedication among the living contrasted with those who have died—not only engaged the audience gathered at Gettysburg that day, but speak to the essential challenges facing succeeding generations of a nation “conceived in Liberty.” In this sense the Gettysburg Address retains a timeless quality, a muse for all Americans to dedicate their lives.

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Kent A. McConnell

See also Gettysburg, Battle of; Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address; Oratory; and vol. 9: Gettysburg Address.

GHENT, TREATY OF. The Treaty of Ghent, ratified by the United States on 17 February 1815, marked the official end of the War of 1812 between the United States and Britain. The war was precipitated by a number of issues that were raised during the American Revolution but left unresolved at that conflict’s end. Many of them, such as the precise boundary between British Canada and the United States, the failure of the British to remove all its troops from U.S. soil, and the status of Britain’s former
Native American allies, lingered and contributed to renewed hostilities between the Americans and the British in 1812. However, on 26 June 1812, shortly after the hostilities commenced, the American government made preliminary overtures for peace. On 21 September, the Russian chancellor offered to serve as a mediator between the two warring parties. The United States presented a peace proposal through the Russians, but the British government in March 1813 quickly rejected it. However, within a few months of that failure, the British, at that point deeply committed to fighting Napoleon’s army on the European continent, offered through their foreign secretary, Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, to enter into direct negotiations with the United States. This offer was accepted on 15 January 1814, and negotiations began in earnest between the two parties in Ghent, Belgium.

Issues regarding the impressment of American seamen, the status of the British-allied Indian groups, and the U.S. northern boundary with British Canada proved difficult to resolve. In the midst of these negotiations, on 27 September 1814, news reached London that the British had captured and burned Washington, D.C. Buoyed by this news, the British proposed that each party should retain its existing holdings. However, that British demand was totally abandoned when news of an American victory on Lake Champlain near British Canada reached London on 24 October. A temporary deadlock ensued.

But larger forces were at work for peace. The continental situation grew increasingly complex and dangerous as the British waged their battle against Napoleon’s army. Additionally, fighting a war in two separate hemispheres strained British finances, while the Duke of Wellington, Arthur Wellesley, warned that unless the British could secure the Great Lakes, a decisive victory over the Americans was implausible. Under the weight of these considerations, the British agreed to restore the status quo that had existed between the parties prior to these recent hostilities.

Additional concessions from the United States and Great Britain were also forthcoming. The United States abandoned not only its demands regarding impressment but also demands for indemnification for commercial losses incurred as a result of the war between France and
Britain. For its part, Britain agreed to respect American rights in the Newfoundland fisheries and to abandon its demand for a permanent boundary between the United States and the Indian nations. However, the Americans did agree to an immediate cessation of hostilities against these nations after war's end and the restoration of all the possessions and privileges they had enjoyed prior to the war. Both parties also agreed to employ their best efforts to abolish the slave trade. The remaining major issue, the U.S.–British Canadian boundary, remained unresolved, and the parties agreed to turn the issue over to a boundary commission that resolved the dispute in 1822.

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Faren R. Siminoff

See also War of 1812.

GHOST DANCE. The name Ghost Dance applies to two waves of a nativistic or messianic movement. Both originated among the Paiute Indians of Nevada in the nineteenth century.

In 1869 a prophet named Wodziwob began to predict supernatural events, claiming that the worn-out world would end, thus eliminating white men, and that all dead Indians would then return to the renewed world. Wodziwob professed to be in communication with the dead, and he instructed his followers to dance a circle dance and sing certain divinely revealed songs. The movement spread to the Indians of southern Oregon and northern California, but it gradually subsided when the promised supernatural events did not occur.

In 1889 there was a resurgence of the Ghost Dance, this time led by another Paiute messiah named Wovoka, or Jack Wilson. Wovoka claimed to have visited the spirit world while in a trance and to have seen God, who directed him to return to announce to the Indians that they should love one another and live peacefully, returning to the old Indian ways. By dancing and singing certain songs, they would hasten the end of the world and the disappearance of the whites. In the aftermath of this event, Indians would be restored to their hunting grounds and reunite with departed friends.

The revitalized Ghost Dance gained its principal strength among the tribes east of the Rockies. The movement spread rapidly to some Plains tribes, including the Lakota (Sioux), Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Comanche, who had recently been confined to reservations and were in the process of having their lands allotted. Enthusiasm for the dance, which included the wearing of “ghost shirts” that were supposedly impervious to bullets, led government officials to interpret the movement as a prelude to a militant revolt. Tensions mounted in late 1890 after Sitting Bull, a leader of the Ghost Dance at Standing Rock Reservation, was killed by Indian police attempting to arrest him. Two weeks later, more than two hundred Miniconjou Lakota Ghost Dancers who had fled the Cheyenne River Reservation after Sitting Bull's death were massacred by troops of the Seventh Cavalry at Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

Despite the tragedy, the Ghost Dance did not completely disappear after Wounded Knee. Although officially banned, Wovoka's original pacific doctrine continued to be practiced on the Pine Ridge Sioux Reservation into the early 1900s, and Ghost Dance congregations continued to function on Dakota reserves in Saskatchewan until the 1960s. Elements of the Ghost Dance were also incorporated into the revitalization of traditional cultural practices such as the Pawnee hand game and Kiowa war dance. Wovoka himself continued in his roles as shaman and healer at Walker River Reservation in Nevada until his death in 1932.

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Frank Rzeczkowski

See also Paiute; Wounded Knee Massacre; and vol. 9: A Letter from Wovoka.

GHOST TOWNS, the term used to identify communities that once prospered but later declined and were...