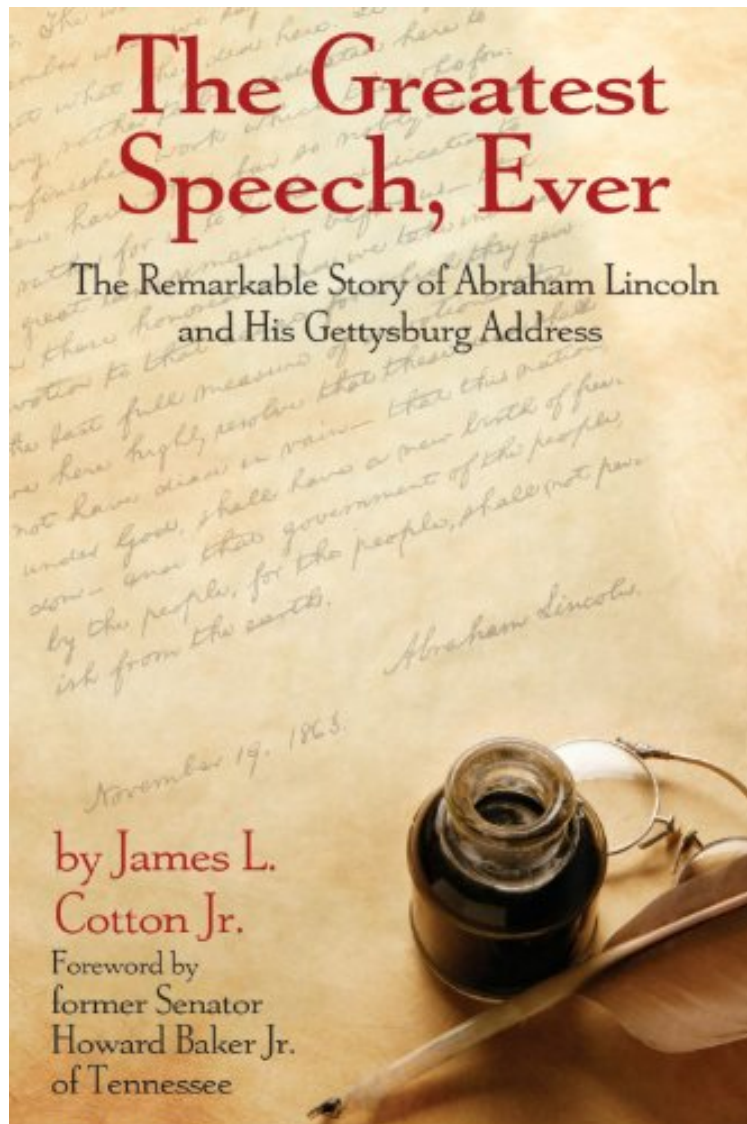


The Greatest Speech, Ever

James L. Cotton Jr.

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James L. Cotton Jr. : The Greatest Speech, Ever before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Greatest Speech, Ever:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Like Mr. Lincoln, an admirable if flawed work.By The SkyWriterHere we have a scholarly work on Abraham Lincoln's enduring address at Gettysburg in November 1863 that, of course, has been etched into more granite walls and kids' history texts than any other American oration. Too bad, then, that Mr. Cotton's book is so careless with certain details in his writing that even the least critical reader might cringe over them: 'Had rode'? 'Calvary' (for Cavalry)? Misplaced Union and CSA battles? Okay, small potatoes,

maybe, and perhaps this writer/reader is too focused on grammar, syntax etc. to the detriment of all else. It's a legitimate call, but still, there are other errors in the book that detract from its otherwise stellar abundance of Lincolniana, such as the 16th president's movements and actions in and around Gettysburg the day before his speech, the childhood and early adulthood that tempered the speech itself and Lincoln's apparent self-doubt about its place of reverence in the future of American history and thought after the war ended. Three stars only because I wanted the book to be worthy of its subject, and it mostly was, but a good editing would help a great deal. 5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. The story behind the speech

By ClaireP Very well researched, this book offers more than just the Gettysburg Address. There is a great deal of information about Abraham Lincoln's formative years, his thought processes in crafting both the Gettysburg Address and the Emancipation Proclamation, the personality traits that made Lincoln so well-suited to the task of leading the nation through its bleakest hours, and the constraints placed upon him by the political necessities of the times, such as the need to maintain the support of the border states. The chapters dealing with the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg are difficult and painful to read, but offer great insights into the heroism of both the soldiers who fought, but also the residents of the town, who were left with the task of dealing with thousands of bodies and the remnants of battle, including live shells that remained in the fields. The days leading up to the consecration of the cemetery at Gettysburg are depicted in great detail, and Cotton shows us the depth of the affection for Abraham Lincoln the man, even in the midst of a firestorm of criticism of Lincoln, the President. All in all, I would highly recommend this book to any student of American history, and would call it a must-read for Civil War buffs. My only criticism is the lack of editing that seemed pervasive in the middle third of the book. It is a shame that such a scholarly work would be published with so many grammatical errors and wrong word choices. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. "The Greatest Speech, Ever" (Updated Version) is some of the ...

By Customer "The Greatest Speech, Ever" (Updated Version) is some of the most interesting history I have ever read. By the time I read through the first chapter, I knew I had to finish the book. This is not dry history, but splendid, richly-detailed narrative served up to the reader in storyteller style. The pages of this book fly by, as Lincoln departs the White House for Gettysburg, leaving behind not only war and political crisis, but also a very sick little boy and wife delirious with worry. On the train ride to Gettysburg, the reader rides along with President Lincoln, then tours the somber battlefields when he arrives, and sits beside him on the podium before his speech. The chapter that describes the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg on the tiny town of Gettysburg was perhaps the most mesmerizing. It opened my eyes to the unspeakable horror of the amputation tables, and to the extent of the suffering, death and destruction that the Civil War brought upon soldiers and families, both the North and South. In one of the final chapters, called "Analepsis: Just To Be Remembered," the author gives an enthralling, panoramic view of Lincoln's life, from childhood to death. He makes the case, convincingly, that Lincoln's life, his DNA, is in every word of the Gettysburg Address. This book breathes life into Abraham Lincoln like no other I have read. In the thought-provoking last chapter, the author writes about the future of America in the shadow of the Civil War experience, and the importance of the Gettysburg Address as the blueprint for American democracy. As Cotton discusses both the flaws and failings, and the brilliance and courage of Lincoln in his moral and political battles to dismantle slavery, the author describes the institution of "politics" in a poignant, brutally-honest way like I have ever read. It certainly strikes home to the deep divisions that prevail in today's political climate. He writes, on page 333: "Politics can be savage and even repulsive, because it often embraces the most basic human cravings for power, prestige and recognition. Noble visions are sometimes there, but under the best circumstances, politics is a flawed means to an altruistic end." This was true not only for Lincoln's era, but for our time, too. For anyone interested in Lincoln or America's history-this book is not to be missed!

Former Sen. Howard Baker aptly describes the book in his Foreword: "The Greatest Speech, Ever was written to be more than a specialized monograph about the Gettysburg Address. The author, Judge James L. Cotton Jr. digressed along the way into side excursions and back roads of Abraham Lincoln's remarkable life, exploring his hardscrabble childhood, and his courageous but controversial Emancipation Proclamation. To fully understand how the Gettysburg Address came to be, one must understand how Abraham Lincoln came to be. Part of the greatness of the Gettysburg Address is that the DNA of Lincoln's life is found in every word. Judge Cotton's extensive research into Lincoln's life located that literary DNA and brings the full display to the public in this remarkable book of the fascinating life of the greatest American president and the greatest speech, ever. Judge Cotton's book is not only a fascinating and scholarly assessment of the Gettysburg Address and its impact on America, but also an absorbing look into Abraham Lincoln's life.

Judge Cotton's book is not only a fascinating and scholarly assessment of the Gettysburg Address and its impact on America, but also an absorbing look into Abraham Lincoln's life. --Former Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., Chief of Staff President Ronald Reagan I'm impressed, to say the least. I've known Scott County Sessions Court Judge James L. Jamie Cotton, Jr., since he was a little kid, running around with my younger brothers at school, church and scouting, but I've learned more about him over a three and a half day period than I ever did before. That's the span during which

I found the time to read his latest book, "The Greatest Speech, Ever" from cover to cover. Needless to say, I learned a lot about The Gettysburg Address, details about the life of President Abraham Lincoln that I never knew, and about how true the age-old adage you can't tell a book by its cover really is. But by finding the time to read his book straight through, I also came to admire the man who wrote it, knowing how long he must have labored in his research, how dedicated he must have been to finish his project, and how much he was able to hone his remarkable storytelling ability in the process. The book is a scholarly work, but it reads like a novel . . . and that's a novel approach to the biographical genre in this day and time. I've read numerous books and essays on the life of Abraham Lincoln through the years, but none as entertaining, insightful and poignant as *The Greatest Speech, Ever*. I admit that I'm probably more than a little prejudiced having known the author for most of his life, but I also have a background in the love of history, particularly in the Civil War era, and still spend whatever free time I can find in absorbing more about that crucial period in America's history. Still, I'm impressed. While his book has as its focal point the 272-word speech that took less than three minutes to deliver just over 150 years ago, *The Greatest Speech, Ever* is also the story of an uncommon man being in the right place at the right time in American history. And intertwined with that story, are numerous detailed vignettes of both common and prominent individuals surrounding Lincoln who most historians tend to ignore, or mention only in passing. It's obvious that Cotton is enamored by Lincoln (as are most Americans), but he also takes an objective view of his subject by pointing out his little known mistakes, faults and failures in contrast with his remarkable achievements in overcoming his humble beginnings in his rise to greatness. In other words, he humanizes an American icon. This approach to writing history allows his readers to better understand Lincoln as he was in his own time and place in the nineteenth century, rather than in stark comparison to our life in the twenty-first century. Of the tens of thousands of volumes written about Lincoln over the last 150 years, a good percentage of them dwell on his assassination. Not so with *The Greatest Speech, Ever*. Cotton makes mention of it, of course, but he doesn't delve into it in detail, because he's got a different agenda; name --Former Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr., Chief of Staff President Ronald Reagan

The Greatest Speech, Ever: The Remarkable Story of Abraham Lincoln and His Gettysburg Address is an in-depth history of President Lincoln's immortal speech, famously made after one of the bloodiest battles in the Civil War. Author James L. Cotton Jr. (adjunct faculty of Roane State Community College) is open in his admiration for --Steven Wilson, Author, *President Lincoln's Spy* and *President Lincoln's Secret* --Thomas Mackie, Director, Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum

This is a story in flashbacks of President Lincoln and what led him to the words of the Gettysburg Address and why he was not originally considered as a speaker --Thomas Mackie, Director, Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum

This is a story in flashbacks of President Lincoln and what led him to the words of the Gettysburg Address and why he was not originally considered as a speaker for the occasion to dedicate the soldier's cemetery in Pennsylvania. The book...mesmerized me when Cotton wrote: "Those words-just 272 of them-breathed life into the Declaration of Independence, and have helped to shape the self-governing Republic that baptizes all of us Americans. I hope the pages of this book will not only reveal how words can sculpt history, but will breathe life into our 16th president. --Robert Booker, *News Sentinel* (Knoxville)

James L. Cotton's book, "*The Greatest Speech Ever*," demonstrates that Lincoln's mythic Gettysburg Address continues to be required reading for American citizenship. We are reminded that this very brief but well-crafted speech defines our ideals and national purpose. - ---Thomas Mackie, Director, Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum

About the Author James L. Cotton, Jr. is a jurist and Lincoln scholar having studied the life of the President extensively. He has served on the adjunct faculty of Roane State Community College for more than two decades and has a law career spanning thirty three years; the last twenty three on the bench presiding over the General Sessions Court in Cook County, Tennessee. He resides with his family in Oneida, Tennessee