

## Green, Scott

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**From:** Paul and Linda Stevens <stevenspl@live.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 19, 2013 9:12 AM  
**To:** 'Paul and Linda Stevens'  
**Subject:** CONNECTING: Max Desfor's 100th birthday celebration; Gettysburg anniversary and Joseph Gilbert; AP selling content; Message of forgiveness; Post Co. renamed; Can Burgundy save Newseum?; Tweets from past; Rosen; Tina Brown; Death notice

Colleagues,

Congratulations to an AP legend and Pulitzer Prize winner - **Max Desfor** – on his 100th birthday.

A celebration of his 100 years was held Nov. 9, the day after his birthday, at the National Press Club in Washington. **Chuck Zoeller** shares that current and former AP staffers who spoke at the party included **Kelly Smith Tunney, Hal Buell, Valerie Komor** and **Myron Belkind**. Belkind, the incoming president of the National Press Club, said Max's photo of Gandhi and Nehru would hang in his office at the NPC, just as it has hung in all his AP offices. Traveling the farthest for the party may have been retired Tokyo-based Asia Photo Editor **Chikako Yatabe**, who said she was hired by Max. Guests received t-shirts with a vintage photo of Max on the front, and a list of his many career highlights on the back.

*Below* are the remarks from Valerie, director of AP's corporate archives.

There is this very good recent profile on Max, the AP's oldest living retiree, from the Lens blog, posted on Connecting earlier, but reposted here:

[http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/10/28/chronicler-of-war-nears-100-and-counting/?\\_r=0](http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/10/28/chronicler-of-war-nears-100-and-counting/?_r=0)

I am attaching two photos shared by Chuck from the party.



One shows Max leading applause for everyone attending the party



and the other shows him with background showing a letter from President Obama honoring his career, and at right Max's famous 1946 photo of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, which was made into a stamp by the Indian government.

If you would like to drop Max a note, his email address is [belascodes@aol.com](mailto:belascodes@aol.com) and his postal address is:

Max Desfor  
15115 Interlachen Dr. #1018  
Silver Spring MD 20906

Here is a link to more from the party for our special colleague:

<http://69.195.124.111/~presidk0/2013/11/10/max-desfors-100th-birthday-party-celebration-pulitzer-prize-winning-photographer-great-man-still-going-strong/>

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**Another anniversary is being celebrated – today – the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address on Nov. 19, 1863.**

Our Connecting colleague **Richard Pyle** notes that in 2007, during the team research and writing of the new AP history, "Breaking News," the team came across a little-known story relating to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. It told how Joseph I. Gilbert, a young newspaper reporter hired by AP to cover the story, had produced the most accurate version of what Lincoln actually said, an account that the president himself relied on later in

making more hand-written copies at the White House. That an overlooked Lincoln-at-Gettysburg tale could still surface after so much time is remarkable, but because ``Breaking News'' covers nearly 170 years of AP history, there was space only for a few paragraphs in that manuscript. So Richard wrote it as a magazine article, which became the cover story in the November 2010 issue of ``America's Civil War.''

His article is shared *below*.

Paul

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**Even as they monetize consumer news, the AP says selling content to members is its core business**

<http://www.niemanlab.org/2013/11/even-as-they-monetize-consumer-news-the-ap-says-selling-content-to-members-is-its-core-business/>

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**Woman in famous AP Vietnam War photo spreads message of forgiveness** (Shared by Paul Colford)

<http://www.pottsmmerc.com/general-news/20131112/woman-in-famous-vietnam-war-photo-spreads-message-of-forgiveness>

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**Washington Post Co. renamed Graham Holdings Company to mark sale of newspaper**

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/washington-post-co-renamed-graham-holdings-company-to-mark-sale-of-newspaper/2013/11/18/57fbc7fe-5060-11e3-9e2c-e1d01116fd98\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/washington-post-co-renamed-graham-holdings-company-to-mark-sale-of-newspaper/2013/11/18/57fbc7fe-5060-11e3-9e2c-e1d01116fd98_story.html)

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**Can Ron Burgundy save the Newseum?**

[http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/can-ron-burgundy-save-the-newseum/2013/11/14/11c45ad0-47f0-11e3-b6f8-3782ff6cb769\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums/can-ron-burgundy-save-the-newseum/2013/11/14/11c45ad0-47f0-11e3-b6f8-3782ff6cb769_story.html)

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**History Comes to Life With Tweets From Past**

[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/18/business/media/history-comes-to-life-with-tweets-from-the-past.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/18/business/media/history-comes-to-life-with-tweets-from-the-past.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0)

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**NYU's Jay Rosen joining eBay founder's new news venture** (Shared by Mark Mittelstadt)

<http://pressthink.org/2013/11/newco/>

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### **Tina Brown says she's still a "voracious reader" of print**

<http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/media/2013/11/8536186/tina-brown-says-shes-voracious-reader-print-ever?--bucket-headline>

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### **Man surprised to see his death notice in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel**

<http://jimromenesko.com/2013/11/18/man-is-surprised-to-see-his-death-notice-in-the-milwaukee-journal-sentinel/>

## Remarks on Max Desfor's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday

Max, I want to thank you for inviting me to speak on this very special occasion. I am deeply honored and humbled, both as your good friend and as the Archivist of the organization you worked for from 1933 to 1978, The Associated Press.

If you will permit me to think of you as a living archive, a treasured repository of vast experience, I would like to celebrate your century of life by placing it within its larger context.

When Max was born, on November 8, 1913, the Gettysburg Address was approaching its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It was still common to find Civil War veterans marching in Decoration Day parades. World War I would break out in the Balkans within months. Max was already 15 when the stock market crash of 1929 occurred.

*Turned this around, because the point is how old he was at this distant time.*

At the age of 20, Max arrived at The Associated Press as a messenger boy in the photo department. It was September of 1933, and our offices were still at 383 Madison Avenue. In that year, AP enrolled 1,300 newspaper members, employed nearly 2,000 staff members, and leased 250,000 miles of wire. Every 24 hours, it transmitted the staggering total of 200,000 words at 60 words per minute. It took 10 minutes for a story to go from London to New York.

Kent Cooper had been AP General Manager since 1925. He oversaw the development of a news photo feature service in 1927 and hired the first photographers in 1928. And he spearheaded Wirephoto, a revolution in picture transmission which effectively created news photography.

It also put Max out of a job. It meant that pictures did not have to be delivered by motorcycle messenger but could be transmitted on the same wire that sent news stories. Pictures could arrive in newspaper offices the same day they were taken. Pictures could be news.

Max's career followed the course of photo technology throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A dedicated and diligent student of the darkroom, he learned everything he could there about what made a good negative and what made a good photograph. He could develop in a tank or in a toilet. He also knew how to read airplane schedules, a valuable skill for a photographer overseas.

After four years, he was promoted from Messenger to Photographer and sent to Baltimore. For many years, he carried the 4 x 5 Speed Graphic, that is, when he wasn't shooting football games with **Big Bertha**.

*Will all your listeners know what this is?*

And he lived through **every change** from then on, from flash powder pictures, peanut flash pictures, four by five, one-twenty, and thirty-five millimeter.

*Maybe something like a mind-spinning series of changes in the ensuing decades? He didn't do digital, after all.*

In his 1997 oral history interview with Hal Buell, former Head of AP Photos, he admitted his only disappointment to date was with the new motor drives for cameras.

"I have perhaps a little bit against that," Max said, "and the only reason I say that is because I, I find that when you have a motor drive on your camera, and you shoot the motor drive, you have a tendency to make movies. Now, fine. You're going to have the picture somewhere in that one, three, or ten rolls of film that you're going to be shooting on a subject. But it's nowhere near as selective. It's nowhere near as accurate as the one picture that you made at the right moment." Max: a connoisseur of the "right moment," the moment of seeing. Fate gave Max numerous "right moments" and he seized them eagerly.

They came on Okinawa, Saipan and on Tinian. In New Delhi, Calcutta, Tokyo, Djakarta, Saigon and Rome.

And, most memorably, on a broken bridge over the Taedong River in North Korea.

Max's great gift, of seeing what is in front of him, has brightened every facet of his life. He not only sees pictures in his mind's eye before making them. He also sees who is dear to him and keeps them close.

Which explains why there are so many well-wishers here this evening, why there are so many who love and admire Max.

Max, I am honored to be counted among them.

Happy Birthday.

Valerie Komor

October 27, 2013

## **A Meeting at Gettysburg**

**By Richard Pyle**

*In August of 1917, the National Shorthand Reporters Association held its 19th annual convention in Cleveland, Ohio. A highlight was a speech by Joseph I. Gilbert, then 75 years old, describing his experience 54 years earlier when, as an ambitious young journalist, he covered Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Gilbert's dispatch, written for The Associated Press, was later judged by Lincoln's own secretary to be the most accurate version of what Lincoln actually said at Gettysburg, and was used by the president in making copies at the White House.*

*As Gilbert was ill at the time of the 1917 convention, a colleague actually read his speech. The association's members, moved by his "beautifully and elegantly written" memoir,*

*preserved it in the minutes of the meeting. Although portions have been reprinted on occasion, it remains an all-but-forgotten footnote to a landmark event in American history.*

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The crowd was beginning to assemble when Joseph Ignatius Gilbert found his way to the wooden stage where the dedication ceremonies for the new Soldiers Cemetery were soon to begin. It sat in an open field, already trampled to mud by many feet, in an unused portion of Evergreen Cemetery, the local burying ground for the town of Gettysburg. Banners and flags trembled in the slight breeze.

Already, the members of a German band from Philadelphia were tuning their instruments. Nearby, a photographer had set up his bulky camera and tripod and, to the amusement of early-arriving spectators, was nervously darting about, fiddling with his equipment and ducking in and out from under his dark cloth hood.

As a reporter, Gilbert would have made a point of arriving early, to stake out a position where he could hear clearly the words spoken from the wooden stage and avoid being swallowed in the encroaching throng.

Especially, he needed to hear the remarks by Abraham Lincoln. The president would be the last to speak, and whatever he said would be the main theme of the dispatch Gilbert would send by telegraph to The Associated Press, the national wire service that had hired him for the day.

It was November 19, 1863. The weather apparently was fitful, as various accounts refer to everything from a predawn threat of rain to bright sunshine and an unseasonably warm day for late mid-November. Over the past few days, Gettysburg, a once obscure farm town of 2,500 citizens in southeastern Pennsylvania, had become filled with strangers for the third time that year. "The streets swarmed with people from all sections of the Union," the local newspaper, the *Adams County Sentinel*, reported.

Five months earlier, in the heavy heat of early July, the visitors had been the armies of North and South, fighting through the town's streets and nearby fields and orchards. Then came phalanxes of workers to recover the dead, and nurses to care for 20,000 wounded, including 7,000 Confederates left behind by Gen. Robert E. Lee's retreating army, who filled public buildings and tent encampments set up by the U.S. Sanitary Commission and the U.S. Christian Commission.

Now, in late autumn, thousands more citizens poured in to attend the dedication of a cemetery, the final resting place for Union soldiers killed in the battles of July 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The town's hotels, boarding houses and many private homes were jammed.

"The influx of strangers began on Monday, and the trains became heavier and heavier as the day of consecration approached... swelling the crowds to immense proportions," the paper reported afterward. While "drawn primarily by the dedication exercises" and the gathering of important figures including the president, it said, "thousands came from a desire to see the battlefield, where still, on every hand, were striking and gruesome evidences of the bloody conflict."

The speakers' "rude platform," as Gilbert later described it, had been hammered together by workmen in a corner of the town graveyard, abutting the seventeen acres of land newly set aside for the military cemetery.

Although historians would not agree on its precise location, Gilbert placed it at "the highest point of ground on which the battle was fought." That was technically not true; Cemetery Hill, as it was called, indeed had been the center of the "fishhook"-shaped Union defenses. Nearby Culp's Hill and Little Round Top, which anchored the extreme left of the blue line more than a mile to the south, and was the scene of fierce combat on the second day, were taller than Cemetery Hill.

Gilbert's writings do not make clear where he positioned himself, but most likely he sat or stood near the front of the 12-by-20-foot stage. Sitting among the dignitaries on the crowded platform, as some reporters apparently did, would not have served his need to hear everything that was said by the president.

Whatever his vantage point, Gilbert could look across to the new cemetery, where about a thousand soldiers' graves were already in place. As designed by a Philadelphia landscape architect, they were arranged in concentric semi-circles radiating out from a center. Eventually, the graves would represent the 18 northern states that had contributed regiments to the Battle of Gettysburg. The disappearance of summer foliage revealed bare trunks and branches splintered by the Rebels' artillery. And even now, five months after the battle, the odor of death sometimes rode the breeze.

Tall, dark-haired, with a discreet goatee, Joseph Gilbert affected the somewhat dandified style of the "Bohemians," as the Civil War's battlefield correspondents called themselves. Not that he was one of them \_ he didn't claim to have done any reporting under fire. Nor, at age twenty-one, had he covered many other events of cosmic significance. His experience was limited to his home town, Philadelphia, and more recently Harrisburg, where he was "local editor" of the *Evening Telegraph* \_ a title he admitted was "a bit high sounding."

He was, however, energetic enough to work at two jobs. In addition to being a "newspaper kid," as he called himself, he served as a shorthand stenographer at the Pennsylvania state capitol, recording verbatim the words of legislative debate.

While such a dual role would be a clear conflict of interest in today's journalism, Gilbert evidently saw nothing wrong in working both for the government and for the press that covered it. Neither, apparently, did The Associated Press, at least not in the case of a part-time "stringer."

Founded in a cooperative agreement by a group of New York newspapers seventeen years earlier, during the war with Mexico and almost simultaneously with the invention of the telegraph, AP was the first nationwide disseminator of news, serving hundreds of newspapers. Unlike the papers, which generally identified themselves with one party or a particular cause, the news agency was scrupulously non-political. Speed and accuracy were its priorities, and Gilbert's skill in taking down the spoken word was why it had hired him to cover the Gettysburg event.

More than a dozen other reporters were there, representing newspapers from New York, Boston and Baltimore in the east to Cincinnati, Columbus and Chicago in the west. Most were veterans of their trade. At least two, in addition to Gilbert, were "phonographers," as shorthand practitioners were called. To the great relief of the press, Edward Everett, the day's main speaker, had brought printed galleys of his planned two-hour speech. As for Lincoln, up to the last day or so, even his two personal secretaries, John Nicolay and John Hay, had no idea what he planned to say.

Gilbert's limited experience did include a previous encounter with Lincoln. Nearly three years earlier, on February 22, 1861, he had been present when the President-elect visited Harrisburg, one of his numerous stops on the way to taking office in Washington. Assassination rumors had followed Lincoln all the way from Illinois, and at Harrisburg had prompted Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin to move a welcoming reception from the railroad depot to a nearby hotel.

By Gilbert's recollection, Lincoln was already speaking when he arrived, forcing him to pick his way forward through the crowd. Once there, he was so "jostled" in the crush that he had trouble taking notes. But Lincoln, noting my predicament, deliberately paused and waited until I adjusted my notebook on the back of a man in front of me, after which he resumed by repeating, for my benefit, an unfinished sentence."

Such a gesture wouldn't have been unusual for Lincoln who, despite being as vilified as anyone who ever occupied the White House, was remarkably accommodating toward the press. During the darkest periods of his administration he cultivated journalists, and welcomed certain war correspondents to the White House to compare their views with official dispatches.

While not part of this inner circle, Gilbert clearly felt a special kinship with Lincoln. In 1917 he would write, "There was something so modest and unaffected, so fatherly and sincere in the manner and speech of the great champion of American liberty \_ his plebeian simplicity of demeanor, unassuming innate dignity and homely, earnest words were so impressive that no one who saw or heard him could forget him."

In those remarks, Gilbert also recalled that during his Harrisburg appearance in 1861, Lincoln had "turned his face, with prophetic instinct, in the direction of Gettysburg," thirty-five miles to the south. "Within his vision were the Cumberland hills where, two and a half years later, on the eve of the great battle, a detachment of Ewell's cavalry from Lee's army made a reconnaissance... the extreme northern point ever reached by a Confederate command."

Later, at Gettysburg, "the bloodiest victory the world had seen heralded the downfall of the Rebellion within cannon sound of the spot on which he had made this last personal appeal for peace," Gilbert wrote.

The Soldiers Cemetery, as it was first called, was an idea born of necessity. After the battle as many as six thousand dead had lain in the fields, and along with the carcasses of hundreds of horses created an intolerable situation.

As grieving relatives and curiosity seekers roamed the battlefields, teams of laborers burned the dead animals, collected human bodies or buried them where they had fallen, marking them with names and unit designations when possible. (Some Confederates were buried but it would be years before all southern dead were finally recovered.)

That November, the *Sentinel* described the fields as "yet strewn with the remains and relics of the fearful struggle," including knapsacks, clothing, pistols, bayonet sheaths and other items, with as many as five thousand temporary graves in rows along stone walls and wooden fences. These were hasty and shallow, and every rain in that wet summer eroded the topsoil, exposing the grisly remains anew.

As the problem worsened, the idea of a soldiers' cemetery at Gettysburg gained favor. Governor Curtin named a young but prestigious local lawyer, David Wills, to head a special commission. It was Wills who visualized a permanent site to hold the bodies of the fallen from each northern state. Through Curtin, Wills arranged for financing by the states, bought the

land and planned the ceremony. He assembled a program of prayers, music and speeches, the *tour de force* to be a speech by Everett, the former senator, Harvard University president and Secretary of State, who was considered the nation's best public orator. The event was set for October 23, but when Everett pleaded prior commitments, it was moved to November 19.

On November 2, David Wills sent a letter to Washington asking if Mr. Lincoln would be willing to follow Everett with "a few appropriate remarks" to "formally set apart these grounds" for the cemetery. In a separate note, Wills also invited Lincoln to be his house guest, as "the hotels in our town will be crowded and in confusion."

Wills' invitation to Lincoln seems to have been an afterthought; the Library of Congress, which owns the letters, has called seventeen days "extraordinarily short notice for presidential participation." However, Lincoln accepted both invitations, evidently without concern over what he could have seen as a political snub or an inexcusable oversight.

The public response may have exceeded the planners' expectations. For many people, the dedication was an excuse to visit the suddenly famous town and its battlefields. As thousands arrived, Gettysburg hotels and boarding houses filled to overflowing, as did private homes, stables and everything else with, or in some cases without, a roof. The night before the dedication, the mood was more celebratory than somber. Gettysburg's streets teemed with people, singing patriotic songs and cheering the military and political figures who had come.

Lincoln arrived about dusk by special four-car train from Washington, with an entourage that included Secretary of State William Seward, Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, Secretary of the Interior John P. Usher, Lincoln's two secretaries, Nicolay and Hay, and his personal black valet, William Johnson. French and Italian ministers represented the diplomatic corps, and several reporters also rode the train. Provost Marshal General John Fry provided personal security in lieu of Lincoln's regular bodyguard, Ward Hill Lamon, who had gone ahead to Gettysburg. The U.S. Marine Band and a group of disabled veterans served as presidential honor guard. Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase declined to make the trip, and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton — though a logical participant in such an event — stayed behind to monitor telegraph reports from Chattanooga, where another major battle was taking shape.

Wills met the train and escorted Lincoln on foot to his four-story home two blocks away. There they joined Everett, Curtin and others. During the evening, as 37 invited guests dined together, groups of citizens gathered in the town square outside and a band from the Fifth New York Artillery and a choir from Baltimore serenaded Lincoln. The President stepped outside the Wills house for a few moments to thank the crowd but declined to deliver a speech, saying he had none prepared.

The throng happily moved on, calling on other dignitaries to offer remarks. Nicolay later wrote that these were "not always perfunctory," but tinged with political tension, mainly relating to rifts among top Pennsylvania state leaders and the already looming issue of the 1864 election. Seward, though regarded by some northern abolitionists as soft on emancipation, sounded the sharpest theme, calling slavery "the origin and agent of the treason that is without justification and without parallel."

When the front-porch orations ended, Nicolay said, "the visitors as were blessed with friends or good luck" found beds where "in spite of brass-bands and the restless tramping of the less fortunate along the sidewalks, they slept the slumber of mental, added to physical, weariness."

Few significant events in American history are as clouded by time and myth as the writing of the Gettysburg Address, particularly where and when Lincoln completed the text delivered at the cemetery, and what became of it afterward. He is known to have begun drafting the speech in Washington, and while some versions suggest he worked on it en route to Gettysburg, Nicolay said noise, conversation, interruptions and the "rockings and joltings of the train" made that "virtually impossible." Fortunately the once-popular fiction that he wrote it on the back of an envelope has been put to rest almost as firmly as the dead of Gettysburg.

Sequestered that evening in a second-floor bedroom above Wills' law office, Lincoln was said to have asked a servant to fetch some writing paper, and also left briefly to confer with Seward, staying at another private home next door. During the evening he also received a telegram from Stanton, informing him that his ailing son, Tad, had improved. According to Nicolay, it was the next morning — apparently after a carriage tour of the Union and Confederate lines with Seward and breakfast with Everett — that Lincoln put the final words on paper at the Wills house.

The so-called "original manuscript," also known as the Nicolay Copy, includes the first part of the speech in ink on a sheet of Executive Mansion letterhead, and the rest in pencil on a piece of lined, bluish writing paper that may have come from Wills' office. This is the earliest existing draft of the Gettysburg Address, and the two mismatched pages have folds suggesting they were in Lincoln's pocket, yet experts don't agree that they are the actual text from which Lincoln spoke.

As the 11:30 a.m. hour for the dedication neared, Ward Lamon organized the official party, with the Marine Band in front and Lincoln, astride a chestnut bay horse, with Seward beside him, leading the procession. As the crowd flowed toward Cemetery Hill, three quarters of a mile south of town, Joseph Gilbert felt that the public mood had changed dramatically, the previous night's patriotic revelry giving way to a more solemn atmosphere.

“Nature seemed to veil her face in sorrow for the awful tragedy enacted there,” he would write. “The darkness on Cemetery Hill became absolutely funereal, the mournful sighing of the wind on a typical November day \_ all these emphasized the melancholy spirit of the occasion. A profound silence reigned. The ten thousand spectators, apparently depressed by a realization of the horrors of war and the dangers that had threatened their homes, were as quiet and inanimate as statues, and, except for a few acclamations when the President arrived, the silence remained unbroken throughout the day.”

In addition to the cabinet members and diplomats, the official entourage included governors and legislators from seven states, blue-uniformed and braided military officers, and local nabobs. Among the last to arrive by carriage was Everett. Ailing at age sixty-nine, the silver-haired orator rested briefly in a private tent before taking his seat on Lincoln's right, with Seward on the left. For all his feverish efforts, the anonymous photographer somehow failed to capture any closeup pictures of the platform assemblage. The only known photo of Lincoln at Gettysburg shows him seated, bareheaded, surrounded by the crowd, with the hulking Lamon beside him.

“A sea of upturned faces covered the slope in front. The ceremonies of dedication were solemn and impressive,” Gilbert remembered. After an invocation and music, he said, Everett began his speech with “a minute account of the three days' battle, discussed the Rebellion, combatted the fallacy of the States Rights dogma that the states are the principals and the National Government a mere agency, and championed the principle of Nationality.”

As Everett rambled on with his history and civics lesson, Lincoln at least once took out his own notes, glanced over them and returned them to his pocket. The oration, meanwhile, proved too long for some spectators, who drifted away from the mass. Finally, Everett sat down, and the Baltimore glee club delivered a hymn written for the occasion, which began: “This spot where in their graves/We place our country's braves/Who fell in freedom's holy cause/Fighting for liberties and laws/Let tears abound.”

Then it was Lincoln's turn to speak. Ward Lamon stood and called out, “The President of the United States!” As the tall man in black “came forward,” Gilbert was struck by his “apparent excellent physical condition” and a face, “fringed by a newly grown beard,” that seemed “less care-worn and haggard” than in the past.

“He stood for a moment with hands clasped and head bowed in an attitude of mourning \_ a personification of the sorrow and sympathy of the nation,” Gilbert recalled. “Adjusting his old-fashioned spectacles, a pair with arms reaching to his temples, he produced from a pocket of his Prince Albert coat several sheets of paper from which he read slowly and feelingly... His marvelous voice, careering in fullness of utterance and clearness of tone, was perfectly audible

on the outskirts of the crowd. He made no gestures or attempts at display and none were needed."

Others, including Nicolay, would say that Lincoln appeared to speak without relying on the notes in his hand, as if he had memorized the speech, as legions of American schoolchildren would do in years to come. Many spectators \_ hundreds, by Gilbert's estimate \_ who had wandered off during Everett's two-hour elocution were drawn back by the President's clear tenor voice, and became ``spell-bound by the majestic personality of the great man of whom they had heard so much and now saw for the first time." They stood in silence, ``many with uncovered heads... not a demonstrative or even appreciative audience."

Gilbert's story, telegraphed to AP, appeared in many newspapers the next day and for days afterward, almost certainly the most widely published first version of the Gettysburg Address. In New York, it was in the *Times*, the *Tribune*, the *Herald* and the *Brooklyn Eagle*. A week later, it showed up in the weekly *Hawk-Eye* in Burlington, Iowa. Bylines being a thing of the future at AP, it bore no reporter's name, nor was it credited to AP by most papers. But Gilbert's account is readily identifiable by specific elements, most notably a few errors and his notations of applause at six points:

``Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. (applause) 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 battle-field of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of it as a final resting-place of 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 power to add or detract. (applause) The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. (applause) It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. (applause) 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 the cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion, that we here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain, (applause) that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that governments of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from the earth. (long continued applause)."

Many papers wrote their own introductions, or leads, to the Gettysburg story. In the procedural journalistic style of the day \_ the ``inverted pyramid" and the ``five W's" were yet to be invented \_ most published accounts opened with elaborate descriptions of the scene

rather than the most important news, which by any measure would have been the president's speech. In modern journalistic parlance, they "buried the lead."

The *New York Times* report, for example, began: "The ceremonies attending dedication of the National Cemetery commenced this morning by a grand military and civic display, under command of Gen. Couch..." It told how soldiers "formed in line" around the crowd, and noted that "the attendance of ladies was quite large." Nine paragraphs later, the paper finally got to Lincoln's speech, clearly relying on the Associated Press version. Perhaps because it was a pro-Lincoln newspaper, the *Times* did not submerge his remarks as deeply as some other papers did, even in the president's home state of Illinois.

With creative editors embellishing the material, such details as the size of the crowd varied wildly. The *New York Times* claimed "about 15,000" spectators, the *Chicago Tribune* "between 30,000 and 50,000." Historians appear to have settled generally on a figure of 10,000, and Gilbert himself used that in his recollection years later.

All factors considered, the story that ran on page two of the *Brooklyn Eagle* may well be the complete version as AP received it from Gilbert — a terse, no-frills account, distinguished by the fact that, unlike most of his contemporaries, he actually put the news in the lead paragraph:

"Yesterday, in the presence of a mighty concourse, the President of the United States solemnly dedicated the new National Cemetery on the battlefield at Gettysburg. Surrounded by the Governors of New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio and by officers of high rank in military and civil circles, he said..." This was followed by the text of the president's remarks, then a summation of the pertinent points of Everett's speech, ending with the orator's observation that in the "glorious annals" of the United States, there would be "no brighter page than that which relates the battles of Gettysburgh (sic)."

Although his mission was to take down every word of Lincoln's remarks, Gilbert would later recall having become so fascinated by the president's "earnestness and depth of feeling" that he "unconsciously stopped taking notes and looked up" at the speaker "just as he glanced from his manuscript with a faraway look in his eye, as if appealing from the thousands who stood before him to the invisible audience of countless millions whom his words were to reach."

If Gilbert the poet caused Gilbert the reporter to miss a word or two, it mattered little. Almost hidden in the text of his 1917 speech in Cleveland is its most significant revelation — that after all his preparation, Gilbert did not actually rely on his shorthand notes to write the story. "Before the dedication ceremonies closed," he wrote, "the President's manuscript was copied, with his permission, and as the press report was made from the copy, no transcription from shorthand notes was necessary."

Why Gilbert recounted this important bit of detail in so offhand a manner and in the passive voice is a mystery. But it clearly refers to his own actions: As the program continued, he personally approached Lincoln, asked to borrow his hand-written text of the Gettysburg Address, copied it down in longhand and then, presumably, handed it back.

Other reporters could have done the same thing, but there is no evidence that any did. Allowing for possible oral changes by Lincoln in delivery and a few minor errors, it helps to explain what author-historian Garry Wills has called "the trustworthy Associated Press report."

The flowery prose in Gilbert's speech 54 years later shows he had long since abandoned any AP-instilled penchant for brevity, thus he could have done posterity a huge favor by providing more information about this remarkable encounter. Instead of "several" pieces of paper, for example, how many? Were they in ink, pencil or both? Were they the mismatched pages of the so-called "original manuscript?" How did he know "they" came from David Wills' office?

These details are at the crux of Joseph Gilbert's personal experience at Gettysburg, and that he left them exasperatingly vague may allow skeptics to suggest that perhaps it didn't happen that way, especially those who find little reason to take the youthful journalist seriously in the first place.

Nor did Gilbert provide details on exactly how he transmitted his story, once written. The fact that it appeared in the next day's New York newspapers shows that he managed to send it fairly quickly by telegraph from Gettysburg. It reached New York in time to be included in the package of stories sent out from AP that night for newspapers of the next day.

Contemporary maps show no telegraph at the Gettysburg rail depot until 1866, a year after the war. If one existed elsewhere in July 1863, the lines may well have been cut by southern troops. This would have forced correspondents to courier battle reports to telegraph points at Harrisburg, Chambersburg, or Westminster, Md., helping to explain why few details of the fighting appeared in print until after it ended. Given the chaos in the weeks that followed, a restored telegraph would have been vital, and there is evidence that one was set up in a storefront near the town square.

As Gilbert left things unsaid, others contributed both clarifying detail and confusion to the story of how the press reported the Gettysburg Address. One word for that would be: lazily. In his 1962 book, "*Reporting the Civil War*," Louis M. Starr says that when they saw that Gilbert had "succeeded in securing Lincoln's manuscript," the New York reporters "discarded their notes: The AP would take care of it for them, and in official form." John Russell Young of the Philadelphia *Press*, another young, shorthand-capable reporter \_ and a

future Librarian of Congress \_ wrote years later that he, too, had decided to let his paper rely on the AP (although the version that it printed was slightly different from AP's).

While Starr's book is sometimes critical of AP, his narrative doesn't take issue with Gilbert's account of having borrowed the speech text. That no one mentioned this at the time suggests other reporters may have been reluctant to admit they didn't show the same kind of initiative.

In his 1930 book, *Lincoln at Gettysburg: What He Intended to Say, What He Said, What He Was Reported to Have Said, What He Wished He Had Said*, author William E. Barton did not mention Gilbert's cemetery encounter with Lincoln, but claimed Gilbert had followed Lincoln to the rail depot late in the day, and was able to look at the speech as the president's train was about to leave for Washington.

Barton (whose errors include misstating Gilbert's middle initial as "L" \_ a mistake repeated by others) offers no evidence for this, but by any measure, Gilbert's own account is more plausible. His job being to write and send a dispatch to the AP as quickly as possible, he hardly would have dawdled for several hours and then risked missing Lincoln altogether.

After the cemetery event, Lincoln and Seward attended a civic reception and a speech by Pennsylvania Governor-elect Charles Anderson at a local church; that Gilbert never mentioned either of these events suggests he was preoccupied during that time writing and transmitting his story.

Moreover, it's unlikely that Gilbert or any other outsider would have had access to the president at the station or on the train, as Lincoln had been suddenly taken ill \_ with what would prove to be varioloid, a mild form of smallpox \_ and was the object of deep concern among officials and aides during the return trip to Washington.

Published accounts of the address, including Gilbert's and at least two others supposedly based on shorthand transcription, differed as to Lincoln's exact words. Nobody got the speech exactly right, and some reporters were hopelessly winging it. These discrepancies suggest that members of the press at Gettysburg did very little comparing of notes, although that must have been as common a practice among political reporters in 1863 as it is today when no "advance text" is at hand.

The two most accurate versions of Lincoln's remarks were by Gilbert and Charles Hale, who was reporting for the *Boston Daily Advertiser* and also knew shorthand. Some historians have suggested Hale's was more reliable; Barton, for example, says Gilbert relied on the written speech, while Hale reported what he heard Lincoln say. If true, Barton fails to explain why Hale, as well as Gilbert, left out the word "poor," the only mistake the two had in common.

Hale was one of three "commissioners" appointed by the governor of Massachusetts to represent that state at the dedication. The three said in a subsequent report that Lincoln's speech "has not generally been reported rightly, having been marred by errors in telegraphing," and attached what they called "the correct form, as the words actually spoken by the President, with great deliberation, were taken down by one of the undersigned" — meaning Charles Hale.

This appears to have been accepted by some as a more or less "official" version of the speech, in which author Hale, perhaps by virtue of being a Harvard man and the nephew of Edward Everett, was automatically accorded more credibility than the young AP reporter from Harrisburg. The fact remains, however, that while Gilbert's version contained five minor errors to Hale's four, it was the example that Lincoln himself would later rely on in making copies at the White House.

The phrase "poor power" had appeared in Lincoln's first draft, the so-called Nicolay Copy. That both Gilbert and Hale missed "poor" in delivery seems oddly coincidental; nothing suggests they compared notes, but evidently neither of them heard that word spoken, as other reporters apparently did. Hale reported Lincoln as saying "have given," instead of "here gave," added "very" to "little note," and said the world "can never forbid," rather than "forget" what they did here. Gilbert's story had "refinished," rather than "unfinished" work, "the" instead of "these" dead, "governments" (plural) of the people. and inserted "and" before "for the people."

While these errors are useful in identifying the work of specific correspondents, most are trivial — or would be, in any context less important than the Gettysburg Address. Nor were they necessarily the reporters' own fault. Like the three-member Massachusetts commission, John Nicolay suggested that some were more likely mistakes by others — telegraphers transmitting the text, copyists putting it back into English, or printers setting type.

If Hale and his two Bay State colleagues saw this explanation as vindicating Hale's own errors, it would apply equally well to Gilbert's. The words "refinished" and "governments" (plural) in his report could have been misreadings of his handwriting, or of the Morse code. "Refinished" appears in all known examples of Gilbert's story except one, the aforementioned Brooklyn Eagle's. Someone there — probably an alert copy editor — apparently decided "refinished" didn't make sense and changed it to "unfinished" before the story was set in type.

Verbal changes by Lincoln in delivery are unknown, but just as Gilbert and Hale omitted "poor," both included the phrase "under God," which wasn't in Lincoln's original draft. This suggests that Lincoln inserted that phrase in speaking. He later included "under God" in the

three versions penned at the White House \_ although moving the phrase from where the two Gettysburg reporters had placed it to just after "this nation." It was in these later copies that Lincoln also burnished his prose by replacing "so nobly carried on" with the more elegant "so nobly advanced."

The mistakes in Gilbert's and Hale's accounts did not appreciably affect their meaning, and were minor compared to what other journalists sent to their papers. The Philadelphia *Inquirer* quoted Lincoln as saying, "the world will little know and nothing remember what we see here," and "we imbibe increased devotion to that cause."

The Chicago *Tribune* correspondent was so fixated on other details that he ignored Lincoln's speech entirely. His readers did learn that "Old Abe" was "the most attentive and appreciative listener" as Everett unfurled his two-hour speech, and that Lincoln twice audibly corrected Everett's misspoken references to "General Lee" when he meant "General Meade."

It wasn't until the next day that the *Tribune's* man finally got around to the Gettysburg Address itself, and still got it seriously wrong. In a dispatch from Harrisburg, he began: "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers established on this continent a Government subscribed in liberty and dedicated to the fundamental principle that all mankind are created equal by a good God, and (applause) now we are engaged in a great contest. We are contesting the question whether any nation so conceived and dedicated can longer remain." Picking his way uncertainly, he got some phrases nearly correct \_ including the word "poor" which Gilbert and Hale missed. But toward the end, he simply lost his way: "Here let us resolve that what they have done shall not have been done in vain. That the nation shall, under God, have a new birth. That the Government the people founded, by the people shall not perish."

By some accounts, Lincoln first thought a lack of audience response meant the two-minute speech had fallen flat. It could be that after Everett's elongated oration, spectators were simply caught off guard by the president's brevity. In fact, the Philadelphia *Press* reporter, John Young wrote later that after Lincoln finished, he had asked him if that "was all," and that Lincoln replied, "Yes, for the present." (This might also explain why the photographer, for all his bustling, failed to capture Lincoln speaking.)

Whatever the case, press reports of crowd reaction were poles apart. One scribe, W. H. Cunningham, said there was none. The Chicago *Tribune* reporter cited two outbursts, including "immense" applause after the words, "can never forget what they did here." Gilbert noted that simply as "applause."

Having reported six instances of applause at the time, Gilbert himself fogged this issue 54 years later, saying in his convention speech that there were no "tumultuous outbursts of enthusiasm accompanying the President's utterances" nor any "outward manifestations of

feeling." Lincoln's theme, he said, "did not invite holiday applause, a cemetery was not the place for it, and he did not pause to receive it." Whether he meant no major clapping, or none at all, is unclear, but his 1863 version seems more plausible; not even the Gettysburg Address was likely to stun 10,000 people into total silence.

In a final Gettysburg vignette, Gilbert recalled that while walking back to town, he was "overtaken, on the rough country road, by the Presidential cavalcade of thirty or more distinguished civic and military officials." Lincoln "bestrode a spirited animal and controlled it with the skill of an expert horseman. With characteristic self-unconcern, he had left his escort behind and was nearly a city block in advance of Secretary Seward, the nearest member of it. His plain black overcoat and high silk hat contrasted oddly with the glittering uniforms of his attendants. As he passed there was an expression of intense gratification upon his usually impassive countenance... His grand figure soon disappeared in the distance and an unaccountable foreboding of evil to befall him oppressed me."

Gilbert speculated in 1917 that he might then be the last person alive who heard Lincoln deliver the Gettysburg Address, but ignored the equally interesting possibility that he might have been the only other person to have handled the paper from which the president spoke. In his Pulitzer Prize-winning 1992 book, "*Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words That Remade America*," author and history scholar Garry Wills wrote that while other people could have had access to Lincoln's text during the return to Washington, it was last seen at the cemetery, "in the hand of the AP reporter Joseph Gilbert."

Of the five existing copies in Lincoln's handwriting, the first, the so-called Nicolay copy, is the undated draft that begins in ink on Executive Mansion stationery and continues in pencil on a second, dissimilar piece of lined paper, indicating that Lincoln began it in Washington and finished it in Gettysburg. The Library of Congress considers this the "delivery copy." Dr. John Sellers, head of the library's manuscript division, called this a "moot issue" since the evidence consists of Nicolay's own claim of its authenticity, Lincoln having been seen putting "finishing touches" with pencil on lined paper at David Wills' house, and its being the only copy with fold marks. "It can be documented that Lincoln was seen removing the folded speech from his coat pocket as he rose to speak," Sellers said.

While Joseph Gilbert noted this fact as well, the language of the Nicolay copy differs from his and Hale's reports in important respects \_ omitting one key passage entirely \_ and as Garry Wills points out, those two pages are hardly the sort of clean, readable copy that the meticulous Lincoln customarily prepared.

The second, or Hay copy, long owned by that distinguished family and made public more than forty years after Gettysburg, is closer to the original newspaper versions, and is thought by

some scholars to be more likely the delivered copy. But when asked, John Hay said he didn't know whether "his" manuscript was the one Lincoln used, and according to Garry Wills, it was a "Hay family tradition" that Lincoln had written it out as a personal favor for his junior secretary.

Garry Wills dismisses both the Nicolay and Hay copies as the real McCoy. As for what became of the speech, he says, "the possibilities are endless. The probabilities are more limited. It is improbable that we have the delivered text." Wills also quotes Nicolay as having said the President "consulted the AP report" — Joseph Gilbert's version — when making three later copies at the White House.

That by itself would seem to undercut Nicolay's claim that his copy, with its different wording, was the "delivered text."

Although he told his Gettysburg story to friends and acquaintances, and did talk about writing a book, Joseph Gilbert — the man who might have helped to clear up some lingering questions — never did so. According to his great-granddaughter, Brenda Molloy Palley, of Chevy Chase, Md., the family's only record of his experiences was an account dictated to a daughter, Mary Rita, in 1917, which was transcribed by a granddaughter, Ruth Molloy, in 1940, 16 years after his death.

In that recollection, as in his Cleveland speech the same year, Gilbert made no secret of his admiration and sympathy for Lincoln. "Being connected with 'The Philadelphia Press' and 'The Washington Chronicle,' the administration newspapers published by Col. (John W.) Forney, then secretary of the U.S. Senate," he wrote, "I was occasionally at Washington in the dark days when disasters at the front, threats of foreign intervention, popular discontent, quarrels in the Cabinet and importunities of office-seekers made life burdensome for the despondent, almost despairing occupant of the White House."

Gettysburg was not Joseph Gilbert's last AP reporting assignment. Five days after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Virginia on April 9, 1865, he was in Charleston, South Carolina, where "by order of President Lincoln, the identical flag lowered, four years before, in the cradle of the Rebellion, was hoisted in triumph over Fort Sumter." Hours later on that Good Friday, April 14, Lincoln was murdered at Ford's Theatre in Washington.

On return to Washington, Gilbert covered the trial of the Lincoln conspirators for AP, again employing his shorthand skill. The testimony and evidence convinced him that actor John Wilkes Booth and three accomplices had engineered the assassination, but he also shared the view of others that Mrs. Mary Surratt, who ran a Washington boarding house and a Maryland tavern where the plotters conferred, was unfairly convicted and hanged on circumstantial evidence.

In a letter \_ curiously dated June 31, 1865 \_ AP's veteran Washington bureau chief, Lawrence Gobright, thanked Gilbert for his service:

Mr. Jos. Gilbert

My Dear Sir:

As the conspiracy trial is drawing to a close and as there is but little more to do in the way of reporting, there is no further need for your assistance. It is proper for me to say that during the five weeks that you were employed, your reports were, in the highest degree, satisfactory, both as to their correctness and the promptness from which they were written out from your notes. These qualities are always appreciated by the press and were especially gratifying to

Your obdt servant,

L.A. Gobright

Washington Agent Associated Press.

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*Joseph Gilbert went on to a distinguished journalism career in Philadelphia, where he specialized in medical stories, including one of the early Siamese twin separations. Partially invalidated in his later years, Gilbert died in 1924, age 82, and is buried in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery, in northeast Philadelphia. In his 1917 speech, Gilbert said of Lincoln: "Appreciation of his greatness increases, not diminishes, with the lapse of years." Historians may quibble over elements of Gilbert's recollections of Gettysburg, and regret that in later years he did not seize the chance to clear up lingering questions, but the fact remains that he was there \_ a journalist-eyewitness who, by his own account, became a brief participant in one of the most singular moments of the nation's history.*

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The author is a former Associated Press staff writer with nearly fifty years experience covering news in the United States and abroad, and was one of 12 AP staffers who wrote chapters for the 2007 book, "Breaking News: How The Associated Press Has Covered War, Peace and Everything Else." His home in Brooklyn was once the residence of Thomas Kinsella, editor of the *Brooklyn Eagle* during the Civil War, and the man who might have corrected the typographical error in Joseph Gilbert's Gettysburg copy.

Further Reading:

Barton, William E., *Lincoln at Gettysburg: What He Intended to Say, What He Said, What he was Reported to have Said, what he Wished he had Said*, "New York: Peter Smith, 1950.

Carmichael, Orton H., *Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*, "New York: The Abingdon Press, 1917.

Starr, Louis M., *Reporting the Civil War*, "New York: Collier Books, 1962.

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Lambert, W.H., *Variations in the Reports of the Gettysburg Address*, "Open Letters, The Century Magazine, Vol. XLVII, Nov. 1893-Apr. 1864, pp. 636-638.

Nicolay, John G., *Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*, "The Century Magazine, Vol. XLVII, Nov. 1893-Apr. 1894, pp. 596-608.

*The New York Times*, Nov. 20, 1863

*Chicago Tribune*, Nov. ?? 1863

*Brooklyn Eagle*, Nov. 20, 1863, 'The National Cemetery at Gettysburg.'

*Boston Daily Advertiser*, Nov. 20, 1863

[www.thelincolnlog.org](http://www.thelincolnlog.org)

Source notes:

Orton Carmichael, in *Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*, " quotes Clark Carr, of Galesburg IL, a representative on the Cemetery Commission and on the platform, as saying the president, "deeply moved," gestured with his hand and his voice momentarily broke as he said, "the world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." p. 68.

20,000 wounded, of which 7,000 were rebels. Carmichael, p. 26.

5,000 shallow graves. *ibid*, p. 27.

Ground "yet strewn with the remains and relics of the fearful struggle." knapsacks, clothing, pistols, shoes, bayonet sheaths etc., grave marks in every quarter and graves along stone and wooden fences."

`` The influx of strangers began on Monday, and the trains became heavier and heavier as the day of consecration approached... swelling the crowds to immense proportions.... drawn primarily by the dedication exercises... thousands came from a desire to see the battlefield, where still, on every hand, were striking and gruesome evidences of the bloody conflict."

*Adams County Sentinel* of Nov 24, 1863, quoted by Carmichael, pp 43-44..

Union: 23 states including KY and MO (its breakaway was not recognized), CA, OR and KS (1861), WVA (1863). Confederacy: 11 states seceded, 13 with KY and MO but not recognized. Wills wrote to governors of 18 of the 23 Union states, including PA. 15 replied. *ibid.* p 29.

Nov 19, 1863 was a Thursday, a week before the first official Thanksgiving holiday, proclaimed by Lincoln that year.

After many incarnations, the David Wills House was acquired in recent years by the National Park Service, restored to its 1863 appearance and opened to the public as a museum in February 2009, the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth. Period furniture in the Lincoln room includes the bed in which he slept.

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