

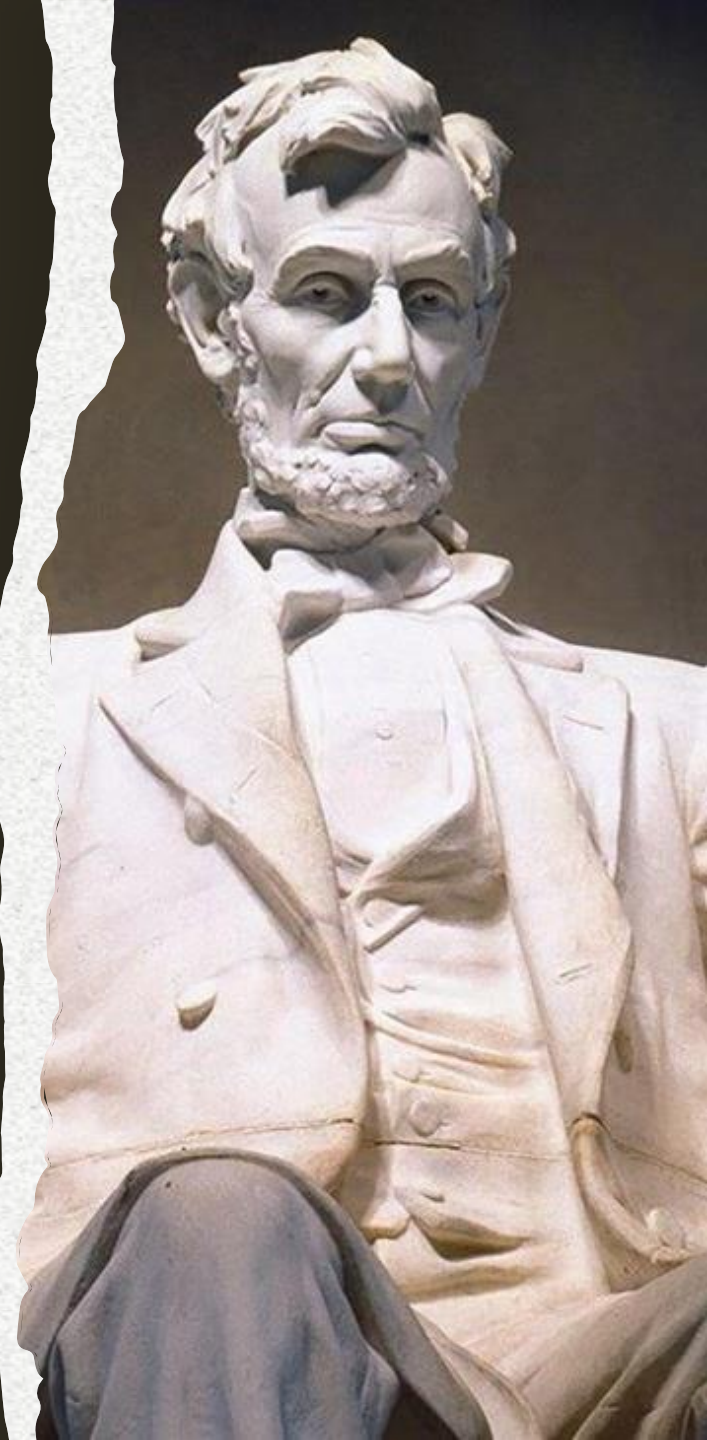
Historical Close Reading

Text

Context

Subtext

*The Gettysburg Address with
Matthew Pinsker*



Text

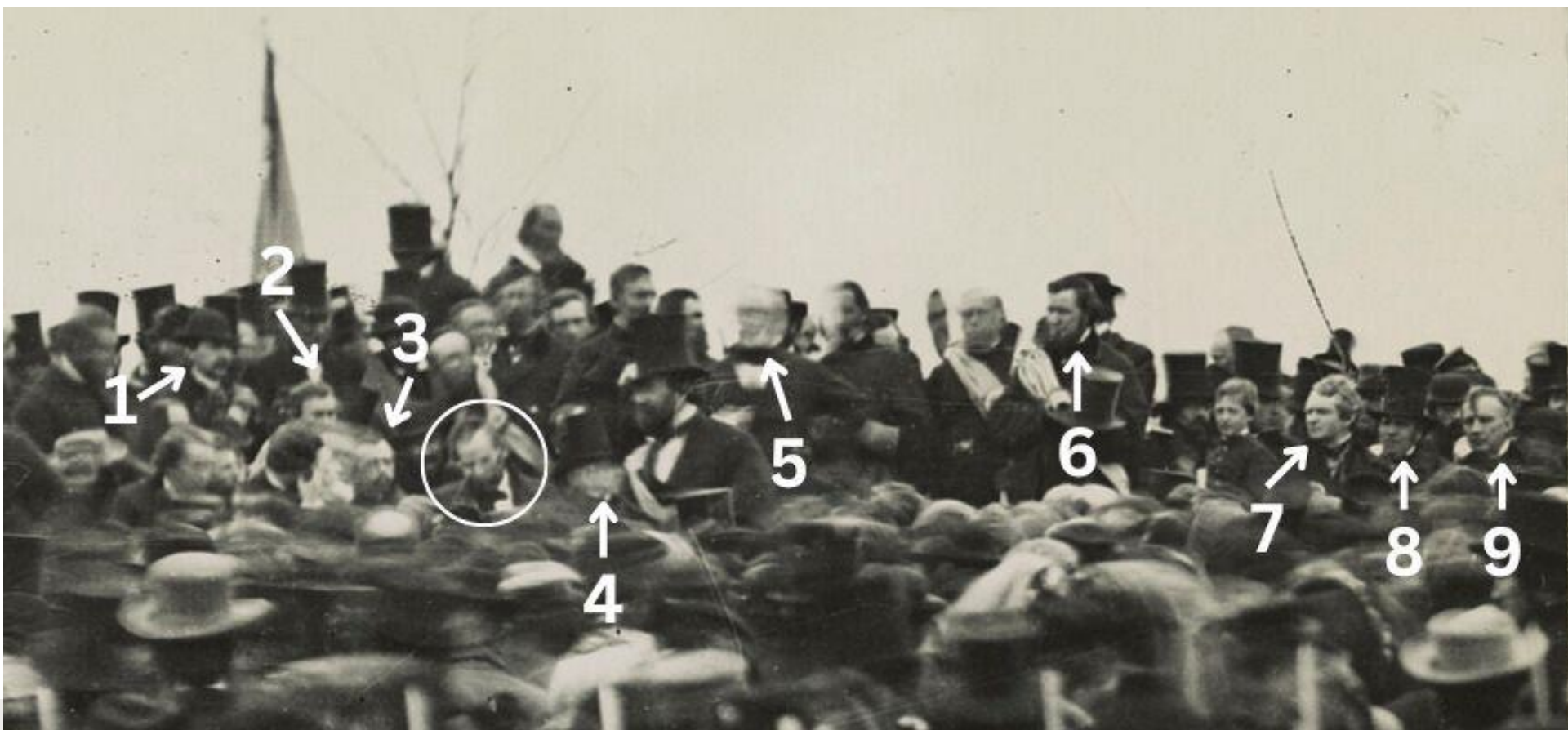
Four score and seven years ago...

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 CAN NOT DEDICATE—WE CAN NOT CONSECRATE—WE CAN NOT 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.

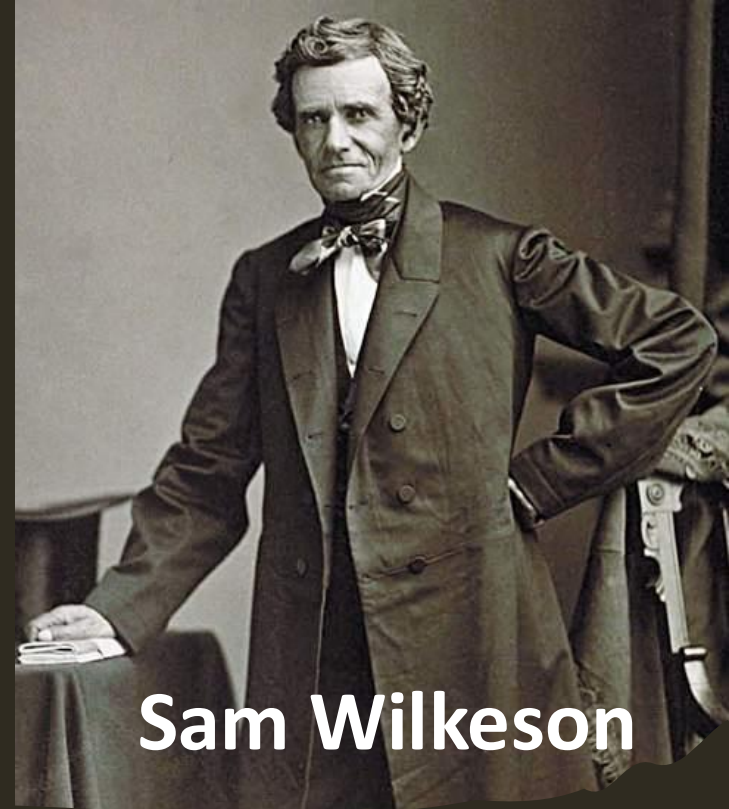
Executive Mansion

Washington,

and seven years ago our fathers
this continent, a new nation
dedicated to the prop
created equal"
engaged in a great civil
nation, or any nation
ated, can long endure,
battlefield of that war,
to a portion of it, as our
who died here, that
we may, in all propriety
can not dedicate—we
can not hallow, thus
living and dead, who
owed it, far above our
it. The world will little
say here; while it
died here.



***Context:* The Gettysburg Convention
November 18-19, 1863**



Sam Wilkeson

DETAILS FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

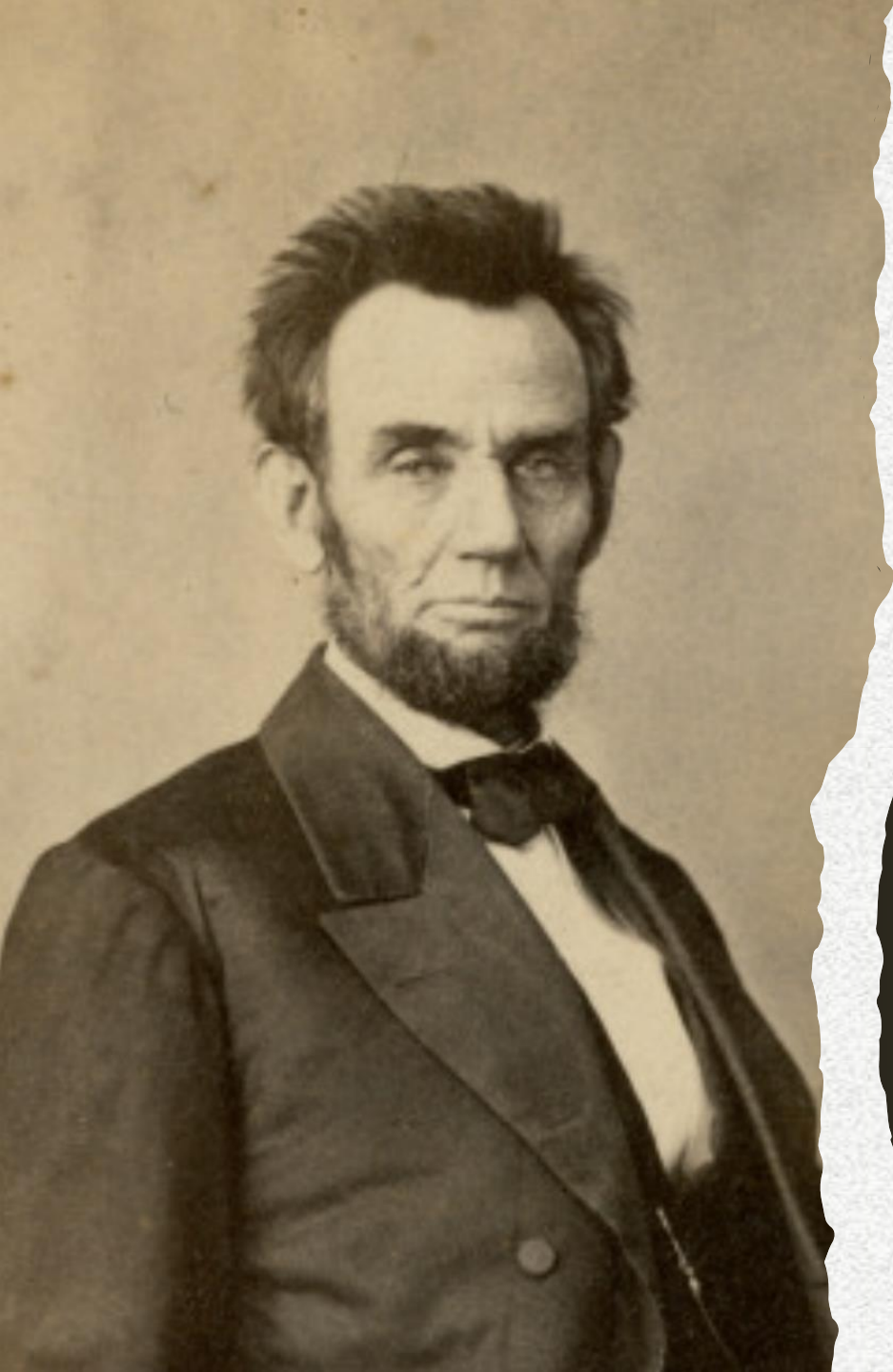
**HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF POTOMAC, }
Saturday Night, July 4.**

Who can write the history of a battle whose eyes are immovably fastened upon a central figure of transcendently absorbing interest—the dead body of an oldest born, crushed by a shell in a position where a battery should never have been sent, and abandoned to death in a building where surgeons dared not to stay?

My pen is heavy. Oh, you dead, who at Gettysburgh have baptised with your blood the second birth of Freedom in America, how you are to be envied!

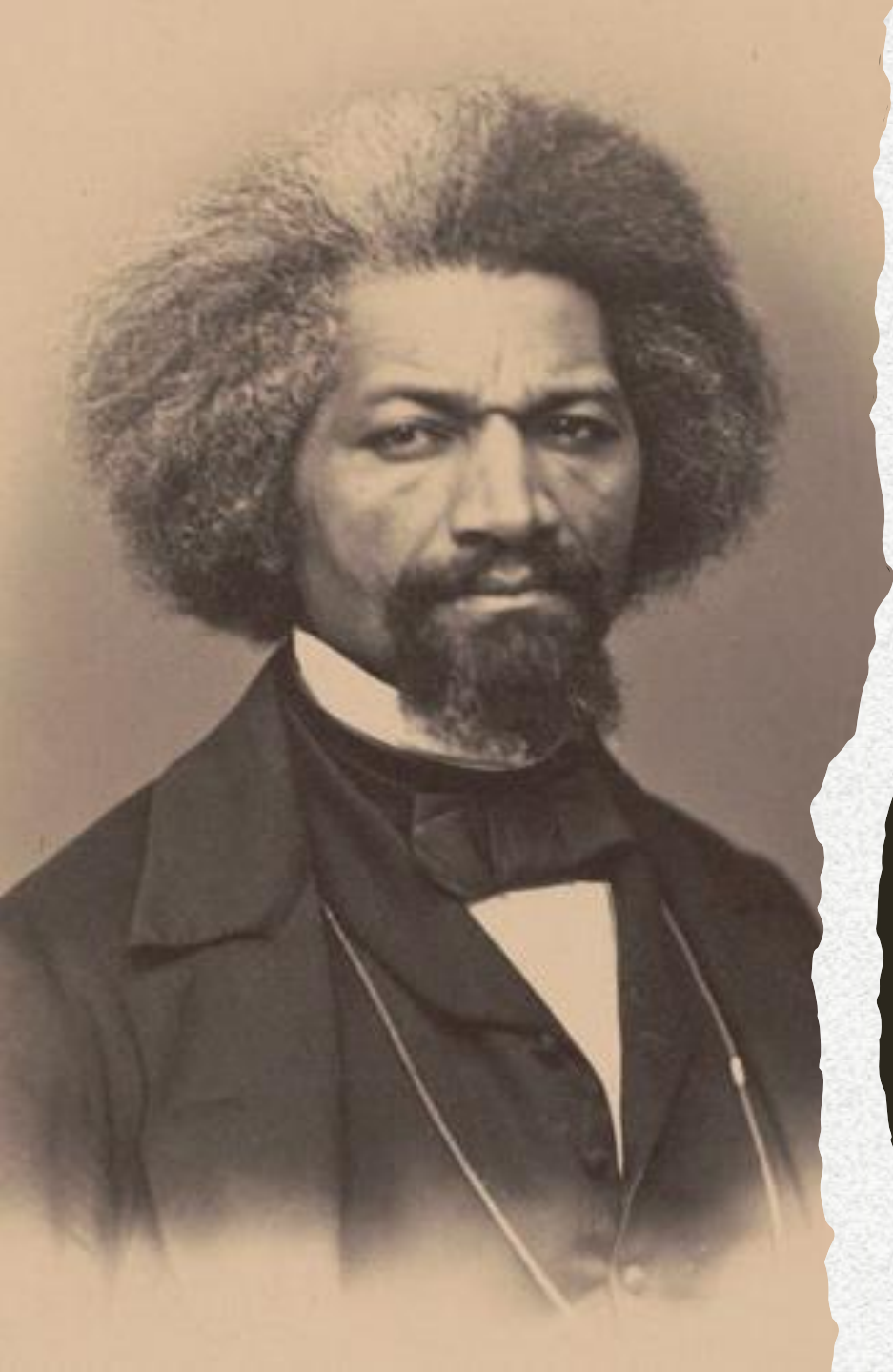
army. Among other costs of this error was the death of RUSSELL. Its value was priceless, however, though priceless was the young and the old blood with which it was bought. The error put us on the defensive, and

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southwest
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ll's earnest
sion of Pen
perfect infantry
list of charges of hostile
have
corps did sustain
self with immortal honors by
and courage. The total w
battery—the list of its
of officers, men and horse
marvellous outspread by
dead soldiers and dead animals
soldiers in blue, and dead sold
marvellous to me than anything
war—are a ghastly and shocking test
terrible fight of the Second corps that none
say. That corps will ever have the distinction of



Subtext

**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.**



Frederick Douglass, “Mission of the War” (January 13, 1864)

I end where I began—no war but an Abolition war; no peace but an Abolition peace; liberty for all, chains for none; the black man a soldier in war, a laborer in peace; a voter at the South as well as at the North; America his permanent home, and all Americans his fellow countrymen.

Anna Dickinson, “Perils of the Hour” (January 16, 1864)

But for what did they fight and for what had they died? In order that, in the language of the President, “good government might not perish from the earth.” In 1776 our independence was asserted, but 1861 was the beginning of liberty....

This was pre-eminently a people’s war. It was guided by the man of the people Granted that we had much yet to do, we had the man to complete the grand and glorious work, and that work was left for his second term of office.





KNOWLEDGE FOR FREEDOM SEMINAR

Dickinson College with support from the Teagle Foundation

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