

The Civil War: The Union Preserved

U.S. History to 1877

Second Inaugural Address

March 4, 1865

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Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

Second Inaugural Address

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With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Nevertheless, the South Persisted

- Obstacles to success
 - The Southern Constitution: weak central government vs. strong states
 - Reluctance to tax, cotton embargo led to printing money and runaway inflation
- Confidence in ultimate Southern victory
 - Judah P. Benjamin's success at manufacturing munitions
 - "Pure" Southern religion & Biblical support for slavery assured God's favor
 - Faith in Robert E. Lee

Surrender and Assassination

- Lee withdraws, Richmond falls
 - April 4, 1865
- Lee surrenders
 - Appomattox, April 9, 1865
- Lincoln assassinated
 - April 14, 1865
- Other Southern armies surrender through May and June

Legacy

- Union preserved
 - Secession discredited
 - Nation more unified than ever
- Defining moment for both sections
 - Heroic fight for high ideals
- 13th Amendment: Slavery abolished
- Rise of industrial economy
- Southern economy & influence decline