THE
PENNSYLVANIA MAGAZINE
OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Lithograph of illustration by Thomas Nast commemorating the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863. This image appeared as an illustration in the January 24, 1863 issue of *Harper's Weekly* as a celebration of President Abraham Lincoln's decree emancipating slaves during the Civil War. At the top of the illustration, the female figure Columbia, an early symbol of the United States, cheers emancipation and a portrait of President Lincoln is inset below. Nast depicts the horrors of slavery on the left-hand side, which feature scenes from a slave auction and whip-weilding plantation master. In contrast, the scenes of the right-hand side show free blacks attending school and gathering with family, as well as suggest harmony between blacks and whites. Online at http://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/694.

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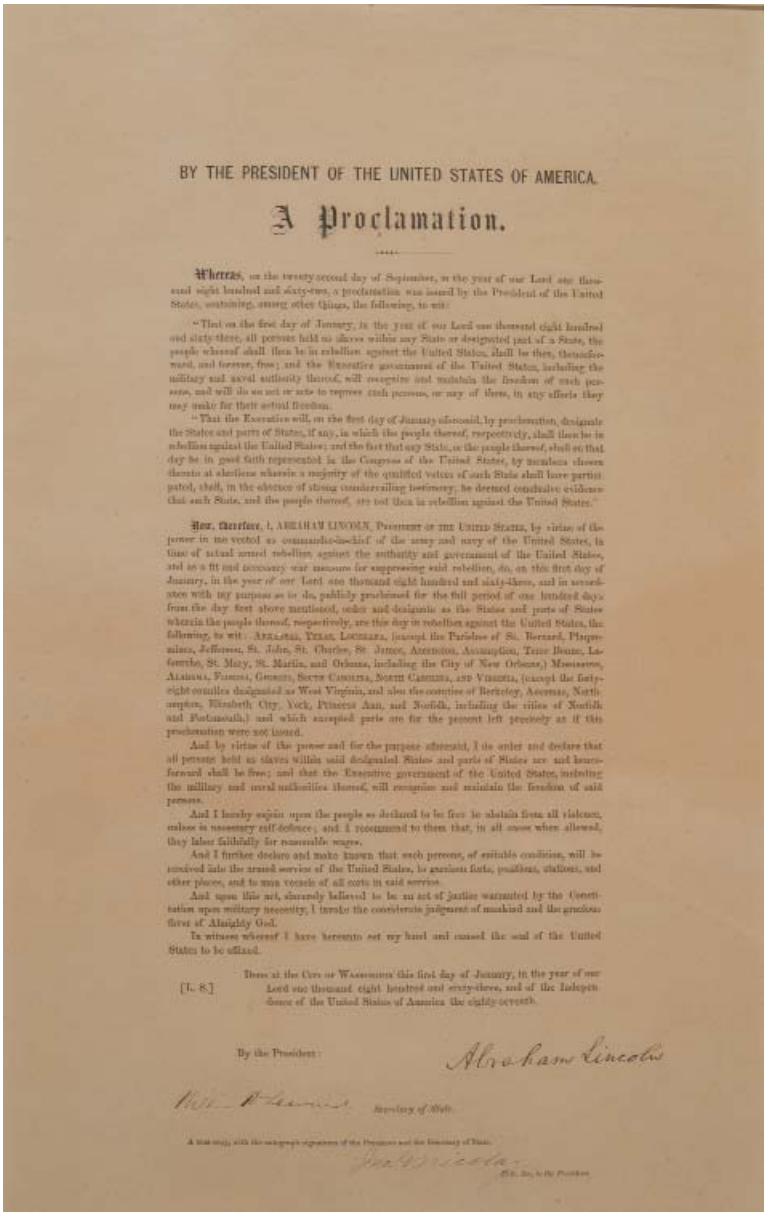
THE
Pennsylvania
Magazine
OF HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

Editorial

This month marks the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, signed by President Lincoln, which declared over three million enslaved African Americans free. Lincoln considered the Proclamation the "central act" of his administration and "the great event of the nineteenth century." It remains perhaps the most revolutionary act of any American president. While it most directly impacted slaves and masters in the seceded states, its consequences were much more far reaching. For African Americans in Pennsylvania—which had led the way toward emancipation with its Gradual Abolition Act of 1780—and throughout the nation, the Proclamation represented a major step in the fulfillment of the promise of the nation's founding. But emancipation, as the essays in this special issue commemorating this important document make clear, is a process—one which began well before January 1, 1863, and which continues to the present day. The *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, published in our nation's birthplace, thought it fitting to recognize and celebrate the new birth of freedom brought forth by Lincoln's Proclamation 150 years ago so that we may be reminded of its promise and better work to nurture its growth in the years to come.

Erica Armstrong Dunbar and Randall Miller, of the University of Delaware and St. Joseph's University, respectively, are the true midwives of this issue of *PMHB*. I am fortunate to have been able to rely upon their energy and expertise. I leave you now in their capable hands.

Tamara Gaskell
Editor



BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A Proclamation.

Whereas, on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following, to wit:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever, free; and the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

"That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States, by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, therefore, I, ABRAHAM LINCOLN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, by virtue of the power in me vested as commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit: ARKANSAS, TEXAS, LOUISIANA, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New Orleans,) MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA, FLORIDA, GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, NORTH CAROLINA, AND VIRGINIA, (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth,) and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are and henceforward shall be free; and that the Executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons, of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States, to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

[L. S.] Done at the City of WASHINGTON this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President:

Abraham Lincoln

Wm. H. Seward, Secretary of State.

A true copy, with the autographic signatures of the President and the Secretary of State.

Geo. Bancroft, Sec. to the President.

Emancipation Proclamation, 1863, owned by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, signed by President Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward. This copy is one of forty-eight autographed printings by Frederick Leypoldt in Philadelphia for Charles Godfrey Leland and George H. Boker for sale as fundraisers at the Great Central Sanitary Fair held in Philadelphia in June 1864. http://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/691

Introduction

In the months surrounding the sesquicentennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, much has been and is being written about this liberating document and its meanings—in its own time and over the decades. Indeed, important new books are already recasting the story of how and why Abraham Lincoln's emancipation proclamations of 1862 and 1863 came when they did, and with what consequences. Many note that—for blacks, at least—the signal act of the Emancipation Proclamation, issued on January 1, 1863, amid a great civil war, gave America new purpose and power and restored God's favor. It created an obligation to save the Union by ending slavery. It promised the dawn of a new day. Celebrations of the emancipating moment then and in years to come marked that hope and obligation. Recalling the Emancipation Proclamation, such works suggest, also demands inquiry into the dynamics, directions, and even dialectics of "emancipation," both in the 1860s and thereafter. Such interest led the staff and editorial board of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* to invite scholars to survey the new literature on emancipation, investigate particular examples of emancipation being worked out during the nineteenth century, and place the struggles over emancipation in a larger context that embraced northern, and especially Pennsylvanian, experiences. Thus, this special issue of *PMHB* on emancipation.

One important new dimension of recent scholarship has been a reorientation of the perspectives from which to assess the character and consequences of emancipation. The two principal hinges of the new orientation are place and race. By enlarging the compass of inquiry to include northerners' expectations of and experiences with freedom, scholars show that the abolitionist interest had been not only to end slavery in the South but also to bring together blacks and whites as equal citizens in the republic. Whatever doubts even some white abolitionists had about blacks' capacity to be fully free, they pressed for basic civil rights, and even the franchise as necessary, to ensure the freedom of black people everywhere as well as blacks' opportunity to make their own way. Many blacks,

too, sought the full rights of citizenship, and, without giving up their own institutions and identity, they also sought full inclusion into polity and society. This perspective reveals a different story than that of blacks working out the meaning of freedom after emancipation in the South, where most scholars have focused their attention. There, scholars argue, the freedpeople emphasized self-determination in building their own institutions, especially churches. Approaching the question of what emancipation wrought from the perspective of place and race reveals that emancipation meant more than just freedom and that its consequences varied. The essays in this special issue take the measure of emancipation by beginning to give northern blacks, and whites, their due.

The long history of emancipation must include the tens of thousands of free blacks who lived throughout the North, some of whose freedom dated back to the colonial era. Many African Americans were freed during and after the American Revolution as states above the Mason-Dixon Line gradually began to abolish slavery. There were many reasons for the gradual decline of slavery in the North as economic practicality, the rise of a wage labor system, religious revivalism, and the ideology of the Revolution argued for slavery's end and opened paths to freedom for blacks.

For Pennsylvanians especially, the moral and monetary dilemma of human bondage placed the commonwealth on the national stage as it became a test case of sorts. To borrow from the historian Willie Lee Rose, Pennsylvania became a "rehearsal for emancipation" after the passage of the 1780 Gradual Abolition Act. Pennsylvania legislators understood the delicate nature of emancipation in the late years of the eighteenth century. Although there was a growing opposition to enslavement, the Gradual Abolition Act attempted to appease Pennsylvania slaveholders by allowing them to extract twenty-eight years of unfree labor from men and women of African descent.

Other northern states also moved against slavery so that by the early nineteenth century it existed as a "peculiar institution" confined to the South rather than a national one. During the nineteenth century, many northern states also sought to limit slavery's hold by instituting "personal liberty laws" and other devices that obstructed the reach of southern slaveholders trying to recover fugitives. Antislavery interests also resisted efforts to introduce slavery in areas thus far closed to the institution, such as the Old Northwest. To be sure, northerners constricted the meaning of

freedom for blacks by denying them access to public schools and the franchise, requiring bonds to enter states or territories, and imposing other discriminatory acts, but the habit of freedom in northern places provided a counternarrative to southern slaveholders' insistence that slavery was right and ought to be protected everywhere.

This special issue of *PMHB* reminds us that emancipation was an uneven and incomplete process that succeeded largely through direct action, a point demonstrated by the bold and aggressive antislavery actions of both enslaved and free African Americans. Black men and women did not sit idly by as passive recipients of freedom. Instead, they petitioned the courts, challenged their previous owners, took flight, and created their own independent churches, businesses, and mutual aid organizations, all with the intention of claiming and enlarging American freedom. They also joined with white antislavery advocates to press for ending slavery everywhere by moral suasion and, for some, by any means available.

But these efforts were not enough to slow slavery's advance or endanger the institution where it was deeply rooted, and black and white abolitionists insisted that such limited efforts alone could not save America from the corrupting power of slavery. At the same time, northern communities struggled to reconcile racial and religious differences with ideas about freedom, often with violent responses. Such troubles persisted through the Civil War era. The long history of antislavery activism and whites' resistance to such efforts, the authors suggest, informed the particular ways blacks and whites responded to Lincoln's changing views about emancipation when it came as a promise with the Emancipation Proclamation and as a fact with the Thirteenth Amendment.

The long history of emancipation also includes the ways blacks and whites remembered it—or, as in the case of many whites over time, sought to forget or distort it. Amid a period of sectional reconciliation by whites and rising racism—with social Darwinism, the trope of the "white man's burden," and Jim Crow laws all gaining strength—blacks in particular took stock of what had come from emancipation. In 1913, for example, blacks in Pennsylvania and elsewhere organized events and exhibitions to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. In Philadelphia, they organized the Pennsylvania Emancipation Exposition, which drew an estimated one hundred thousand people to the exhibits showing black progress. Through churches, civic organizations, schools,

and individual efforts, blacks commemorated the Emancipation Proclamation by asserting their own contributions to the health and wealth of their communities and calling for another new birth of freedom. That story, however, has not been much told. The essay in this issue on one particular example of black self-assessment in Germantown speaks to that moment and memory.

The essays herein collectively show that emancipation was never a moment and was always part of a movement. They also suggest that understanding and appreciating the many meanings of the Emancipation Proclamation, in its day and after, must move the focus from any preoccupation with one place or one people. Indeed, the story of emancipation—of freedom—is the constant in America. Its demands extend beyond its time. During this sesquicentennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, we might well take that to heart so that its parchment promise—that people might be free—becomes hard fact. Thus, too, this special issue on emancipation.

University of Delaware ERICA ARMSTRONG DUNBAR
Saint Joseph's University RANDALL M. MILLER

The Contested History of American Freedom

As we commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, we are prompted to consider the meaning of freedom and the role freedom—its promise, its contradictions, and its consequences—has played in American identity and American history. In 2013, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania will launch a new digital history project, with generous funding from Bank of America, entitled "Preserving American Freedom." This web project will highlight fifty documents from the Historical Society's collections that illuminate key moments, conflicts, and ideas in the history of American freedom. Prominent among these is a copy of the Emancipation Proclamation signed by Abraham Lincoln as well as numerous emancipation- or abolition-related documents such as Pennsylvania's Gradual Abolition Act of 1780, records of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, an excerpt from the Underground Railroad journal of William Still, and a "Declaration of Liberty" dictated by John Brown and his compatriots. Users will be able to explore not only detailed digital facsimiles of the original documents but transcriptions, annotations, biographies, illustrations and other related media, a timeline, lesson plans, and contextual essays. Some of the most prominent scholars of American history have contributed essays to this exciting project—Evan Haefeli, Pauline Maier, Gary Nash, Richard Newman, Walter Licht, Emily Rosenberg, and Thomas Sugrue—and a longer, thematic essay by Eric Foner, the foremost historian of American freedom, ties this project together. A special, for-print version of Foner's essay, "The Contested History of American Freedom," is presented here. Look for the final version—and the documents referenced below in footnotes—online soon at http://hsp.org/preserving-american-freedom.

No idea is more fundamental to Americans' sense of ourselves as individuals and as a nation than freedom. The central term in our political vocabulary, freedom—or liberty, with which it is almost always used interchangeably—is deeply embedded in the record of our history and the language of everyday life. The Declaration of

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Independence lists liberty among mankind's inalienable rights; the Constitution announces securing liberty's blessings as its purpose.[1] Freedom has often been invoked to mobilize support for war: the United States fought the Civil War to bring about "a new birth of freedom," World War II for the "Four Freedoms," the Cold War to defend the "Free World." The recently concluded war in Iraq was given the title "Operation Iraqi Freedom." Americans' love of freedom has been represented by liberty poles, caps, and statues and been acted out by burning stamps and draft cards, fleeing from slave masters, and demonstrating for the right to vote. Obviously, other peoples also cherish freedom, but the idea seems to occupy a more prominent place in public and private discourse in the United States than in many other countries. "Every man in the street, white, black, red or yellow," wrote the educator and statesman Ralph Bunche in 1940, "knows that this is 'the land of the free' . . . [and] 'the cradle of liberty.'"[2]

Despite, or perhaps because of, its very ubiquity, freedom has never been a fixed category or concept. Rather, it has been the subject of persistent conflict in American history. The history of American freedom is a tale of debates, disagreements, and struggles rather than a set of timeless categories or an evolutionary narrative toward a preordained goal. And the meaning of freedom has been constructed at all levels of society—not only in congressional debates and political treatises, but on plantations and picket lines, in parlors and even in bedrooms.

If the meaning of freedom has been a battleground throughout our history, so too has been the definition of those entitled to enjoy its blessings. Founded on the premise that liberty is an entitlement of all mankind, the United States, from the outset, blatantly deprived many of its own people of freedom. Efforts to delimit freedom along one or another axis of social existence have been a persistent feature of our history. More to the point, perhaps, freedom has often been defined *by* its limits. The master's freedom rested on the reality of slavery, the vaunted autonomy of men on the subordinate position of women. By the same token, it has been through battles at the boundaries of freedom—the efforts of racial minorities, women, workers, and other groups to secure freedom as they

[1] Declaration of Independence: First Newport Printing by Solomon Southwick, Ab-1776-25, and US Constitution, Second Draft, James Wilson Papers (Collection 721), both in Historical Society of Pennsylvania Treasures (Collection 978). All original documents cited in this essay are found in the collections of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania unless otherwise noted.

[2] Quoted in Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York, 1944), 4.

understood it—that the definition of freedom has been both deepened and transformed and the concept extended to realms for which it was not originally intended.

* * *

The early settlers of Great Britain's North American colonies brought with them long-standing ideas about freedom, some of them quite unfamiliar today. To them, freedom was not a single idea but a collection of distinct rights and privileges that depended on one's nationality and social status. "Liberties" meant formal, specific privileges—such as self-government or the right to practice a particular trade—many of which were enjoyed by only a small segment of the population.

Freedom did not mean the absence of authority or the right to do whatever one pleased—far from it. One common conception understood freedom as a moral or spiritual condition; freedom meant abandoning a life of sin to embrace the teachings of Christ. What was often called "Christian liberty" meant leading a moral life. It had no connection with the idea of religious toleration. Religious uniformity was thought to be essential to public order. Every country in Europe had an official religion, and dissenters faced persecution by the state and religious authorities. Liberty also rested on obedience to law. Yet the law applied differently to different people, and liberty came from knowing one's social place. Within families, male dominance and female submission was the norm. Most men lacked the economic freedom that came with the ownership of property. Only a minute portion of the population enjoyed the right to vote.

Nonetheless, conditions in colonial America encouraged the development both of a greater enjoyment of freedom than was possible in Europe at the time and of alternative ideas about freedom. The wide availability of land meant that a higher percentage of the male population owned property and could vote. Unlike the French and Spanish empires, which limited settlement to Roman Catholics, the British encouraged a diverse group of colonists to emigrate to their colonies. Thus, religious pluralism quickly became a fact of life, even though nearly every colony had an official church. William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania and a member of the Quakers, who faced severe restrictions in England, envisioned his colony as a place where those facing persecution in Europe could enjoy spiritual freedom. His Charter of Privileges of 1701 guaranteed that no resident of Pennsylvania who believed in "one almighty God" would be

punished for his religious convictions or "compelled to frequent or maintain any religious worship."[3] Some English settlers, such as the authors of a petition from Pennsylvania complaining to London authorities about Mennonites settling in the colony, found the growing diversity of the colonial population disturbing.[4] But while it did not establish complete religious toleration (it required belief in God), Penn's charter was, nonetheless, a milestone in the development of religious liberty in America.

The struggles in England that culminated in the Civil War of the 1640s and, half a century later, the Glorious Revolution, gave new meanings to freedom. Alongside the idea of "liberties" that applied only to some groups arose the notion of the "rights of Englishmen" that applied to all. The idea of "English liberty" became central to Anglo-American political culture. It meant that no man was above the law and that all within the realm enjoyed certain basic rights of person or property that even the king could not abridge.

* * *

The belief in freedom as the common heritage of all Englishmen was widely shared by eighteenth-century Americans. Resistance to British efforts to raise revenues in America began not as a demand for independence but as a defense, in colonial eyes, of the rights of Englishmen. The Stamp Act Congress of 1765 condemned the principle of taxation without representation by asserting that residents of the colonies were entitled to "all the inherent rights and liberties" of "subjects within the Kingdom of Great Britain."[5] But the Revolution ended up transforming these rights—by definition a parochial set of entitlements that did not apply to other peoples—into a universal concept. The rights of Englishmen became the rights of man. The struggle for independence gave birth to a definition of American nationhood and national mission that persists to this day—an idea closely linked to freedom, for the new nation defined itself as a unique embodiment of liberty in a world over-

[3] *The Charter of Privileges, Granted by William Penn, Esq; to the Inhabitants of Pensilvania and Territories* (1701; repr., Philadelphia, 1741).

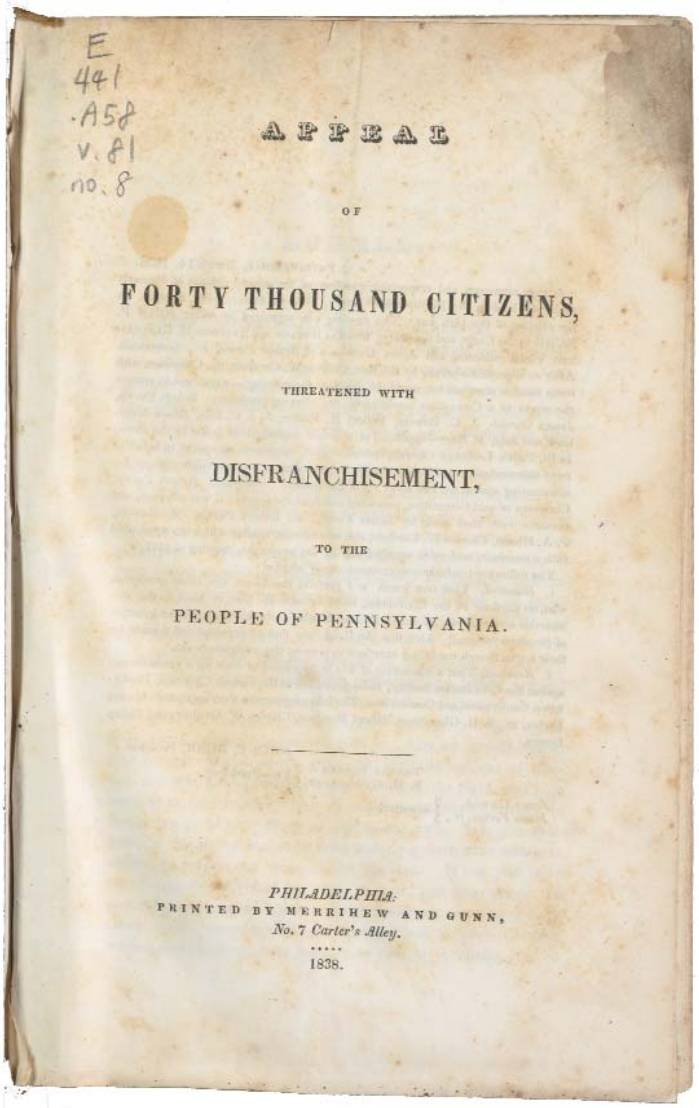
[4] Memorial against Non-English Immigration, Dec. 1727, box 4A, folder 2, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Miscellaneous Collection (Collection 425).

[5] Declaration of the Congress Held at New York, Oct. 7, 1765, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Autograph Collection (Collection 0022A).

run with oppression. This sense of American uniqueness—of the United States as an example to the rest of the world of the superiority of free institutions—remains alive and well even today as a central part of our political culture. Over time, it has made the United States an example, inspiring democratic movements in other countries, and has provided justification for American interference in the affairs of other countries in the name of bringing them freedom.

The American Revolution, together with westward expansion and the market revolution, destroyed the hierarchical world inherited from the colonial era. As the expanding commercial society redefined property to include control over one's own labor, and the opening of the West enabled millions of American families to acquire land, old inequalities crumbled and the link between property and voting was severed. Political democracy became essential to American ideas of freedom. This was a remarkable development. "Democracy" in the eighteenth century was a negative idea, a term of abuse. The idea that sovereignty rightly belongs to the mass of ordinary, individual, and equal citizens represented a new departure. With its provisions for lifetime judges, a senate elected by state legislatures, and a cumbersome, indirect method of choosing the president, the national constitution hardly established a functioning democracy. But in the new republic, more and more citizens attended political meetings, became avid readers of newspapers and pamphlets, and insisted on the right of the people to debate public issues and to organize to affect public policy.

By the 1830s, a flourishing democratic system had emerged, based on popular control of local governments and distrustful of the faraway national state. American democracy was boisterous, sometimes violent, and expansive—it largely excluded women, at least from the voting booth, but could incorporate immigrants from abroad and, after the Civil War, former slaves. It engaged the energies of massive numbers of citizens, producing voter turnouts that reached 80 percent in some elections. The right to vote became an essential element of American freedom. Yet, even as the suffrage expanded for white men, it retreated for others. New states did not allow black men to vote. In the older states, some groups lost the right to vote even as others gained it. Women who met the property qualification (mainly widows, since married women's property belonged to their husbands) enjoyed the suffrage in New Jersey beginning in 1776, but it was taken away in 1807. In Pennsylvania, African American men lost the right to vote when a new state constitution was adopted in 1838,



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APPEAL

OF

FORTY THOUSAND CITIZENS,

THREATENED WITH

DISFRANCHISEMENT,

TO THE

PEOPLE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED BY MERRIHEW AND GUNN,
No. 7 Carter's Alley.
1838.

Appeal of Forty Thousand Citizens, Threatened with Disfranchisement, to the People of Pennsylvania, 1838, protesting the amendment of Pennsylvania's constitution to restrict voting rights to white freemen. Historical Society of Pennsylvania. http://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/7558.

prompting Philadelphia's black leaders to protest.[6] In New York State, the same constitutional convention of 1821 that eliminated property qualifications for white men imposed so high a qualification for black men that almost all were stripped of the franchise. Overall, for American men, race replaced class as the dividing line between those who could vote and those who could not.

* * *

Democracy, in Lincoln's famous formulation, means "government of the people, by the people, and for the people."[7] But this begs the question of who constitute "the people." The Revolution had given birth to a republic rhetorically founded on liberty but resting economically in large measure on slavery. Slavery had been central to colonial development, and slavery helped to define American understandings of freedom in the colonial era and the nineteenth century. From the very first meeting of Congress, when the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery presented a petition for universal liberty, slavery was a source of division in the new nation.[8] Of course, as ubiquitous newspaper advertisements seeking the return of fugitives attested, slaves and indentured servants (bound to labor for a specific number of years, not life) sometimes expressed their own commitment to freedom by running away.[9] Later, northern abolitionists organized "vigilance committees" to assist fugitives; Philadelphia's was run by the free African American William Still, who carefully recorded the details about runaway slaves who arrived in the city and later published a book, *The Underground Rail Road*, that bore witness to the many acts of self-emancipation.[10]

Nonetheless, slavery helped to shape the identity—the sense of self—of all Americans, giving nationhood from the outset a powerful exclusionary dimension. Even as Americans celebrated their freedom, the

[6] *Appeal of Forty Thousand Citizens, Threatened with Disfranchisement, to the People of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1838).

[7] Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address" (Nov. 19, 1863), available at http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/gettyb.asp.

[8] Memorial of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery to the Senate and Representatives of the United States [Feb. 1790], box 5B, Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers (Collection 490).

[9] Advertisements, *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 6–13, 1738.

[10] Journal C of Station No. 2 of the Underground Railroad, Agent William Still [1852–57], Pennsylvania Abolition Society Papers (Collection 490)/Historical Society of Pennsylvania Treasures Collection (Collection 978); Still, *The Underground Rail Road* (Philadelphia, 1872).

definition of those entitled to enjoy the "blessings of liberty" protected by the Constitution came to be defined by race. No black person, declared the US Supreme Court in 1857, could ever be an American citizen.

Yet, at the same time, the struggle by outcasts and outsiders—the abolitionists, the slaves, and free blacks themselves—reinvigorated the notion of freedom as a universal birthright, a truly human ideal. The antislavery crusade insisted on the "Americanness" of both enslaved and free blacks and repudiated not only slavery but the racial boundaries that confined free blacks to second-class status. Abolitionists pioneered the idea of a national citizenship whose members enjoyed equality before the law, protected by a beneficent national state. And the movement offered a way for those excluded from the suffrage, most notably free blacks and women, to participate in political life in other ways—by circulating petitions, delivering speeches, and seeking to change public sentiment about slavery.

The abolitionist movement also inspired other groups, especially women, to stake their own claims to greater freedom in the young republic. The long contest over slavery gave new meaning to personal liberty, political community, and the rights attached to American citizenship. Abolitionism, wrote Angelina Grimké, the daughter of a South Carolina slaveholder who became a prominent abolitionist and women's rights activist, was the nation's preeminent "school in which *human rights* are . . . investigated."[11] Leaders of the movement for women's suffrage, such as Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, arose out of the abolitionist movement. After the Civil War, however, when Congress (including Radical Republicans who had supported women's suffrage) moved to enfranchise black men but not women, white or black, many women's suffragists concluded that women could not place their trust in male-dominated political movements. Women, Stanton and Anthony now insisted, must form their own organizations to press the case for equal rights.[12] It would take another half century of struggle for women to win the right to vote. But in an ironic reversal of the situation in Reconstruction, when the rights of black men took precedence over those of women, leaders of the women's suffrage movement assured southern legislatures that the Nineteenth Amendment, added to the Constitution

[11] Angelina Grimké to Catherine Beecher, Oct. 2, 1837, in *Letters to Catherine Beecher*, by Grimké (Boston, 1838), 114, at http://books.google.com/books?id=KSWzlG7UHnsC&pg=PA114&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false.

[12] Constitution of the National Woman Suffrage Association, with note from Susan B. Anthony [May 17, 1874], case 7, box 19, Simon Gratz Collection (Collection 250A).

"Come and Join Us, Brothers," 1864. This broadside lithograph, printed for the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments, depicts recruits at Camp William Penn, the first training ground for African American troops. Historical Society of Pennsylvania Medium Graphics Collection. http://digital library.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/5493.

in 1920, would not affect laws disenfranchising blacks, male or female, through property and literacy tests and poll taxes.[13]

* * *

The Civil War, of course, destroyed slavery and placed the question of black citizenship on the national agenda. Although the Confederacy's vice president, Alexander H. Stephens, identified slavery as the "cornerstone" of the Confederacy at the war's outset, many Southerners, such as

[13] For more on the women's suffrage movement of the twentieth century, see Dora Kelly Lewis Correspondence (Collection 2137), particularly Dora Kelly Lewis to Mrs. Henry K. Kelly, July 4, 1917, Dora Kelly Lewis to Louise Lewis, Jan. 10, 1919, and Dora Kelly Lewis to Louise Lewis, Apr. 14, 1920.

South Carolina plantation owner Thomas Drayton, insisted, "*We* are fighting for home & liberty."[14] But when Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, the cause of the Union became inextricably linked to the promise of freedom for the slaves.[15] The Proclamation also authorized for the first time the enrollment of black men in the Union army. Initially paid less than white troops, the black soldiers mobilized to demand equal compensation, which Congress granted in 1864 and 1865. Black men, one officer wrote, had moved "one step nearer owning their rights as men."[16]

In the crucible of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the abolitionist principles of birthright citizenship and equal protection of the law without regard to race were written into the Constitution—an attempt to strip American freedom of its identification with whiteness. But these changes affected all Americans, not just the former slaves. The Fourteenth Amendment made the Constitution what it had never been before—a vehicle through which aggrieved groups can take their claims that they lack equality and freedom to court. Reconstruction failed to secure black freedom and was followed by a long period of inequality for black Americans. But the laws and amendments of the Civil War era remained on the books waiting to be awakened in the twentieth century by another generation of Americans in what they would call the "freedom movement."

* * *

After decades of the slavery controversy, which had somewhat tarnished the sense of a special American mission to preserve and promote liberty, the Civil War and emancipation reinforced the identification of the United States with the progress of freedom, linking this mission as never before with the power of the national state. Even as the United States emerged, with the Spanish-American War of 1898, as an empire akin to those of Europe, traditional American exceptionalism thrived, yoked ever more tightly to the idea of freedom by the outcome of the

[14] Thomas F. Drayton to Percival Drayton, Apr. 17, 1861, box 24, folder 3, Drayton Family Papers (Collection 1584); Alexander H. Stephens, "Cornerstone Speech," In *Alexander H. Stephens in Public and Private: With Letters and Speeches, Before, During, and Since the War* (Philadelphia, 1886), 717–29, at http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?documentprint=76.

[15] Emancipation Proclamation, Ab-1863/Historical Society of Pennsylvania Treasures Collection (Collection 978).

[16] Lieutenant N. H. Edgerton to Thomas H. Webster, chairman of the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Troops, June 27, 1864, box 1, folder 13, Abraham Barker Collection on the Free Military School for Applicants for the Command of Colored Regiments (Collection 1968).

Civil War. To be sure, anti-imperialists such as Moorfield Storey of Boston could condemn American rule in the Philippines for depriving the people of those islands of "the freedom which in this very city our fathers declared the inalienable right of every human being."[17] But the majority of Americans appeared to see the expansion of national power overseas as, by definition, an expansion of freedom.

At the turn of the twentieth century, debates over freedom were dominated by the question of what social conditions make enjoyment of freedom possible. The question of how to secure "opportunity for free men" in the face of vastly unequal economic power between employer and employee, wrote Philadelphia businessman Joseph Fels, was the major question of the age.[18] One outlook defined the free market as the true domain of liberty and condemned any interference with its operations. One supporter of Philadelphia transit companies confronting a strike called trade unions "diabolical" interferences with the "liberty [of] your company to transact its own business."[19]

Critics, however, raised the question of whether meaningful freedom could exist in a situation of extreme economic inequality. In the nineteenth century, economic freedom had generally been defined as autonomy, usually understood via ownership of property—a farm, artisan's shop, or small business. When reformers forcefully raised the issue of "industrial freedom" in the early years of the twentieth century, they insisted that in a modern economy, economic freedom meant economic security—a floor beneath which no citizen would be allowed to sink. To secure economic freedom thus defined required active intervention by the government. During the 1920s, this expansive notion of economic freedom was eclipsed by a resurgence of laissez-faire ideology. But in the following decade, Franklin D. Roosevelt sought to make freedom a rallying cry for the New Deal. Roosevelt persistently linked freedom with economic security and identified entrenched economic inequality as its greatest enemy.

[17] Moorfield Storey, "Statement against Acquiring the Philippine Islands" (typescript draft of speech, Philadelphia Conference of American Anti-Imperialist League, Feb. 22, 1900), Historical Society of Pennsylvania Autograph Collection (Collection 0022A). Storey's speech, entitled "Is It Right?" was later published by the American Anti-Imperialist League as *Liberty Tracts* 8, no. 1 (1900).

[18] Joseph Fels to C. W. Post, Oct. 5, 1909, box 1, folder 4, Joseph and Mary Fels Papers (Collection 1953).

[19] R. G. Ashley to Charles O. Kruger, Mar. 22, 1910, box 17 5005 to 5019, folder JR-60-14, Harold E. Cox Transportation Collection (Collection 3158), unprocessed section.

If Roosevelt invoked the word to sustain the New Deal, "liberty"—in its earlier sense of limited government and laissez-faire economics—became the fighting slogan of his opponents. The principal conservative critique of the New Deal was that it restricted American freedom. When conservative businessmen and politicians in 1934 formed an organization to mobilize opposition to the New Deal, they called it the American Liberty League. Opposition to the New Deal planted the seeds for the later flowering of an antistatist conservatism bent on upholding the free market and dismantling the welfare state.

* * *

During the twentieth century the United States emerged as a persistent and powerful actor on the world stage. And at key moments of worldwide involvement the encounter with a foreign "other" subtly affected the meaning of freedom in the United States. One such episode was the struggle against Nazi Germany, which not only highlighted aspects of American freedom that had previously been neglected but fundamentally transformed perceptions of who was entitled to enjoy the blessings of liberty in the United States.

Today, when asked to define their rights as citizens, Americans instinctively turn to the privileges enumerated in the Bill of Rights—freedom of speech, the press, and religion, for example. But for many decades after the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution in 1791, the social and legal defenses of free expression were extremely fragile in the United States. A broad rhetorical commitment to this ideal coexisted with stringent restrictions on speech deemed radical or obscene. Dissenters who experienced legal and extralegal repression, including labor organizers, World War I–era socialists, and birth control advocates, had long insisted on the centrality of free expression to American liberty. But not until the late 1930s did civil liberties assume a central place in mainstream definitions of freedom.

There were many causes for this development, including a new awareness in the 1930s of restraints on free speech by public and private opponents of labor organizing. But what scholars call the "discovery of the Bill of Rights" on the eve of American entry into World War II owed much to an ideological revulsion against Nazism and the invocation of freedom as a shorthand way of describing the myriad differences between

American and German society and politics. Americans who demanded American entry into the European war in 1941 called themselves the Fight for Freedom Committee. They insisted that the destruction of Nazism was necessary for the preservation of freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment—"freedom to think and to express our thought, [and] freedom of worship."[20]

World War II also reshaped Americans' understanding of the internal boundaries of freedom. The abolition of slavery had not produced anything resembling racial justice, except for a brief period after the Civil War when African Americans enjoyed equality before the law and manhood suffrage. By the turn of the century, a new system of inequality—resting on segregation, disenfranchisement, a labor market rigidly segmented along racial lines, and the threat of lynching for those who challenged the new status quo—was well on its way to being consolidated in the South, with the acquiescence of the rest of the nation.[21] Not only the shifting condition of blacks but also the changing sources of immigration spurred a growing preoccupation with the racial composition of the nation. In 1879, a referendum on the subject of Chinese immigration in California resulted in 154,000 registering opposition, with only 883 in favor.[22] The Chinese Exclusion Act followed in 1882. Immigration from Europe also aroused controversy. In the early twentieth century, far more newcomers entered the United States from Italy and the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires than from northern and western Europe, the traditional sources of immigration. Among many middle-class, native-born Protestant Americans, these events inspired an abandonment of the egalitarian vision of citizenship spawned by the Civil War and the revival of definitions of American freedom based on race. The immigration law of 1924, which banned all immigration from Asia and severely restricted that from southern and eastern Europe, reflected the renewed identification of nationalism, American freedom, and notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority.

[20] Conyers Read, "The Fight for Freedom" (typescript draft of speech, Fight for Freedom Committee, Philadelphia Chapter, May 29, 1941), box 35, folder 3, Historical Society of Pennsylvania Collection of World War II Papers (Collection 1479).

[21] James S. Stemons, "Growing Antipathy and Antagonism between the White and Black Races: The Effect, Cause and Cure" (typescript draft of speech, Methodist Preachers' Meeting, Sept. 23, 1912), box 4, folder 14, James Samuel Stemons Papers (MSS 12).

[22] Certificate of Vote on "An Act to Ascertain and Express the Will of the People of the State on California on the Subject of Chinese Immigration" [1879], case 3, box 1, Simon Gratz Collection (Collection 250A).

The struggle against Nazi tyranny and its theory of a master race discredited ideas of inborn ethnic and racial inequality and gave a new impetus to the long-denied struggle for racial justice at home. A pluralist definition of American society, in which all Americans enjoyed equally the benefits of freedom, had been pioneered in the 1930s by leftists and liberals. During the Second World War, this became the official stance of the Roosevelt administration. The government used mass media, including radio and motion pictures, to popularize an expanded narrative of American history that acknowledged the contributions of immigrants and blacks and to promote a new paradigm of racial and ethnic inclusiveness. One radio program asked listeners: "How can we expect to win a people's war if we maintain barriers against any group? For is not this great country dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal?"[23] What set the United States apart from its wartime foes was not simply dedication to the ideal of freedom but the resolve that Americans of all races, religions, and national origins could enjoy freedom equally. By the war's end, awareness of the uses to which theories of racial superiority had been put in Europe helped seal the doom of racism—in terms of intellectual respectability, if not American social reality.

Rhetorically, the Cold War was in many ways a continuation of the battles of World War II. The discourse of a world sharply divided into two camps, one representing freedom and the other its opposite, was reinvigorated in the worldwide struggle against communism. Even during World War II, when the Soviet Union was America's ally, anticommunist organizations insisted that communism posed a dire threat to American values such as freedom of religion and speech, not to mention the threat posed by communist advocacy of such dangerous doctrines as "absolute social and racial equality; intermarriage of Blacks and Whites; Promotion of Class hatred."[24] During the Cold War, the United States was once again the leader of a global crusade for freedom against a demonic, ideologically driven antagonist. From the Truman Doctrine to the 1960s, every American president would speak of a national mission to defend the Free World and protect freedom across the globe, even when American actions, as in Iran and Guatemala in the 1950s and Vietnam in the 1960s,

[23] *Lest We Forget: Eternal Vigilance Is the Price of Liberty*, 7th series, no. 5: *Eternal Vigilance in Business* (Washington, DC, 1943), box 1, disc 5, Philadelphia Fellowship Commission Recordings (Collection 3572).

[24] American Women Against Communism mailer to Mary Winder Morris, Sept. 28, 1944, box 33, folder 4, Morris Family Papers (Collection 2000B).

"From Every Mountainside"

"Let Freedom Ring"

Vol. 1 No. 1 Published by the PENNSYLVANIA CIVIL RIGHTS CONGRESS November 1953

Masthead from the first issue of *Let Freedom Ring* (Nov. 1953), a newsletter published by the Pennsylvania Civil Rights Congress to combat McCarthyism. Box 3, folder 24, Thelma McDaniel Collection (Collection 3063), Historical Society of Pennsylvania. http://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/8082.

seemed to jeopardize the freedom of other peoples rather than enhance it. The Cold War abroad led inevitably to an anticommunist crusade at home that placed in jeopardy core American freedoms. As the Pennsylvania Civil Rights Congress pointed out in 1953, the denial of freedom of speech to those who held unpopular opinions itself posed a threat to "American traditions of freedom."[25]

* * *

The glorification of freedom as the essential characteristic of American life in a struggle for global dominance opened the door for others to seize on the language of freedom for their own purposes. Most striking was the civil rights movement, with its freedom walkers (arrested in Alabama in May 1963), freedom rides, freedom schools, freedom marches, and insistent cry, "freedom now!"[26] Freedom for blacks meant empowerment, equality, and recognition—as a group and as individuals. The flyer mobilizing and urging participation on the March on Washington of 1963, where Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous "I Have a Dream" speech, spoke not only of restoring the constitutional rights of black Americans but also of restoring "dignity and self-respect" by guaranteeing employment and adequate education to all Americans.[27]

[25] Pennsylvania Civil Rights Congress, "Introducing *Let Freedom Ring*: An Editorial," *Let Freedom Ring* 1, no. 1 (1953), box 3, folder 24, Thelma McDaniel Collection (Collection 3063).

[26] Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee newsletter, vols. 17–19, May 21, 1963, box 3, folder 43, Thelma McDaniel Collection (Collection 3063).

[27] Flyer for the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom [1963], box 1, folder 10, Thelma McDaniel Collection (Collection 3063).

Central to black thought has long been the idea that freedom involves the totality of a people's lives and that it is always incomplete—a goal to be achieved rather than a possession to be defended.

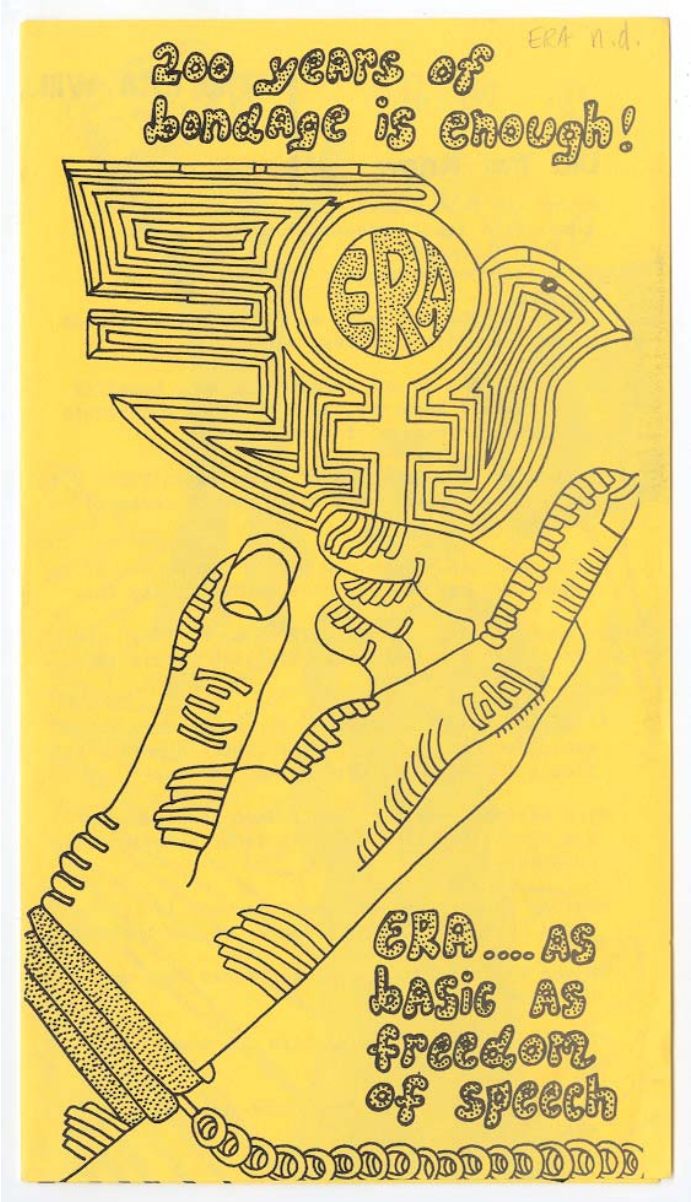
The black movement made freedom once again a rallying cry of the dispossessed. It strongly influenced the New Left and the social movements that arose in the 1960s. In that decade, private self-determination assumed a new prominence in definitions of freedom. The expansion of freedom from a set of public entitlements to a feature of private life had many antecedents in American thought (Jefferson, after all, had substituted "the pursuit of happiness" for "property" in the Lockean triad that opens the Declaration of Independence). But the New Left was the first movement to elevate the idea of personal freedom to a political credo. The rallying cry "the personal is political," driven home most powerfully by the new feminism, announced the extension of claims of freedom into the arenas of family life, social and sexual relations, and gender roles.[28] The sixties also saw the rise of a movement for gay rights, exemplified by July 4 demonstrations at Independence Hall, to remind Americans that homosexuals were denied the "liberties and rights" that should, according to the Declaration of Independence, belong to all.[29] While the political impulse behind sixties freedom has long since faded, the decade fundamentally changed the language of freedom of the entire society, identifying it firmly with the right to choose in a whole range of private matters—from sexual preference to attire to what is now widely known as one's personal "lifestyle."

* * *

Although Cold War rhetoric eased considerably in the 1970s, it was reinvigorated by Ronald Reagan, who, consciously employing rhetoric that resonated back at least two centuries, united into a coherent whole the elements of Cold War freedom—limited government, free enterprise, and anticommunism—in the service of a renewed insistence on American mission. Today, at least in terms of political policy and discourse, Americans still live in the shadow of the Reagan revolution.

[28] See, for instance, brochure on the Equal Rights Amendment [1976], box 1, National Organization for Women (NOW), Philadelphia Chapter Records (Collection 2054).

[29] "Fourth Annual Reminder Day for Homosexual Rights" brochure, July 4, 1968, Homosexual Rights Flyer (Collection 3682).



Brochure in support of the Equal Rights Amendment, 1976. Box 1, National Organization for Women, Philadelphia Chapter Records, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. http://digitallibrary.hsp.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/8084

Freedom continues to occupy as central a place as ever in our political vocabulary, but it has been almost entirely appropriated by libertarians and conservatives of one kind or another—from advocates of unimpeded free enterprise to groups insisting that the right to bear arms is the centerpiece of American liberty. The dominant constellation of definitions seemed to consist of a series of negations—of government, of social responsibility, of a common public culture, of restraints on individual self-definition and consumer choice. At the same time, the collapse of communism as an ideology and of the Soviet Union as a world power made possible an unprecedented internationalization of current American concepts of freedom. The "Free World" triumphed over its totalitarian adversary, the "free market" over the idea of a planned or regulated economy, and the "free individual" over the ethic of social citizenship.

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the language of freedom once again took center stage in American public discourse as an all-purpose explanation for both the attack and the ensuing war against "terrorism." "Freedom itself is under attack," President George W. Bush announced in his speech to Congress on September 20. Our antagonists, he went on, "hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other."[30] As during the Cold War, the invocation of freedom proved a potent popular rallying cry. But the seemingly endless war on terrorism also raised timeless issues concerning civil liberties in wartime and the balance between freedom and security. As happened during previous wars, the idea of an open-ended global battle between freedom and its opposite justified serious infringements on civil liberties at home. Legal protections such as habeas corpus, trial by impartial jury, the right to legal representation, and equality before the law regardless of race or national origins were curtailed and compromised.

America, of course, has a long tradition of vigorous political debate and dissent, an essential part of our democratic tradition. Less familiar are previous episodes—the arrest of those with a disloyal "disposition" during the American Revolution, the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, the massive repression of dissent during World War I, Japanese-American internment during World War II, anticommunist hysteria during the Cold

[30] "President Bush Addresses the Nation" (address to joint session of Congress, Sept. 20, 2001), available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/bushaddress_092001.html.

War—when unpopular beliefs or particular groups of Americans were stigmatized as unpatriotic and therefore unworthy of constitutional protections.[31]

Today, the idea of freedom remains as central as ever to American culture and politics—and as contested. One thing seems certain. The story of American freedom is forever unfinished. Debates over its meaning will undoubtedly continue, and new definitions will emerge to meet the exigencies of the twenty-first-century world, a globalized era in which conversations about freedom and its meaning are likely to involve all mankind. Thinking about the moment(s) of emancipation during the sesquicentennial of the Emancipation Proclamation should remind Americans of the long and contested history of defining, determining, and defending freedom, and of their obligations to do so.

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[31] For arrests of Quakers during the American Revolution, see "To the Congress: The Remonstrance of the Subscribers, Citizens of Philadelphia," Sept. 5, 1777, in *Address to the Inhabitants of Pennsylvania by Those Freemen of the City of Philadelphia, Who Are Now Confined in the Mason's Lodge, by Virtue of a General Warrant; Signed in Council by the Vice President of the Council of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 1777), 31–35; for Japanese internment, see Shigezo and Sonoko Iwata Papers (MSS 53), particularly Sonoko to Shigezo Iwata, May 28, 1942 (box 1, folder 36), Shigezo to Sonoko Iwata, June 18, 1942 (box 1, folder 32), and Sonoko Iwata to Shigezo Iwata, July 22, 1942 (box 1, folder 53).

The Age of Emancipating Proclamations: Early Civil War Abolitionism and Its Discontents

The simple way . . . to put an end to the savage and desolating war now waged by the slaveholders, is to strike down slavery itself, the primal cause of the war.

Frederick Douglass in *Douglass' Monthly*, May 1861

I would leave to my children the Union that our fathers left to us. . . . I do not wish to see a new St. Domingo on [my] southern border. These are my sentiments as a Pennsylvanian and a white man.

Congressman Charles Biddle, March 6, 1862

WELL BEFORE LINCOLN ISSUED any Emancipation Proclamation—preliminary or otherwise—Civil War Americans were involved in a robust debate about the broader social and ideological dimensions of black wartime freedom. Indeed, it is fair to say that even without the Great Emancipator's liberating deed, pre-1863 Americans would still have been engaged in the most serious discussion of emancipation since the postrevolutionary period. Much like the so-called "First Emancipation," when the exigencies of war and nation building compelled the founding generation of statesmen, reformers, and citizens to reexamine slavery's place in American life (culminating in a series of gradual abolition laws above the Mason-Dixon Line), pre-Proclamation emancipation debate flowed from a complex matrix of wartime concerns. Prompted by a half-dozen "emancipating proclamations," or proto-abolitionist edicts, issued by military and political officials during the first year and a half of sectional battle, this debate illuminated

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much more than strategic concerns of the moment. Rather, it reflected continuing concerns about black freedom in the United States.

Indeed, early wartime fears about black liberations large and small often flowed from antebellum discourses about race—and, more specifically, about the fruits of the First Emancipation. For many Unionists (including Pennsylvanians), early emancipation in the United States represented an unsuccessful experiment in black liberty, with generations of northern freedmen clinging to a perilous existence. Hardcore anti-abolitionists North and South pushed the matter further, arguing that global emancipation had failed from British Canada to the French Caribbean. As Pennsylvania Democrat Charles Biddle declared openly in March 1862, his concerns about black wartime liberty derived not only from constitutional scruples about Southern masters' property rights but his identity as a Northern "white man" who feared a future of racial discord in a nation full of ex-slaves—a prospect he compared unfavorably to rebellious Saint-Domingue.[1] Similarly, Indiana Democrat William Holman worried that Union confiscation policies alone presaged "fanatical" abolitionist schemes that would liberate hordes of Southern blacks who might oppress whites in and beyond Dixie.[2]

Both before and during the Civil War, abolitionists rejected such arguments, highlighting instead global emancipation success stories (including Haiti) and offering wide-ranging statistics on black educational uplift, community building, and philanthropy to make the case for a new birth of freedom in the United States.[3] Whether supporting "contraband" and confiscation policies or broader freedom decrees by military figures, American abolitionists also vigorously defended each new emancipating proclamation of the early 1860s. But their views did not always win the day. Indeed, as abolitionists had long known, Biddle and Holman were far from alone. They spoke to, and for, a significant slice of Unionists who saw an ominous future in emancipation peace as well as wartime freedom. And of course, they did this well before Lincoln's grand emancipation edict ever saw the light of day.

[1] *The Alliance with the Negro: Speech of Hon. Charles J. Biddle of Pennsylvania, Delivered in the House of Representatives of the United States, March 6, 1862* (Washington, 1862), 8.

[2] See Holman's comments in Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. appendix, 151–54 (May 23, 1862).

[3] See especially Matthew J. Clavin, *Toussaint Louverture and the American Civil War: The Peril and Prospect of a Second Haitian Revolution* (Philadelphia, 2009).

So what happens when we focus exclusively on wartime emancipation debates before September of 1862? Just what did policy makers, reformers, and Abraham Lincoln himself learn during this intense micro-era of emancipation? If we step back and ask these questions, the coming of the Emancipation Proclamation seems anything but automatic or certain. Indeed, it is clear that wartime abolitionism was a hard, and highly contingent, road to travel, with the Emancipation Proclamation coming in many ways *despite* (not because of) early debate over black liberty.[4]

The Age of Emancipating Proclamations, Part 1: From Early Abolition to Abolition War?

The emancipating proclamations of the early war years offered a burst of abolitionism unseen in American life since the nation's founding. Between May 1861 and July 1862, Union political and military officials offered six significant freedom decrees of one kind or another: General Benjamin Butler's contraband edict in Virginia, two congressional confiscation acts, General John Fremont's Missouri proclamation of freedom, David Hunter's proclamation of freedom in the Department of the South, and compensated emancipation in the District of Columbia. In addition, early Civil War Americans debated diplomatic recognition of Haiti and Liberia, interdictions of the global slave trade, the status of the Fugitive Slave Law in Union territory, and the employment of enslaved people in federal installations, among other things. Taken individually, none of these acts (or debates) would be as sweeping as the Emancipation Proclamation. Yet, taken together, they formed a corpus of emancipation codes that impacted thousands of slaves and masters stretching across huge swaths of Confederate and Union territory. Here, numbers would tell only part of the tale, for while congressional Democrats and anti-abolitionists often asked for details about black liberation, they too realized that emancipation precedent mattered more—namely, the prospect of federal encroachment upon Southern slavery and what that might mean for the nation as a whole. Thus, whether they became official policy

[4] There is no shortage of great work on the Emancipation Proclamation. For the most recent studies, see Louis P. Masur, *Lincoln's Hundred Days* (Cambridge, MA, 2012); and James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861–1865* (New York, 2012). See also these award-winning books: Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trail: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (New York, 2010); and Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (New York, 2004).

or not, early emancipating proclamations engendered much broader societal debate over black wartime freedom.

This first act of Civil War freedom, halting and incomplete as it was, paled in comparison to what would happen between 1863 and 1870. But that is not the way early Civil War figures would see it. From the perspective of the broad abolitionist past—in which most Americans agreed that southern bondage must never be touched by federal hands—each new freedom decree of the early 1860s represented a potentially big step forward. The only thing that matched it was the twenty-five-year period of postrevolutionary emancipation that slowly drained bondage from the North. Although Vermont gets credit for first banning bondage in its constitution of 1777, Pennsylvania's 1780 abolition act marked the beginning of an abolitionist heyday. As generations of scholars know, the Quaker State law did not free a single slave outright; only those born after the act had passed would be liberated at the age of twenty-eight. Worse, perhaps, in Pennsylvania and elsewhere many slaves were sold south before freedom came. Nevertheless, Pennsylvania's law bracketed a fruitful era of race reform; between 1780 and 1804, when New Jersey passed the last gradual abolition act before the Civil War era, every state above the Mason-Dixon Line crafted some antislavery law.[5] With such abolitionist momentum in mind—including a wave of private manumissions and black freedom suits in the Chesapeake—historian Gary Nash has argued that the founders could have slain slavery altogether if they had pushed harder in the South.[6]

While new research on early abolitionism complicates that notion, Nash is right that the First Emancipation loomed large in national memory. Some Civil War statesmen referred to it as a benchmark of American freedom. For Radical Republicans, in fact, early abolitionism showed that federal officials must finish the founders' freedom struggle. According to a group of New Yorkers pressuring Congress to take decisive antislavery measures in 1862, Pennsylvania abolition illustrated that enlightened

[5] On northern emancipation, see, among other works, David N. Gellman, *Emancipating New York: The Politics of Slavery and Freedom, 1777–1827* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2006); Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" in New England, 1780–1860* (Ithaca, NY, 1998); Gary B. Nash and Jean R. Soderlund, *Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation in Pennsylvania and Its Aftermath* (New York, 1991); and Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2001).

[6] See Nash, *Race and Revolution* (Lanham, MD, 1990). On Virginia's wave of private emancipation and black freedom suits, see Eva Sheppard Wolf, *Race and Liberty in the New Nation: Emancipation in Virginia from the Revolution to Nat Turner's Rebellion* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2006).

statesmen could use government policy to strike against bondage and secure national greatness.[7] Massachusetts's George Livermore compiled an exhaustive list of "Opinions of the Founders" on "Negroes as Slaves, as Citizens, and as Soldiers," including John Jay's celebration of Pennsylvania abolitionism as a key part of the American future.[8] For him and others, early emancipation worked but remained incomplete.

Yet many northerners as well as southerners argued that the First Emancipation had failed, most notably by creating the paradox of free blacks in a seemingly white republic. Pennsylvania's Charles Brown offered a representative summary of this view in an 1849 congressional speech, calling abolitionism nothing less than a brand of visionary fanaticism that fooled blacks into thinking they were equal to whites. "I know, in the South, the slaves are more contented in their position and happier than are the free negroes of the North," he observed. Even in Pennsylvania, Brown explained, white citizens had disenfranchised blacks and pushed them to the social margins. But in the South, where he watched Virginians debate and reject abolitionism in the 1830s, Brown believed that emancipation was simply "impracticable." Brown spoke for many when he asserted that bondage should be left in the "care of an overruling Providence" as well as "the states where slavery exists."[9]

When the Civil War began, virtually all officials agreed that under the Constitution, slavery was off limits in the states where it already existed. Nevertheless, when General Benjamin Butler launched the war's first formal emancipation volley in late May of 1861 with his declaration that fugitive slaves would not be returned to their masters (the Northern equivalent of firing on Fort Sumter), some Unionists saw abolitionism on the horizon—though that might not be a good thing. Abraham Lincoln's secretary John Hay noted that only weeks after the president called for seventy-five thousand Union soldiers in April 1861, fellow Republican Carl Schurz "loafed" into his office to discuss "the slaves & their ominous discontent." With fugitives already infiltrating Union lines, Unionists wondered what to do. Hay felt that the "madness" of Southern rebellion

[7] *The Privilege and Dignity, Responsibility and Duty of the Present Congress, to Emancipate the Slaves by Law* (New York, 1864).

[8] George Livermore, *An Historical Research Respecting the Opinions of the Founders of the Republic on Negroes as Slaves, as Citizens, and as Soldiers. Read before the Massachusetts Historical Society, August 14, 1862* (Boston, 1862), 46.

[9] Brown speech on "Abolition and Slavery," in Cong. Globe, 30th Cong. 2d Sess. 117–19 (Feb. 19, 1849), quote at 119.

offered an emancipation moment that would otherwise have taken "many lifetimes" to achieve. But after hearing abolitionists brag about black liberation, Hay reconsidered. Fearful of servile war, Hay wrote in his diary that "this is not the time" to stir the cauldron of emancipation.[10] For their part, Southern masters began moving slaves away from Union lines, concerned that their bondsmen would flee to so-called "Black Republicans" who, according to secessionist warnings dating back to the election of 1856, eagerly sought to stir slave discord and rebellion.

Theory turned to reality after three enslaved Virginians (named Mallory, Townsend, and Baker) escaped to Fort Monroe, a federal redoubt on the Virginia coast near Hampton Roads.[11] While their arrival was hardly a surprise—northerners had been dealing with southern fugitives since Pennsylvania abolitionism in the 1780s—the skillful way that they shaped their escape narrative *was* new, and it offered a powerful way to envision ad hoc wartime black liberty. As the black men explained, they had been building Confederate fortifications in Virginia and would soon be transferred to North Carolina for further war work. The lawyerly Butler used these details to argue that slaves must be seized as contraband property. When Union brass (including Lincoln) let the order stand, some Americans cheered. According to the *Christian Recorder*, a black periodical based in Philadelphia, Butler's edict constituted one of the "grand movements of history."[12]

While the overwhelming majority of Unionists rejected such views, black and white abolitionists hailed Butler as a liberator. The black press led the way, viewing Butler as a representative New Northerner: a federal official who did not avoid wartime abolitionism. Ingeniously inverting the story of Exodus, which had been African Americans' favorite biblical text for its depictions of a righteous God who struck down recalcitrant Egyptian masters, black writers pictured Butler as an enlightened Pharaoh who heeded Moses's call: "let my people go." From his Rochester base, Frederick Douglass illuminated Butler's righteous power. After a Virginia master demanded thirty parcels of his "live property" at Fort Monroe, Butler replied firmly that he would not return enslaved people

[10] John Hay, diary entry, May 10, 1861, in *The Civil War: The First Year Told by Those Who Lived It*, ed. Brooks D. Simpson, Stephen W. Sears, and Aaron Sheehan-Dean (New York, 2011), 353–54.

[11] See Adam Goodheart, "Freedom's Fortress," chap. 8 in *1861: The Civil War Awakening* (New York, 2011).

[12] *Christian Recorder*, June 8, 1861.

unless they wanted to go back to bondage. Like a chorus, the enslaved flock shouted that "they preferred to remain with the soldiers in the Fort." "Finding himself in a bad fix," the master "manumitted the thirty slaves on the spot [and] left them in the fort free men."[13]

A nearly fairy-tale version of blacks' flight to freedom, Douglass's account reversed the reality of rendition haunting many antebellum runaways. With Butler's decisive action, the *Christian Recorder* claimed, secession would "bring with it results altogether different from those contemplated by its authors and principal agents [Northern Unionists]": slavery's destruction, not its protection. In fact, it reported, "fugitive slaves are already flying in considerable numbers" to federal forts. To emphasize Butler's status as a great liberator, the *Christian Recorder* informed readers that the general "*refuses to return [slaves] to bondage*."[14] With its national network of correspondents and subscribers, the *Christian Recorder* spread word of Butler's edict far and wide. Little wonder that from May 1861 onward, Fort Monroe became a black sacred site and a magnet for thousands of blacks running to freedom.

In Butler, black and white reformers crafted a usable symbol of emancipation—a prospective abolitionist leader who rarely, if ever, existed in American statecraft. Yet Butler's decree did not define federal policy until August 1861, when the First Confiscation Act took effect.[15] Passed in the wake of Union disaster at Bull Run, the law formalized Butler's order by allowing Northern military forces to confiscate property used to support Confederate rebellion, including "persons held to service." Predictably, slaveholders—Union and Confederate—howled. Kentuckian John Crittenden, the would-be compromiser who had so recently pushed Congress to forever protect Southern slavery via amendment (it died amid the war), thought that confiscation shattered antebellum slavery protections. Others worried that confiscation turned slaves and white citizens, not merely military officials, into mini-liberators who would use deceit to label loyal masters as Confederate rebels (resulting in a loss of their slaves). Many political and military figures favored General George McClellan's edict prohibiting Union attacks on masters' property.[16]

[13] *Douglass' Monthly*, July 1861.

[14] *Christian Recorder*, June 8, 1861.

[15] See John Syrett, *The Civil War Confiscation Acts: Failing to Reconstruct the South* (New York, 2005).

[16] See Stephen W. Sears, "Lincoln and McClellan," in *Lincoln's Generals*, ed. Gabor S. Boritt (New York, 1994), 9.

Confiscation's opponents—among whom were many Northerners—also sounded alarm bells about black freedom.[17] Almost immediately, white Northerners expressed concern about "sudden" emancipation, a term they used again and again. Though the stalwart *Philadelphia Inquirer* argued that secessionists should be prepared to lose bondage as a price of rebellion, it worried about the "sudden emancipation" of millions of "semi-savages" inside Union lines. In Franklin County, on Pennsylvania's southern border, another paper argued that confiscation had already set Southern blacks "adrift." Even without a mass emancipation decree, the *Valley Spirit* wrote, confiscation remained disconcerting to Northerners. Indeed, by June of the following year, the paper stoked racial animosity by reporting that contrabands received better treatment than whites. With confiscation and contraband policies, the Union was truly topsy-turvy.[18]

Throughout the summer and fall of 1861, Northerners continued to debate the social meaning of the "Contraband Question," often in ways that caused abolitionists chagrin. As Charles Biddle soon put it, the contraband question had become a "Negro question," and thus the vehicle for discussions about the national implications of Southern liberation. Pennsylvania was a battleground state, as several newspapers argued against letting freed blacks come north. Building on years of colonizationist support, a Chambersburg paper suggested sending "contrabands" to Haiti to "quiet any sensitiveness in relation to [a] too sudden and great increase in our free Negro population." After the First Confiscation Act took effect, the paper urged putting "contrabands in Indian country," thus preventing freed blacks from wallowing in "idleness" up north. Better to simply return wartime fugitives to their masters.[19]

Contraband images illuminated many white Unionists' ambivalence about tactical black liberation. Minstrelized depictions of "contraband" blacks saturated Northern newspapers, broadsides, and even envelopes. Yet they rested on antebellum caricatures of African Americans as shiftless simpletons unprepared for freedom. With Fort Monroe as the frequent reference point, a series of Union envelope images depicted escaped

[17] *Christian Recorder*, Aug. 24, 1861. The article deals with Butler's policy but alludes to confiscation as a problematic issue.

[18] See *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Oct. 4, 1861; *Franklin County (PA) Valley Spirit*, Nov. 27, 1861, and June 11, 1862.

[19] Biddle, *Alliance with the Negro*, 1–2; *Franklin County (PA) Semiweekly Dispatch*, June 28, 1861, and Dec. 31, 1861; Biddle also quoted in *Valley Spirit*, Apr. 2, 1862.

blacks as devilish figures whose flight undermined the Confederacy. "Come back here you black rascal," a slaveholder yelled in one frequently circulated image. "Oh! No—I can't Combe back[,] 'Ise contraban,'" the enslaved person replies in a raw dialect as he and his family run to Fort Monroe. But Butler's contraband policy heralded problems for white Northerners too: "ebony black" men who wanted not just freedom but equality. In early 1862, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* noted that contraband "charity" cases continued to rise throughout the Union even as white families suffered. As "Music by the 'Contra-Band,'" a famous image published in the summer of 1861, indicated, freed blacks seemed to prefer dancing a jig to anything else. As much as they poked fun at slaveholders, then, contraband images stigmatized blacks as potentially uncontrollable beyond bondage. And, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* noted in April 1862, contrabands "are [still] going North."[20]

While white and black abolitionists battled back against these depictions, they could not overturn the prevailing image of freed blacks as a social problem. One Pennsylvania newspaper editor laughed that abolitionists now delighted in definitions of blacks as property, when for years they argued otherwise; what, the editor mockingly asked—would white Unionists treat them as equals?[21] George McHenry, the former director of Philadelphia's Board of Trade before moving to London and becoming a Confederate sympathizer, hoped not, arguing that the First Emancipation proved the futility of black freedom. From the mid-Atlantic to the Midwest, according to McHenry, early abolitionism had produced black paupers and criminals. In abolition's first home of Pennsylvania, free blacks had become "a degraded class much deteriorated *by* freedom." For him, blacks were simply "not industrious," and freedom only made things worse.[22]

McHenry was part of a vigilant anti-abolitionist sector of Northern society that arose as soon as the war started. Standing vocally against any and all attempts to turn the Union war into an abolitionist crusade, these emancipation critics were often identified with the Democratic Party. Powerful bands of anti-abolitionist statesmen at the local, state, and federal levels appeared in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and

[20] Civil War Envelope Collection, John A. McAllister Collection, Library Company of Philadelphia; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 29, 1861, Jan. 14, 1862, and Apr. 18, 1862.

[21] *Valley Spirit*, Nov. 27, 1861.

[22] George McHenry, *Position and Duty of Pennsylvania: A Letter Addressed to the President of the Philadelphia Board of Trade* (London, 1863), 72.

Illinois—a white belt in which economic and cultural beliefs merged into a discourse about protecting the North from "black Republican" heresy. In Pennsylvania, networks of anti-abolitionists stretched from big cities to small towns. The *Clearfield Republican*, a Democratic organ published in central Pennsylvania, spoke for many people when it worried about "abolitionized Republicanism" even before Lincoln was elected. With Lincolnites believing in the "irrepressible conflict" thesis that slavery must be vanquished, the paper saw a Republican victory as anathema to white northerners. And make no mistake, the paper noted in October 1860, if emancipation succeeded in the South, "four millions of ignorant and uncontrolled Negroes" would soon flood the North, competing with white workers for jobs and worse.[23]

For that reason, the black press defended proto-emancipation policies such as confiscation at every turn. Realizing that early Civil War debates over black freedom simultaneously looked backward to the First Emancipation and forward to the prospect of African American liberty in the 1860s, black writers argued that even small Civil War liberations had proven to be successful. In the summer of 1861, Frederick Douglass hailed contraband contributions to the Union cause: "At Fortress Monroe the ebony contrabands are everywhere to be seen in large numbers, and [they] make themselves generally useful." Out west in Illinois, Douglass reported, "slaves are coming to the camps of the soldiers every day, and are immediately set to work upon the fortifications."[24] By underlining enslaved peoples' industriousness, piety, and geniality, Douglass sought to neutralize worries of racial friction (or worse, race war) that had haunted abolitionism for years. The *Christian Recorder* reprinted Edward Pierce's famous analysis of enslaved peoples' contributions to the Union cause. Entitled "Experience among the Contrabands," Pierce's essay offered "sketches of [liberated blacks'] character and habits" in Union-controlled South Carolina. Originally published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, the article examined contrabands' morality, religion, character, and industriousness—longstanding talking points in debates over American emancipation. With white Northerners' guidance, Pierce argued, freed blacks would easily transition to new labor and social systems.[25]

[23] *Clearfield (PA) Republican*, Oct. 10, 1860.
[24] *Douglass' Monthly*, July 1861.
[25] *Christian Recorder*, Nov. 23, 1861.

Part of a genre that examined blacks' fitness for freedom dating back to the eighteenth-century North, Pierce's essay offered a bold reminder that the emancipating proclamations of 1861 and 1862 reprised old debates in new ways. Indeed, with contraband policies creating mini-liberations in Confederate territory, wartime emancipation was no distant possibility. When the *Christian Recorder* wrote that roughly fifteen thousand freed slaves lived off the coast of South Carolina, perceptive readers knew that this number surpassed most northern emancipations and far exceeded recalcitrant Delaware's tiny slave population.[26] Both east and west, the hundreds of fugitive slaves arriving in any Union camp in one year equaled the entire number of runaways passing through Philadelphia in the whole decade before the Civil War.[27] The question in 1861–62, no less than the 1780s and 1790s, was this: what did black freedom mean? Drawing on a black abolitionist discourse from the founding years, Frederick Douglass linked abolitionism and equality. But he worried that Union officials would go no further than piecemeal liberation policies that left blacks as stateless refugees.[28] Democrats' references to freed blacks as "Africans"—that is, people with no connection to US citizenship—certainly abetted Douglass's case.[29]

Just as bad, as the *Christian Recorder* reported, some Union generals refused to offer fugitives sanctuary, no matter congressional policy. Radical Republicans' inability to get Congress to condemn them augured ill for abolitionism. In December 1861, for instance, House Republicans failed to pass a resolution censuring General Henry Halleck for turning away fugitive slaves. Moving from language that "required" Halleck to reverse course to a "request" that he do so, Illinois representative Owen Lovejoy tried in vain to convince his colleagues to hammer Halleck.[30] For some Republicans no less than Democrats, however, Lovejoy's resolution was another step toward a broad emancipation war they did not yet want.

[26] *Christian Recorder*, Oct. 11, 1862.

[27] See *Douglass' Monthly*, July and Dec. 1861.

[28] *Douglass' Monthly*, Oct. 1861.

[29] As one example, see Democrat Samuel Cox of Ohio's House resolution seeking "the number, age, and condition of the Africans" at Fort Monroe, Journal of the House of Representatives, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. 416 (Mar. 7, 1862).

[30] Journal of the House of Representatives, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. 48–51 (Dec. 9, 1861).

The Age of Emancipating Proclamations, Part 2: "Bold Acts"

By autumn 1861, the stakes of Union policy had been raised by General John Fremont's emancipation decree. After declaring martial law in Missouri, a border Union state riven by Confederate and Union loyalties, Fremont asserted that slaves of rebel masters there would be "declared freemen." Like Butler, Fremont used the prospect of black freedom to cut down rebel strength. But Fremont's action was also proactive—it decreed black liberty from afar. It broadcast the message that if you rebelled, by definition your slaves deserved freedom.[31]

Like subsequent emancipation proclamations, Fremont's order could be read as legalistic and limited. But for many black activists, that hardly mattered, for Fremont's proclamation broke through the sacred concept of property rights in man that marred even contraband and confiscation policies. Indeed, using the word "freeman" instead of "contraband," Fremont offered a nod to blacks' inherent humanity and equality. Using sacred as well as secular language, African Americans celebrated Fremont as another biblical prophet who had righted human wrongs. When word leaked that Fremont's aide-de-camp was the son-in-law of the great Philadelphia abolitionist Lucretia Mott, the Pathfinder's emancipation policy appeared heroic. Here was an act based on principle, not just politics. The *Christian Recorder* called it simply a "bold act" and the new standard of wartime liberty.[32]

Black abolitionists' support for Fremont was shaped by years of struggle with abolitionist patrons, many of whom agreed that Southern masters had constitutional rights in man.[33] But here was a true liberator, one who did not haggle over white rebels' wartime rights. For reformers (and even some Union soldiers), Fremont's proclamation proved significant for another reason: it moved emancipation debates out of the congressional realm, where anti-abolitionist Democrats could scuttle black liberation policies through all manner of parliamentary procedure.[34] Fremont's call

[31] *Christian Recorder*, Sept. 7, 1861.

[32] See Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York, 1998), 527; *Christian Recorder*, Sept. 28, 1861.

[33] See Newman, "Creating Free Spaces: Blacks and Abolitionist Activism in Pennsylvania Courts, 1780s–1830s," chap. 3 in *Transformation of American Abolitionism.*

[34] See Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York, 2007), 46–47.

to arms harkened back to the Declaration of Independence, offering a clear rebuke to slaveholding and slaveholders.

But Fremont's proclamation also brought swift rebuke from the Union war machine, including a countermanding order from Lincoln. Unlike Butler's contraband decision, which the administration supported as a wartime tactic, Fremont's order flirted with broad abolitionism, which might alienate border South states altogether. With over one hundred thousand Missouri slaves, perhaps a third of whom belonged to rebel masters, Fremont's edict was a big abolitionist stroke—encompassing at least as many enslaved people as the entire First Emancipation.[35] Lincoln also worried about reactions from Northern whites. As Charles Biddle noted in 1862, emancipating proclamations such as Fremont's turned the war into something much less palatable to "border" Northerners.[36]

The abolitionist press read Lincoln's revocation of Fremont's emancipation edict as a fearful concession to both slaveholders and anti-abolitionist Northerners. For Douglass, Fremont rhymed with freedom while Lincoln paired perfectly with slavery. "The lawyer has prevailed over the warrior," Douglass lamented, noting that Lincoln objected not to martial law per se but to Fremont's "emancipating clause." Still, Douglass declared, Fremont's proclamation remained "the most important document which has yet appeared in the progress of the war." There was "no middle ground" anymore, he explained. The question now was this: should enslaved people be considered "friends or enemies?"[37]

Military men debated Douglass's point. All along the thousand-mile front, Unionists wondered about emancipation as a day-to-day issue. In the trans-Mississippi theater, General William Tecumseh Sherman found himself besieged by fugitives. With nearly a thousand contrabands in camp by the middle of 1862, Sherman shrewdly used black labor to fortify his army. But he refused to grant fugitives final freedom. Other generals issued manumission papers—a policy Sherman decried as taking away loyal slaveholders' rights. Despite the passage of contraband and confiscation edicts, Sherman thought that decisions on blacks' ultimate freedom would have to come from on high.[38]

[35] On debates over emancipation in Missouri, see especially Adam Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic: St. Louis and the Cultural Civil War* (Cambridge, MA, 2011).

[36] Biddle, *Alliance with the Negro*, 8.

[37] *Christian Recorder*, Sept. 28, 1861; *Douglass' Monthly*, Oct. and Nov. 1861.

[38] Sherman to Ellen Ewing Sherman, July 31, 1862, and Sherman to Gideon J. Pillow, Aug. 14, 1862, in *Sherman's Civil War: The Selected Correspondence of William Tecumseh Sherman*, ed. Brooks D. Simpson and Jean V. Berlin (Chapel Hill, NC, 1999), 260–61, and 274–75.

When General David Hunter issued his own emancipating proclamation on May 9, 1862, he prompted further debate about broad black freedom. As head of the Department of the South, which encompassed Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina, Hunter declared martial law. Like Fremont, he linked his order to wartime abolitionism, for, "martial law and slavery being incompatible," as he put it, slaves of rebels would be "forever free." An overjoyed William Lloyd Garrison noted that Hunter's order impacted roughly a quarter of the South's slaves, making it the greatest single emancipation proclamation in the Western world since British (compensated) emancipation in the 1830s. Abolitionists celebrated Hunter as someone who had learned the right lessons from northern emancipation. The *Christian Recorder* noted that Hunter, born in New Jersey and reared in the shadow of Pennsylvania abolition, was an unsurprising emancipator. (The paper had started keeping a tally of Union generals' birthplaces). For A.M.E. bishop Henry Turner, Hunter's upbringing paled next to his transcendent order, which, "in one sweeping proclamation, over which angels rejoice, declared the mystic Israelites free throughout South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida."[39] Though again legalistic and limited, Hunter's proclamation seemed glorious to blacks.

Like Fremont, too, Hunter had to grapple with the higher political power and concerns of the president. Worried about losing control over any emancipation process and ceding policy making to generals, Lincoln issued a counterproclamation asserting that "neither General Hunter nor any other commander or person has been authorized by the Government . . . to make proclamation declaring the slaves of any state free." An outraged Garrison called Lincoln's "veto" of Hunter "weak" and "pitiable."[40] Drawing on arguments made by former president John Quincy Adams in the 1830s and 1840s that the federal government—especially the president, as commander in chief—had the power to emancipate slaves in times of national peril, he argued that General Hunter no less than President Lincoln had the wartime right to suppress Confederate rebellion by liberating Southern slaves.[41] By countermanding Hunter, Lincoln shrank from a great emancipation moment. Bishop Turner compared Lincoln to the condemned Egyptian Pharaoh who "hardened his heart"

[30] *Christian Recorder*, July 1862.
[40] *Liberator*, May 23, 1862.
[41] Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation*, 126.

and ignored God.[42] Once again, black and white abolitionists thought they had found the next great emancipator. Once again, they were disappointed by the president.

Ironically, both Lincoln and federal officials had scored some points among abolitionists with the District of Columbia emancipation edict the month before Hunter's proclamation. Since the 1820s, abolitionists had targeted the District as a legitimate field for congressional abolition. Even if Southern slaveholders had constitutional rights, abolitionists argued, the District was federal property without such protections. Throughout the antebellum era, such arguments failed to win many political converts. War changed congressional dynamics and made District abolition possible. It also prompted concern about a new age of federal emancipation. As David Wilmot, the famous Pennsylvania Democrat-turned-Republican, argued, District abolition was an "emancipation" in every sense of the word, freeing slaves and Congress from the restraints of the past.[43] Liberating nearly three thousand bondspeople, it was, as others rejoiced, "an example to all the land"—a reference to Leviticus: "Proclaim Freedom throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."[44] Even black abolitionists, who preferred big military proclamations such as Fremont's, celebrated District abolition. In Boston, a special meeting of black reformers "tender[ed] to Congress and the President our heartfelt thanks for this act which frees the National Capital from the curse and sin of slavery."[45]

Opponents believed that District emancipation violated the tenets of white democracy by not allowing masters a vote on the law. The specter of role reversal lurked behind such critiques, as anti-abolitionists compared white masters to enslaved members of a seemingly new body politic. Critics maintained that Unionist Marylanders and Virginians whose states had ceded District property in the postrevolutionary era should not be treated as mere "vassals" to Northern abolitionists. A Pittsburgh paper noted that the lesson of the hour was not bolder emancipation orders by faraway federal powers but more sensitivity to state and local peculiarities and rights. Returning to Pennsylvania's 1780 emanci-

[42] *Christian Recorder*, July 12, 1862.

[43] David Wilmot, quoted in *Philadelphia Press*, May 5,1862.

[44] Kate Masur, *An Example for All the Land: Emancipation and the Struggle over Equality in Washington, DC* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2010).

[45] Meeting and resolutions of Black Bostonians, May 12, 1862, reprinted in *Liberator*, May 23, 1862.

pation law, it noted that early abolitionism had been sanctioned by the Quaker State's white citizens.[46] Southern slaveholders deserved the same respect. A Lancaster, Pennsylvania, newspaper conjured Stephen A. Douglas to make just this point, noting that the recently departed Little Giant had rightly argued against District abolition. The source of that argument? The Lincoln-Douglas debates of 1858, which propelled Douglas to a Senate win. This proved that Americans rejected federal emancipation. In fact, the paper asserted, Lincoln—a vowed nonextensionist rather than emancipator—should prove his true Union colors by vetoing District abolition altogether.[47]

When Congress began debating a stronger confiscation act in early 1862, essentially mandating that military officers attack bondage, Democrats often made this point. Taking slave property away from masters without due process or a referendum violated the Constitution. The precedent, as much as the policy, was poisonous, especially if reunion with Southern seceders remained the government's highest priority. When the Second Confiscation Act passed in July, not only solidifying contraband policies but paving the way for both broader emancipation decrees and black military contributions, a year of bold federal action seemed nearly complete to many Democrats. To them, the war for Union looked increasingly like an abolition war—a point they were eager to make in the midterm elections of 1862.

The Meaning of Limited Emancipation War, 1861–62: More Race Debate in the North

Within a year of the firing on Fort Sumter, contrabands, confiscation, and emancipation decrees became linked in the minds of some Republicans as a great triumvirate of shifting wartime policy. Indiana's George Julian offered a remarkable summary of the way that "confiscation and liberation" had reversed the fortunes of war. Speaking in the Senate in April 1862, Julian noted that "the slave power" was a political fact of life during the early republic. "I rejoice now to find events all drifting in a different direction," he happily continued. Indeed, "slavery is not much longer to be spared." From the initial contraband policy, which shielded fugitive slaves from Confederate rendition, to the First Confiscation Act,

[46] *Pittsburgh Presbyterian Banner*, Mar. 29, 1862.
[47] *Lancaster (PA) Intelligencer*, Apr. 8, 1862.

which targeted bondage as a legitimate part of wartime policy, the Union had "given freedom to multitudes of slaves." As important, the emancipating proclamations of Fremont and Hunter, though rescinded, made broad antislavery policy a firm topic of discussion. In fact, they had convinced Lincoln that "freedom to the slaves" would be fully warranted if the rebellion did not end soon. "Our watchwords," he confidently predicted, "are now freedom, progress."[48]

With Julian's optimistic rendering of events, the next step seems almost logical: Lincoln's preliminary emancipation edict. However, given the First Emancipation's contested history during the early war years, and the social/political debate already generated by proto-abolitionist wartime policies, the next step for Union powerbrokers was anything but preordained. With a series of emancipation edicts already having been issued, debated, overturned, and rethought in such a compressed period—and with thousands of former slaves already in quasi-free status in Union camps and federal territory—many Civil War statesmen wanted time to reflect. In Congress throughout early 1862, political officials sought updates on the results of black liberation policies: the number of blacks freed on the military front, where they went, and who was paying for their support. Far from mere wartime concerns about runaway slaves and outsized military budgets, these calls harkened back to revolutionary-era fears that gradual emancipation would create a dependent class of black freedmen who would bloat northern state budgets. In dismantling bondage, as Joanne Melish has written of New England emancipation, early northern officials also worried about black dependency on the state, broadly conceived. Rather than belonging to individuals, blacks would now be the "slaves of the community."[49] That meant that black freedom itself was viewed by early white liberators as not merely glorious but destabilizing. In short, while whites might enjoy unbridled freedom, black liberty carried with it inherent stigmas and concerns—especially that of dependency.

Drawing on this discourse in the Civil War, Union politicians and citizens alike argued that by 1862 too much emancipation had already occurred. The *Presbyterian Banner*, published out of Pittsburgh, stigmatized early Civil War abolitionists as neo-Jacobins whose visionary

[48] *Confiscation and Liberation: Speech of Hon. George W. Julian, of Indiana, in the House of Representatives, Friday, May 23, 1862* (Washington, 1862), 6.

[49] See especially Melish, *Disowning Slavery*, chaps. 2–3 and 5; quote at 84.

schemes of human equality would sink reunion efforts.[50] While sympathetic to antislavery principles, the paper could not countenance calls for "sudden" emancipation in the South, nor could it condone policies that put black freedom on par with Unionism. As proto-emancipation edicts piled up, anti-abolitionists worried that the Union might win the war but then lose the white republic altogether. The result of emancipation, according to one Northerner's self-described "Anti-Abolitionist" pamphlet in 1862, would be nothing less than a rise in black crime and "pauperism" in the North, as freed blacks streamed across the Mason-Dixon Line.[51]

As black abolitionists noted, many white Northerners still seemed frozen by the question long associated with American emancipation: "what would become of the slaves"? The most sagacious philosophers stumbled on this matter, Bishop Henry Turner of the A.M.E. Church suggested, with Northerners as well as Southerners arguing that "the Negro can [not] live outside slavery." According to Bishop Turner, "northern proslavery men have done the free people of color tenfold more injury than the southern slaveholders."[52] White concerns about abolition war reverberated across the Atlantic where an Irish lawyer sympathetic to the Union wrote alarmingly that "the bugbear of 'premature emancipation' is fast becoming to the popular mind more frightful than the fact of ripe and flourishing slavery." For Confederates and anti-abolitionist Northerners alike, ad hoc military emancipation ranked with "the most horrible crime." Democrats, in particular, reviled abolitionist policies, insisting that they would have "no emancipation, no confiscation, no murders in cold blood" by liberated bondmen.[53]

Continued race debate in the North (and West) helps explain why wartime abolitionists were often on the defensive. Too few Northerners saw black freedom as desirable or workable on a national scale. For many whites, black liberty was a wartime tactic carefully contained. Pure abolitionism remained "visionary," "fanatical," and something to be avoided. Here, Democrat James McDougall offers a useful view of what emancipationists were up against in early 1862. A California lawyer who had lived in Illinois, McDougall was no border state rabble-rouser (though he

[50] *Presbyterian Banner*, Mar. 29, 1862.
[51] J. H. Van Evrie, *Free Niggerism* (New York, 1862), 1.
[52] Ibid.
[53] John Elliott Cairnes, *Revolution in America: A Lecture* (Dublin, Ire., 1862), 15–17; quote at 16.

enjoyed his alcohol a bit too much). Unlike some Democrats, whose complaints about military costs served as a means to undercut expansive Union war aims, McDougall believed that Congress should fund all debts incurred to save the republic.

But McDougall saw abolition differently. As he argued in an underappreciated Senate speech in March, a proposed new confiscation law that virtually commanded federal officials to seize rebel property, and (as congressional journals put it) "free the slaves," seemed to turn the Union war into a battle for both black liberation and white subjugation. Not even colonization, which was written into the proposed confiscation law, could save the white republic from ruin if Southern abolition resulted. Though no friend of bondage, he thought emancipation was a "wild" and "visionary" plan. As he noted sadly, eerily prefiguring Lincoln's colonization lecture to black leaders later that year, the Civil War had already cut white brotherhood into pieces. But for "the agitation of the negro question," he observed, "there would have been no disturbance in this country, and we should have been a brotherhood as a nation to-day."[54] In the winter and spring of 1862, McDougall opposed stronger confiscation edicts, District emancipation, and the move toward even a limited abolition war.

McDougall was no fire-breathing racist. Indeed, he channeled the anti-abolitionist views of many Northern politicians, military leaders, and citizens who saw emancipation as a problematic part of America's past; for them, Southern liberation must not burden the nation's future.[55] On this score, no one did more to stoke wartime anti-abolitionism than the infamous J. H. Van Evrie of New York. A medical man who popularized notions of black inferiority, Dr. Van Evrie also ran a publishing house in New York that circulated a series of "Anti-Abolition" pamphlets, books and treatises detailing the horrors of global emancipation. Looking back to the First Emancipation, and across the Atlantic world to other black freedom decrees, Van Evrie saw only regret and ruin. For him, abolitionism was unnatural and unworkable everywhere it had been tried. With titles ranging from the scientific ("An American Ethnological View of the Negro Question") to the sensational ("Free Niggerism"), the doctor became a household name for people worried about abolitionist ascen-

[54] James McDougall, Senate speech on "Confiscation of Property," Cong. Globe, 37th Cong., 2d Sess. 65, 67 (Mar. 3–4, 1862).

[55] See Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North* (New York, 2006).

dancy. No less a figure than Jefferson Davis hailed Van Evrie's work as "an able and manly exposure of a fallacy, which more than all other causes has disturbed the tranquility of our people": Northern abolitionism.[56]

New York and Pennsylvania became key markets for Van Evrie's work precisely because they had large white working-class populations living in metropolitan areas with large free black populations borne of the First Emancipation. Terrified by the prospect of "sudden" emancipation, urban Democrats vilified "black Republicanism" in all its forms. But Van Evrie's work penetrated the countryside too. For editors on Pennsylvania's southern borderland, for instance, his exposé of "emancipation's failures" in early national America was revealing. "The public have long needed a concise history of the results of emancipation," one paper noted, and the good doctor had delivered it. "Farmers, mechanics, and all white laboring men are deeply interested in understanding the subject," especially in light of abolition's recent gains on the political and military fronts. Now, the editorialist insisted, the prospect of millions of freedmen liberated by an act of war must galvanize Northerners. Even more than secession, mass abolition would "ruin the country." For those reasons and more, he thought that Van Evrie's pamphlet deserved a wide readership. For years, echoes of this sentiment could be found in the central, western, and eastern parts of Pennsylvania.[57]

By the late 1860s, Van Evrie's work stood as an ideological redoubt of anti-Reconstruction thought. But his views had been shaped years before the Great Emancipator did anything.

Countermanding Himself: The Emancipated Lincoln

Well before the fabled one hundred days between Lincoln's preliminary and final emancipation decrees, the wearied president understood that both Northerners and Southerners feared "sudden" emancipation, as Lincoln himself referred to it in his famous congressional message of March 1862. Recognizing that congressmen, abolitionists, military officials, white citizens, masters, enslaved people, and black activists had in just a short period of time covered nearly every possible way of seeing Civil War freedom—including whether or not the federal government

[56] The Davis blurb is found an advertisement for Van Evrie's "An American Ethnological View of the Negro Question," printed in the *Philadelphia Press*, Feb. 2, 1861.

[57] *Lancaster Intelligencer*, June 24, 1862. See also the *Clearfield Republican*, Dec. 4, 1861.

and military had even the right to consider Southern emancipation—the president hardly had a clear way forward.[58]

For that reason, he refrained from any "bold act" of emancipation for some time. And when he did broach abolition in early 1862, he did so in revealing ways. As he explained to Congress, Lincoln favored Pennsylvania-style gradualism as a way to soothe broader societal fears about black freedom, "because, in my opinion, gradual not sudden emancipation, is better for all." Lincoln also wrote that wartime abolitionist measures must be both compensated and noncoercive, meaning that Southern states could use federal aid to take the "practical" abolitionist steps they themselves approved. And Lincoln was already on record as supporting colonization. Not only did he embrace it personally, he knew that debate over contraband and confiscation policies showed that many whites North and South would not even consider abolition without black expulsion. Lincoln had to conciliate anti-abolitionists as much as lecture proslavery forces. And still Lincoln failed.[59]

His fruitless effort to convince skeptical politicians such as James McDougall speaks volumes about the conundrums of emancipation during the early war years. After reading McDougall's fears of confiscation, the president outlined for the California senator the comparative costs of compensated emancipation versus continuing civil war.[60] Hoping to appeal to McDougall's pragmatic side, Lincoln argued that gradual abolitionism made monetary sense. But McDougall (like others) continued to oppose wartime emancipation on social grounds. He could not see past black liberty. Lincoln's gradual abolitionism, like so many other Union policies, was dangerous, or impracticable, or both. Where would ex-slaves go? What would they do? One might say that Lincoln's words on another occasion fit well the position he faced in mid-1862: few wanted broad abolition (save radical reformers), many people deprecated it (North as well as South), and yet emancipation might well have to come as a Union-saving measure. In short, much like the abolitionist stalemate of the early 1800s, in which the contested gains of the First Emancipation

[58] Abraham Lincoln, "Message to Congress Recommending Compensated Emancipation," Mar. 6, 1862, online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=70130.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Lincoln to James McDougall, Mar. 14, 1862, original in Special Collections, University of Rochester Archives, Rochester, NY.

bogged down in fears about black liberation nationally, early wartime abolitionism stalled because of continuing racial fears.

Why, then, did Lincoln finally decide to issue his own abolition edicts when an anti-emancipation backlash prevailed and he had already countermanded broad military abolitionism? This remains the thorniest of questions for scholars of Lincoln and the Civil War.[61] Was Lincoln being shrewd? Pragmatic? Desperate? With anti-emancipation forces North and South critiquing every abolitionist edict before the summer of 1862, Lincoln may have realized that he had to issue an executive emancipation order as a preemptive strike against Democrats and conservative Unionists. Knowing that Republicans would lose midterm seats to Democrats already talking about returning to the Union as it was, he wanted to slash slavery before opponents could gather more force (Democrats ended up gaining twenty-eight congressional seats in the November election). Recall too that Lincoln first thought about mass emancipation in June of 1862, after a springtime of Union disasters and political opposition to compensated abolition in the border states. From this admittedly provocative perspective, Lincoln reached for black freedom as much out of desperation as cool calculation.

But that should not limit appreciation of what he did. Every emancipation edict in 1861 and 1862 was borne of wartime necessity and framed as piecemeal policy. Only after 1863 (and, really, after the war) would national emancipation assume a providential status as the Union's saving grace and the Western world's grandest experiment in black freedom. Prior to 1863, no Civil War emancipation order did what even Pennsylvania's gradual abolition act had in 1780: declare abolitionism itself the patriotic "duty" of American statesmen.[62] Like others, Lincoln tried but failed to incorporate abolitionism into the body politic as it was in early 1862, with colonization, compensation, and gradualism (hallmarks of every antebellum abolition debate) becoming key facets of his preferred emancipation vision. When his ideas did not win the day, Lincoln saw that the Union of old—and the abolitionist debates haunt-

[61] Among many others recently weighing in, see Harold Holzer, Edna Greene Medford, and Frank J. Williams, eds., *The Emancipation Proclamation: Three Views* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2006). See also Michael Vorenberg's fine Bedford edition, *The Emancipation Proclamation: A Brief History with Documents* (New York, 2010).

[62] The act is reprinted at: http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/pennst01.asp and in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's Preserving American Freedom digital history project at http://hsp.org/preserving-american-freedom.

ing it—had to be smashed in order to propel both emancipation and Unionism forward. Here, we might say that Lincoln engaged in a form of creative destruction: using his military power to blow apart the abolitionist past. While written as a military order, the *Christian Recorder* noted, even the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation "carries with it a moral power that is irresistible."[63] In other words, its liberationist aims transcended the document's very legalistic language. Put in human terms, Lincoln was now less concerned with the Charles Biddles and James McDougalls of the Union world and more interested in the Frederick Douglasses and Henry McNeil Turners.[64] In no small way, the president had countermanded himself. As the *Christian Recorder* stated, "the Proclamation" proves that "the world moves."[65]

Stepping into a role long since envisioned by black abolitionists—who saw the legalistic and limited emancipation edicts of Butler, Fremont, and Hunter as bold steps toward broader black liberation—the president became the next great emancipator of Civil War times, a moral statesman on the side of right. "We shout for joy that we live to record this righteous decree," Douglass wrote in October 1862.[66] While he would register concerns about Lincoln's edict afterwards, Douglass's initial view was shaped by the abolitionist limits set in the early war years. But as he recognized even in his most dour moods, "the first of January, 1863, was a memorable day in the progress of American liberty and civilization. It was the turning-point in the conflict between freedom and slavery."[67] For Douglass, the final Emancipation Proclamation (stripped as it was of earlier colonizationist language and pointing toward black military action) showed that the ambivalent president had finally taken a step in the right direction.[68]

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[63] *Christian Recorder*, Oct. 18, 1862.

[64] Glenn David Brasher, *The Peninsula Campaign and the Necessity of Emancipation: African Americans and the Fight for Freedom* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2012).

[65] *Christian Recorder*, Oct. 18, 1862.

[66] *Douglass' Monthly*, Oct. 1862.

[67] *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself* (Boston, 1892), 426.

[68] *Douglass' Monthly*, Oct. and Nov. 1862.

"God Is Settleing the Account": African American Reaction to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation

THE WHITE MAN SEATED ACROSS THE ROOM was offering them a new life in a land of opportunity. Against the backdrop of Washington's sweaty August, in 1862, he told his five black guests from the District of Columbia about a temperate, welcoming place, with fine harbors, exotic flora and fauna, and vast reserves of minerals. "There is evidence of very rich coal mines," he offered. Surely they—ministers, teachers, and a congressional messenger—could understand that whites (notwithstanding his own feelings) would never treat them as equals on American soil. "Your race are suffering, in my judgment, the greatest wrong inflicted on any people," he told them. But he seemed more concerned with injuries to his own race: "See our present condition—the country engaged in war!—our white men cutting one another's throats. . . . But for your race among us, there could not be war."

He offered to finance their passage to a new home in a mountainous quarter of the Isthmus of Panama known as Chiriquí. The government had in hand a glowing report on everything from Chiriquí's climate and coal to its value as a forward post of US influence in Central America.

This article is adapted and expanded from our book *Tasting Freedom: Octavius Catto and the Battle for Equality in Civil War America* (Philadelphia, 2010). Other major sources include Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (New York, 2010); Kate Masur, "The African American Delegation to Abraham Lincoln: A Reappraisal," *Civil War History* 56 (2010): 117–44; and numerous documents reviewed in C. Peter Ripley, ed., *Black Abolitionist Papers*, 5 vols. (Chapel Hill, NC, 1985–92), hereafter cited as *BAP*. Both are available online by subscription as a Proquest database. Citations below are to volume and document number for those sources that appear in the printed volumes and by accession numbers for those that are only in the microfilm and online edition. We are grateful for invaluable assistance, advice, and encouragement from a corps of terrific historians and archivists: Erica Armstrong Dunbar, Harlan Greene, Phillip "Dr. Phil" Lapsansky, Roger Lane, Randall Miller, Jutta Seibert, and Stacey Peeples.

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There was even a disquisition on the tolerable pleasures of dining on monkey meat.[1]

It was risky—but he pointed out that George Washington had risked all for his countrymen, "yet he was a happy man, because he was engaged in benefiting his race." Finally, he took on tones of a country auctioneer. "Could I get a hundred tolerably intelligent men, with their wives and children?" he asked. "Can I have 50? If I could find 25 . . . I think I could make a successful commencement."

The room went silent. The guests were among the small but energetic class of free African Americans whose writers and thinkers had bridled at white-led "colonization" schemes for nearly half a century. Many had braved bullwhips and bloodhounds to attain the equivocal freedoms of Washington, DC, and the North. They had overcome all sorts of obstacles to prosper there, as preachers and porters, caterers and cooks, raising families, launching colored schools and churches, starting libraries and literary societies. Now a gifted pitchman was all but bribing them to turn their backs on those hard-earned victories and promote colonization by leading the charge to Central America.

The pitchman was Abraham Lincoln.

His guests asked for time to consider their reply. The president, believing the meeting so important that he had transcripts sent to the newspapers, agreed, reassuring them, "No hurry at all."[2]

* * *

The meeting was held on August 14, 1862. Lincoln's guests did not know that five weeks later he would promise to free the slaves. On September 22, the president decreed that in every state still in rebellion on January 1, 1863—a hundred days hence—any person still enslaved would be "then, thenceforward, and forever free."[3] On the 150th anniversary of those world-changing announcements, it is easy to imagine

[1] US House of Representatives, *Report of the Select Committee on Emancipation and Colonization: With an Appendix* (Washington, DC, 1862), 75.

[2] Abraham Lincoln, "Address on Colonization to a Deputation of Negroes," Aug. 14, 1862, in *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 8 vols. (Springfield, IL, 1953), 5:370–75, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/lincoln/.

[3] Abraham Lincoln, "Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation," Sept. 22, 1862, in American Originals exhibit, National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter cited as NARA), http//:www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals_iv/sections/preliminary_emancipation_proclamation.html.

Africans Americans exulting in Lincoln's pledge as soon as they learned of it. The truth was more complicated.

Historians have debated Lincoln's motives. Was he, in Michael Burlingame's words, "eager to end slavery" and publicly pushing colonization "to sugarcoat the bitter pill of emancipation" for whites?[4] The September 22 announcement broadcast that efforts to "colonize persons of African descent, with their consent . . . will be continued."[5] Yet the Emancipation Proclamation Lincoln signed on January 1 made no mention of such a scheme. Louis P. Masur has written that the president "changed his mind" on colonization during those hundred days.[6]

But African Americans had no way of reading Lincoln's mind. Having endured many proslavery administrations, they had had their hopes raised by his vague antislavery pronouncements as a candidate, only to be disappointed by his actions and words in his first years in office. They had seen him advocate a "gradual" emancipation that would not be complete in their lifetimes. They saw that his September promise was born of military and not moral necessity, and they received it with his Central America spiel still ringing in their ears.

The history of emancipation is often told with little mention of how African Americans viewed Lincoln before his September promise and in the hundred days that followed. Overlooking those reactions starves the story of its street-level impact; heeding those voices enriches it and, furthermore, offers a glimpse into the hopes, fears, conflicts, and complexities of the African American community at that historic hour.

That community was divided by generation, income, education level, skin color, and proximity to slavery or distance from it; their leaders often engaged in the kind of endless bickering over strategy and belief that marks any major social movement. They differed on whether to stay in the country. They differed on supporting the war. Some differed on slavery itself, because in Charleston and other southern outposts some free blacks owned slaves. In short, they were no more monolithic than their white counterparts.

[4] Michael Burlingame, *Lincoln and the Civil War* (Carbondale, IL, 2011), 59. See also Kate Masur, "A Separate Peace," *Opinionator: Exclusive Online Commentary From The Times*, Aug. 17, 2012, http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/08/17/a-separate-peace/.

[5] Lincoln, "Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation," in American Originals exhibit, NARA.

[6] Louis P. Masur, "Liberty Is a Slow Fruit: Lincoln the Deliberate Emancipator," *American Scholar* 81, no. 4 (2012): 44.

As historian Kate Masur has written, the meeting with Lincoln and the reaction that followed "reveal a vigorous and complex debate among African-Americans regarding their future in the United States."[7] The man future generations would know as the Great Emancipator was showing more enthusiasm—at least in public pronouncements—for emigration than emancipation. The September 22 promise, therefore, came as a surprise. Exultation would come eventually, but only after a hundred days marked by doubt, disagreement, and more than a little suspense.

* * *

To be invited to a private talk with a president in the White House—that was persuasive in its own right. ("I tell you I felt big in there!" Frederick Douglass said of a later visit.[8]) No harm in listening, counseled a black Washington pastor who had helped arrange the meeting. Rev. Henry McNeal Turner quipped, "I suppose no colored man in the nation would have any objection to going any where, if this government pay them for their two hundred and forty years' work."[9]

The delegation's chairman—Edward M. Thomas, a messenger for the House of Representatives and a collector of books and art—felt his fears of colonization recede as Lincoln spoke. Thomas promised to argue the case to his counterparts in New York, Boston, and the hub of the rising black intelligentsia, Philadelphia. But he could not make the sale. Who was this "*bogus* committee," a writer with the pseudonym "Cerebus" demanded in the AME Church's weekly *Christian Recorder*, printed in Philadelphia. The writer wanted to know "*who* gave *that committee* authority to act for us, the *fifteen thousand* residents of color in this District—and . . . the *two hundred and ten thousand* inhabitants of color in the Free States."[10]

Newspaper reports of the White House meeting prompted expressions of anger and anguish in Northern blacks' letters to Lincoln. George B. Vashon of Pittsburgh wondered if the president "calmly calculated the hundreds of millions of dollars" the Chiriquí plan would add to the national debt, and took fierce exception to Lincoln's contention that the

[7] Kate Masur, "A Separate Peace."

[8] Philip S. Foner, ed., *Frederick Douglass: Selected Speeches and Writings*, abridged and adapted by Yuval Taylor (Chicago, 1999), 551.

[9] Masur, "African American Delegation," 136.

[10] Ibid., 132–37.

black man's presence in America had brought on the war: "He may have been the occasion of it; but he has not been its cause. That cause must be sought in the wrongs inflicted upon him by the white man."[11] A. P. Smith of New Jersey wrote, "Pray tell us, is our right to a home in this country less than your own, Mr. Lincoln? . . . Are you an American? So are we. Are you a patriot? So are we."[12]

Douglass, the best-known black voice in the land, came down harshly on the meeting's host. "Mr. Lincoln assumes the language and arguments of an itinerant Colonization lecturer, showing all his inconsistencies, his pride of race and blood, his contempt for Negroes and his canting hypocrisy," he wrote in *Douglass' Monthly*. "He says to the colored people: 'I don't like you, you must clear out of the country.'"[13]

Lincoln was hardly the first to say it. Schemes to "colonize" free African Americans, whether in Africa or Central America, had risen and fallen for decades, backed by slaveholding interests but also by presidents such as Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe. From time to time, black leaders such as Henry Highland Garnet of New York City and Martin R. Delany of Pittsburgh promoted their own emigration ventures—Rev. Garnet with an espoused goal of bringing the Gospel to Africa, Delany with a vision of founding a self-sustaining black republic.[14]

Other black leaders believed white-sponsored colonization societies aimed to put an ocean between enslaved people and their greatest allies, free blacks. Rev. William Catto of Philadelphia—who had nearly sailed to Liberia in 1847 before his thinking changed—denounced colonization as a ruse to deport freemen like himself lest they educate or incite the slaves, the better to "hold our brethren the more quietly and safely in chains."[15] The only things new about the pitch made in Washington were the salesman and the destination.

Robert Purvis, the gentleman farmer and Underground Railroad hero, tried to explain this to Samuel Pomeroy, the Kansas senator who was Lincoln's point man on the Chiriquí effort. Purvis noted that his own

[11] George Boyer Vashon to Abraham Lincoln, Sept. 1862, in *Douglass' Monthly*, Oct. 1862; reprinted in *BAP*, vol. 5, doc. 30.

[12] Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 225.

[13] Frederick Douglass, "The President and His Speeches," *Douglass' Monthly*, Sept. 1862.

[14] For Garnet's emigration efforts, see, e.g., Henry Highland Garnet, circular by the African Civilization Society, Feb. 16, 1854, *BAP*, vol. 5, doc. 1a; for Delany's, see, e.g., Martin R. Delaney to Frederick Douglass, July 10, 1852, *BAP*, vol. 4, doc. 25.

[15] Daniel A. Payne, *History of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Nashville, TN, 1891), 250, http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/payne/payne.html.

father-in-law, sailmaker James Forten, had in 1817 helped lead black protests against colonization. "Senator Pomeroy," Purvis wrote, "these were the sentiments of the colored people of Philadelphia, and of the whole land, in 1817; they have been their sentiments ever since, and they will be found to be their sentiments now."[16]

But some African Americans did want to "clear out of the country." That was the eternal rub of the colonization debate—for every black leader who scorned the idea, a hundred families were ready to go. Many had already immigrated to Liberia. An enthusiastic Pomeroy reported in October 1862 that fourteen thousand black people had signed up for passage to Chiriquí. Even if that number was inflated, Washington's Rev. Turner said he alone knew of a thousand. Douglass needed to look no further than his own family to know how conflicted his people were: one of his grown sons wanted to sign up.[17]

Lincoln had been a steadfast colonizationist ("I cannot make it better known than it already is, that I strongly favor colonization," he avowed in his December 1862 message to Congress).[18] The candidate whose speeches raised blacks' hopes had, as president, inspired dismay and distrust. Soon after the meeting on Chiriquí, he famously insisted that the war was not to end slavery but to save the Union, with or without slavery.[19] And early in his presidency, circumstances had tested his commitment to freedom. As far as black leaders were concerned, he had failed each test.

When two Union generals ordered slaves freed in territories they commanded—John C. Fremont in Missouri and David Hunter in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina—Lincoln rescinded their orders. Then there was the subordinate's order he refused to rescind: closing schools the army had opened for the thousands of newly freed and education-starved blacks of Union-occupied North Carolina. His appointee explained that the president was merely upholding the state's law—which, like South Carolina's and others', banned teaching blacks to read and write.[20] Lincoln also had signaled that he, like many other white Northerners, feared the consequences of letting blacks enlist. On September 13, 1862, he told Chicago ministers who had come to the White House to argue

[16] Robert Purvis to Samuel Pomeroy, Aug. 29, 1862, *Liberator*, Sept. 12,1862.
[17] Masur, "African American Delegation," 138.
[18] Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 236.
[19] Ibid., 227–28.
[20] Ibid., 176–180, 206–12.

for emancipation, "If we were to arm them, I fear that in a few weeks the arms would be in the hands of the rebels."[21]

As recently as March, Lincoln had made the case for letting states embark on "gradual abolishment of slavery," with compensation to slaveholders. This emancipation would be so gradual that it would not be complete until the end of the century. The decree of September 22 meant that Lincoln was, in essence, revising his main timetable for emancipation from thirty-seven years to one hundred days. Could his seemingly sudden change of position be trusted?[22] Author William Wells Brown, who had escaped slavery, remarked, "The colored people of the country rejoice in what Mr. Lincoln has done for them, but they all wish that General Fremont had been in his place."[23]

The Chiriquí offer was still on the table as the hundred-day wait began—and still dividing black leadership. Rev. Garnet argued that creating a Central American refuge for the thousands of "contrabands" fleeing from the Confederate states was a good idea. "Let the government give them a territory, and arm and defend them until they can fully defend themselves, and thus hundreds of thousands of men will be saved, and the Northern bugbear 'they will all come here' be removed," Garnet wrote in the *Weekly Anglo-African*. But just weeks earlier, Garnet's Shiloh Presbyterian Church in lower Manhattan was the site of an anticolonization rally. A guest speaker from Philadelphia, Rev. Catto, accused Lincoln of caving in to the most hateful, violent white elements, of "pandering to the mob spirit."[24]

Yet African Americans' hopes were rising. Catto's son Octavius and Robert Purvis' niece Charlotte Forten were part of a new generation of activists—reared in homes that doubled as hideaways in the network known as the Underground Railroad and taught that education was a birthright, agitation for equal rights a duty. They had reached adulthood in the late 1850s, espousing in writings and speeches a belief that they could change the world. As one of their staunchest white allies, Massachusetts minister Theodore Parker, put it, the arc of the moral uni-

[21] Ibid., 229.

[22] Ibid., 196, 236–38.

[23] Donald Yacovone, ed., *A Voice of Thunder: The Civil War Letters of George E. Stephens* (Urbana, IL, 1997), 18.

[24] *Pacific Appeal*, Oct. 18, 1862, quoted in introduction to George B. Vashon to Abraham Lincoln, Sept. 1862, *BAP*, vol. 5, doc. 30; *Weekly Ango-African* article reprinted in *Pacific Appeal*, Oct. 11, 1862, BAP, accession no. 02181; Biddle and Dubin, *Tasting Freedom*, 271.

verse seemed to be bending toward justice, even if he could not "calculate the curve."[25]

Black Americans created and lived in a complex world. In Philadelphia, home to the largest free African American population of any northern city, with upward of twenty thousand by 1860, thousands lived in poverty, disease, and illiteracy in the worst, most crowded sections. But there were also, by the time the war began, eighteen black churches, a widely read black newspaper, a black-run cemetery, and a patchwork of fraternal, social, and literary societies that numbered as many as one hundred. The backbone of the Underground Railroad was made up of well-to-do families such as the Fortens and Purvises—each a "dynasty of social activists," as Emma Lapsansky Werner describes them—while its eyes and ears were the waiters, drivers, porters, and maids who staffed hotels, restaurants, and docks. The Quaker-financed Institute for Colored Youth, where Octavius Catto and his friend Jacob White Jr. graduated and taught, drew visiting educators eager to observe black pupils thriving under the tutelage of black teachers.[26]

Slavery was never far away. In December 1859, when Rev. Jeremiah Asher told his Philadelphia flock that members of his family were still enslaved in the South, shouts went up from every pew: "So is mine"! "So is mine"![27] Yet discord ran rampant. Black activists who wanted to launch an antislavery party and otherwise gain entrance to the political arena broke bitterly with abolitionists who favored "moral suasion."[28] Douglass branded black pastors cowards for not hosting antislavery meetings—never mind that past meetings had resulted in churches being stoned or set afire.[29]

[25] *Centenary Edition of the Works of Theodore Parker*, 15 vols. (Boston, 1907–12), 3:64. See also Biddle and Dubin, *Tasting Freedom*, esp. chaps. 5–9.

[26] See, e.g., Roger Lane, *William Dorsey's Philadelphia and Ours: On the Past and Future of the Black City in America* (New York, 1991). Visitors to the Institute for Colored Youth are described in Biddle and Dubin, *Tasting Freedom*, 183–84, citing, e.g., Fanny Jackson Coppin, *Reminiscences of School Life, and Hints on Teaching* (Philadelphia, 1913), 21; and Emma Jones Lapsansky, "The World the Agitators Made: The Counterculture of Agitation in Urban Philadelphia," in *The Abolitionist Sisterhood: Women's Political Culture in Antebellum America*, ed. Jean Fagan Yellin and John C. Van Horne (Ithaca, NY, 1994), 96.

[27] William Dusinberre, *Civil War Issues in Philadelphia, 1856–1865* (Philadelphia, 1965), 86.

[28] See, e.g., *BAP*, vol. 3, introduction and p. 22; Allen B. Ballard, *One More Day's Journey: The Story of a Family and a People* (New York, 1984), 67; and description of Frederick Douglass's debate with Charles L. Remond, *New York Times*, May 21, 1857.

[29] See, e.g., Douglass's criticism of Philadelphia pastors in *North Star*, Sept. 1, Oct. 13, and Oct. 20, 1848.

Then there was the war; in its first two years, African American leaders split over whether to seek to join the fighting or even support the cause. Why bring slaveholders back into the Union? Lincoln had made it crystal clear that abolition was not the point. Besides, as Garnet pointed out, many Northern whites were so "horror stricken" at the idea of a biracial army that they "turned up their noses till they almost met their foreheads."[30]

In August 1862, pastor Jabez Campbell led a men-only meeting at Mother Bethel AME Church, at which he insisted that the time had come "to state our own position in the present crisis." With little discussion, the group adopted resolutions:

> *Whereas*, We have been made to understand that in no case, at the present, will the negroes be armed or employed as soldiers in defence of the Government. . . .
>
> *Resolved*, That . . . the better class of colored people have too much self-respect to intrude themselves where they are not wanted. . . .
>
> *Resolved*, That as a loyal and peace-loving community, the colored people of Philadelphia desire by no act of theirs to increase disorder or intensify evil feelings; but if by order and quiet they can assist in restoring peace to the country, they desire to practise that.[31]

But younger men were already finding ways to fight. Billy Wormley, a friend of Octavius Catto from Washington, DC, talked his way into a job with the navy flotilla that drove the rebels out of Beaufort, South Carolina.[32] Another friend, Alfred M. Green, wrote to New York's *Weekly Anglo-African* protesting the paper's call for neutrality. Green said newly formed independent companies of black soldiers drilling in the countryside had the right idea: "No nation ever has or ever will be emancipated from slavery . . . but by the sword, wielded too by their own strong arms. . . . The prejudiced white men, North or South, never will respect us until they are forced to . . . by deeds of our own."[33]

[30] Carla L. Peterson, *Black Gotham: A Family History of African Americans in Nineteenth-Century New York City* (New Haven, CT, 2011).

[31] *Christian Recorder*, Sept. 6, 1862.

[32] William A. Wormley to Octavius V. Catto, Nov. 7, 1861, box 3Ga, folder 5, Leon Gardiner Collection of American Negro Historical Society Records (Collection 0008), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[33] Albert M. Green, letter to editor, *Weekly Anglo-African*, Oct. 1861, in *BAP*, vol. 5, doc. 22b.

Green's argument rang hollow at first; the army, after all, wasn't letting colored men enlist. But the same thought occurred to other black writers and leaders. The exigencies of the war had forced Lincoln and his generals to consider emancipation and enlistment; now, African Americans had a chance to address exigencies of their own. If the North needed them to win the war, they needed the validating stamp of citizenship that came with valor on the battlefield.[34]

* * *

On one sad score, at least, they knew Lincoln was right: when he said they had "suffered very greatly" from living among whites. Douglass, for instance, had been whipped in slavery, had been pelted with rotten eggs for an antislavery speech in Pennsylvania, and had his right hand broken for another in Indiana. Garnet had been chased from a school in boyhood and tossed from a train as an adult. In 1864, whites in Syracuse would throw the minister down, take his wooden leg and silver-plated cane and make him crawl through the mud.[35]

William H. Parham of Cincinnati, for one, was ready to leave. "I have almost concluded to go to Jamaica," the young colored teacher wrote on September 7, 1862, to his Philadelphia friend Jacob White Jr. White rioters had descended on black Cincinnati, and Parham told of a mob that "attacked a house occupied by a colored family on Commercial Street." He said his mind was all but made up "to get out of this slavery-cursed and Negro-hating country as soon as I can."[36]

A reminder of the "mob spirit" had just been in the newspapers. Nine days before the White House meeting, whites in Brooklyn decided they had seen enough jobs in tobacco warehouses go to black men, women, and children, so they set fire to two warehouses. The *New York Times* reported that as flames threatened to trap colored women and children who had retreated to the upper floors, whites outside shouted, "kill the d—n naygurs!" and "burn the naygurs." Police rescued the workers, but the owner hired whites to replace them.[37]

[34] See, e.g., Robert Hamilton, "The Present—and its Duties," editorial, *Weekly Anglo-African*, Jan. 17, 1863, in *BAP*, vol. 5, doc. 35.

[35] Peterson, *Black Gotham,* 273.

[36] William H. Parham to Jacob C. White Jr., Sept. 7, 1863, in *BAP*, vol. 5, doc.29.

[37] *New York Times*, Aug. 5, 1862; James M. McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War: How American Blacks Felt and Acted during the War for the Union* (1982; repr., New York, 2003), 70.

Such events may have made Pomeroy's Chiriquí plea more appealing. He published a letter "To the Free Colored People" in the black papers. "The hour has now arrived," Pomeroy wrote, "when it is within your own power to take one step that will secure, if successful, the elevation, freedom and social position of your race upon the American continent. The President of the United States has already signified his desire to carry out fully . . . the desire of the National Legislature, which made an appropriation to facilitate your emigration and settlement in some favorable locality outside of these States."[38]

The letter had barely made it to readers of San Francisco's *Pacific Appeal*, an African American newspaper, when news of Lincoln's promise arrived and overtook all conversation. "Though no firing of cannon was heard from the hilltops . . . the Proclamation was, nevertheless, read and discussed with intense interest," the paper reported on September 27. "A murmur might have been heard, here and there, from the groups that could be seen in earnest conversation, apparently discussing the merits of the great topic which the telegraph had just announced, but there was not much excitement and no noisy demonstration of any kind."[39]

The closer to slavery, the stronger the reaction. Here, too, was a divide—between those who had not lived in slavery and those who, in Rev. Catto's words, had seen "the evil" and knew that "the most vivid descriptions fell far short of the realities."[40]

Harriet Jacobs was still in girlhood in North Carolina when a slaveholder had begun sexually harassing her—"slavery is terrible for men, but it is far more terrible for women," she wrote. She managed to escape by hiding in an attic for seven years. Now she was teaching, feeding, and clothing contrabands at a federal camp in Alexandria, Virginia. There, a mammoth barracks built for 500 freed people now housed 1,500. Lincoln's promise had infused her with energy. In a December 1862 letter to her Rochester abolitionist friend Amy Post, a white woman, Jacobs wrote that the past six months had been "the happiest of all my life." She felt that "a just God is settleing [*sic*] the account."

Jacobs implored Post and others to volunteer at the camps. She wrote of refugees "so degraded by slavery that . . . they know little else than the handle of the hoe, the plough, the cotton pad, and the overseer's lash.

[38] Masur, "African American Delegation," 138–39; Samuel C. Pomeroy, "To the Free Colored People of the United States," *Pacific Appeal*, Sept. 20, 1862.

[39] "The Proclamation," editorial, *Pacific Appeal*, Sept. 27, 1862, in *BAP*, accession no. 08481.

[40] William Catto, quoted in William Still, *The Underground Rail Road* (Philadelphia, 1872), 86.

Have patience with them. You have helped to make them what they are; teach them civilization. You owe it to them, and you will find them as apt to learn as any other people."[41]

But even after graphic testimony about slavery in Jacobs's and other accounts, many a well-educated Northerner seemed barely awake to its degradations. Diarist Sidney George Fisher, a member of Philadelphia's elite, wrote of his shock at learning—through his slaveholder in-laws—that masters impregnated slaves and sold off their mulatto children. He reported that abolitionists as fiery as James Miller McKim of Philadelphia had been appalled to learn of "the lacerated backs" of slave women whipped by masters' jealous wives in "some of the best families."[42] Nathaniel Hawthorne, visiting the camp where Jacobs worked, wrote that its residents wore "such a crust of primeval simplicity (which is quite polished away from the northern black man), that they seemed a kind of creature by themselves, not altogether human."[43]

Who knows what the freed people thought of the novelist staring in at them? Such gawking was all too familiar for free Americans of color. The Amy Posts were far outnumbered by whites who had no idea of blacks' lives. When proslavery forces alleged in 1860 that Lincoln had met with blacks, the president-elect could honestly reply, "I was never in a meeting with negroes in my life."[44] Black New York abolitionist James McCune Smith lamented, "Our white countrymen do not know us. . . . What hand has refused to fan the flame of prejudice against us? . . . What American artist has not caricatured us?"[45] In this complaint, he could have included British artists. When Lincoln promised to liberate the slaves and enlist colored troops, *Punch* magazine lampooned the president as a desperate gambler trying to best the Confederacy by throwing down an outsized ace of spades.[46] In the cartoon, titled "Abe Lincoln's Last Card," readers saw that the "spade" on the card was an African face.

[41] Jean Fagan Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs: A Life* (New York, 2004), esp. 159–63.

[42] Sidney George Fisher diary, Jan. 2, 1860, and Aug. 31,1863, in *A Philadelphia Perspective: The Diary of Sidney George Fisher*, ed. Nicholas Wainwright (Philadelphia, 1967), 343–44, 459.

[43] Yellin, *Harriet Jacobs*, 163.

[44] Foner, *Fiery Trial,* 131.

[45] Ibid.; Benjamin Quarles, *Lincoln and the Negro* (1962; repr., New York, 1991), 43.

[46] Henry Mayer, *All on Fire: William Lloyd Garrison and the Abolition of Slavery* (New York, 1998), 543.

* * *

As the day drew near, the black editors of the *Pacific Appeal* took stock:

> Notwithstanding the results of the recent elections in the Eastern States,—by many supposed to be adverse and in antagonism to the position of the President . . . by telegraphic despatches [*sic*] we are constantly informed that the President will not yield to pro-slavery pressure, by the modification or withdrawal of his great mandate for emancipation. Almost every paper (Republican or Democrat) is filled with the opinions expressed by nearly all the great statesmen of the day, in favor of the great edict to be issued, it is to be hoped, by the President, January 1st.[47]

It was to be hoped.

With eleven days to go, an organization of Philadelphia's leading men of color, the Statistical Association, implored the population to exercise restraint. Three of the association's leaders, William Still, Jacob White Sr., and a barber named Isaiah Wears, published an article in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* headlined "The President's Proclamation":

> How shall the 1st of January be observed by the colored people?
>
> The question is doubtless uppermost in the minds of very many among us of all classes.
>
> The Executive Committee of the Social, Civil and Statistical Association of the Colored People of Pennsylvania, conceiving that much harm might grow out of an observance not governed by discretion, deem it essential to the welfare of themselves and their brethren generally, to offer publicly a few well-considered suggestions on the subject.

The writers were old enough to know what harms might come—anti-slavery meetings in Philadelphia had been stormed by mobs; a black 1842 temperance parade had triggered bloody white reaction. They also made note of the calculated nature of Lincoln's promise:

> That the hearts of thousands are anxiously longing for the glad day to fly swiftly around none can doubt. . . .

[47] "The Great Coming Event," editorial, *Pacific Appeal*, Nov. 29, 1862, in *BAP*, accession no. 08595.

> . . . [But] the manner by which the proclamation was brought about; the direct efforts being made to prohibit us from participating in the defence of the government; the malignant opposition manifest against our having a peaceful habitation on the continent where we were born and have labored and suffered—these with other considerations admonish us forcibly that the day has not yet come for us to arrange the "jubilee," or to make public demonstrations in the way of parades, etc. The time may come soon when we can publicly rejoice over the downfall of slavery and the rebellion together; but be assured it is not yet. Let us not, therefore, make merry too soon.[48]

The White House sent no signal of any last-minute change of plans. In fact, there was good news for colonization foes—opposition from neighboring Central American governments had cooled the administration's Chiriquí fever.[49] But Frederick Douglass was wary. What if the president "fails in this trial hour, what if he now listens to the demon slavery—and rejects the entreaties of the Angel of Liberty?" he wrote. "Suppose he cowers at last . . . and thus gives a new lease of life to the slaveholder's rebellion? Where then will stand Mr. Abraham Lincoln? . . . His name would go down in history scarcely less loathsome than that of Nero."[50]

On December 31, Lincoln signed a different sort of document: a federal contract to pay a speculator fifty dollars for every freed slave he could ship to, and settle on, an island off Haiti. Like the emissary who touted Chiriquí's coal and monkey meat, Bernard Kock promised Lincoln that food, shelter, and opportunity awaited freed blacks beneath the palms of Île-à-Vache.[51] If the colonization push was a feint on Lincoln's part, it was an elaborate one.

By then, black carpenter George Stephens of Philadelphia had signed on with a Union regiment as cook and valet to a general. Writing on New Year's Eve from an encampment near Fredericksburg, he offered readers of the *Weekly Anglo-African* his expression of the hour's hopes and fears. He, too, said accounts needed settling. This "may be the watch night which shall usher in the new era of freedom," Stephens wrote. "Do not

[48] William Still, Jacob B. White Sr., and Isaiah C. Wears, "The President's Proclamation," *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Dec. 20, 1862, in *BAP*, accession no. 03502.

[49] Masur, "African American Delegation," 140.

[50] Frederick Douglass, in *Douglass' Monthly*, Jan. 1, 1863.

[51] See, e.g., Foner, *Fiery Trial,* 239–40.

nations have to suffer for misdeeds as well as individuals? And should they not have a season of moral reckoning? . . . Her wealth is built on the labor of slaves." As for Lincoln, "The pro-slavery pressure on him must be very great. Since the recent elections have unmistakably indicated that the pro-slaveryites are immensely in the majority, I should not be disappointed if the proclamation be withheld."[52]

At Union-occupied Port Royal, South Carolina, Charlotte Forten was entertaining no such doubts. Ten oxen were being roasted for the ceremony. The young teacher—ordinarily a doubter extraordinaire—was so sure of what was coming that she taught her newly freed pupils the John Brown song for the occasion. On December 31, she wrote in her journal: "I count the hours till to-morrow, the glorious, glorious day of freedom."[53]

* * *

The words of women such as Forten and Jacobs and men such as Stephens and Douglass represented only the most educated black Americans—the "talented thousandth," as historians described blacks at Oberlin, the only antebellum US college to welcome them.[54] They had access to pencil, paper, and presses. No one knew with any certainty, then or now, how most of the Americans most directly affected by Lincoln's promised order would receive the word—that is, if they received it at all.

Booker T. Washington recalled a "grapevine telegraph" that carried word of Lincoln's decree from plantation to plantation in Virginia.[55] Even before that, slaveholders found their inventories suddenly thinning as Union armies advanced. Charles Colcock Jones, a minister and Georgia planter, was distraught in July 1862 to find his beloved house servant gone. Jones wrote to his Confederate soldier son: "*Fifty-one* have already gone from this county. Your Uncle John has lost five. *Three* are said to have left from your Aunt Susan's and Cousin Laura's; one was captured, two not; and one of these was *Joefinny*!"[56] As the war unfolded, a

[52] George Stephens to *Weekly Anglo-African*, Dec. 31, 1862, in Yacovone, *Voice of Thunder*, 216–20.

[53] Brenda E. Stevenson, ed., *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké* (New York, 1988), 428.

[54] See Ellen N. Lawson and Marlene Merrill, "The Antebellum 'Talented Thousandth': Black College Students at Oberlin before the Civil War," *Journal of Negro Education* 52 (1983): 142–55.

[55] Steven Hahn, *A Nation under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), 66.

[56] Erskine Clarke, *Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic* (New Haven, 2005), 414–15.

South Carolina planter observed to diarist Mary Boykin Chestnut that "the black waiters are all ears now." He said he had taken the precaution of speaking French in their presence.[57]

But for millions of others, slavery's censorship was profound. Slaves were barred from writing—"for God's sake, don't let a slave be cotch with pencil and paper," former Charleston slave Elijah Green remembered seventy years later; "You might as well had killed your master or missus."[58] And most free blacks had no access to learning. What they said and felt in those hundred days is hard to know now and was harder to know then.

So, on January 1, 1863, a Lincoln loyalist in Philadelphia made it his business to find out. Benjamin Rush Plumly ventured across new-fallen snow to find the black churches full.[59] A merchant, published poet, and abolitionist, Plumly chose his destinations wisely that day; the city was the hub of free black America, and the black churches were the durable brick-and-wood-frame hubs of that hub. Plumly found himself welcomed—and overwhelmed. He promptly wrote to Lincoln:

> Dear Sir,
>
> I have been, all day, from early morning intil [*sic*] a short time ago, in the Crowded Churches of the Colored People of this City.
>
> During thirty years of active Anti-Slavery life, I have never witnessed, such intense, intelligent and devout "Thanksgiving." . . .
>
> Occasionally, they sang and shouted and wept and prayed. God knows, I cried, with them. . . .
>
> The mention of your name . . . evoked a spontaneous benediction from the whole Congregation. No doubt of the coming of Your Proclamation beset any one of them.
>
> As one of their speakers was explaining the effect of your Act, he was interrupted by a sudden outburst, from four or five hundred voices, singing
>
> "The Year of Jubilee."
>
> An old Anti-Slavery song . . . which we sang, stirringly, in the dark days of mobs & outrage, was so changed as to include Your name.

At one church, Plumly reported, worshippers lined up to receive Communion made small donations in support of "the Contrabands; all

[57] Hahn, *Nation under Our Feet*, 67.

[58] Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780–1860* (New York, 1983), 197.

[59] Snow and other Philadelphia weather data for December 31, 1862–January 1, 1863, courtesy of Stacey C. Peeples, curator and lead archivist, Pennsylvania Hospital, Philadelphia, PA.

the while singing their moving hymns." "To day," Plumly continued, all of the city's twenty black churches "were open & filled":

> They have among them, many men of talent, education and property. There are several excellent orators. All of these,—ministers and laymen, exhorted the people, to accept the great gift, with reverent joy; to make no public demonstration, no procession or parade; to indulge in no resentment for the past, and no impatience for the future, but to "work and wait,["] trusting in God, for the final triumph of Justice. . . .
>
> The Black people all trust you. They beleive [*sic*] that you desire to do them Justice.
>
> They do not beleive [*sic*] that You, wish to expatriate them, or to enforce upon them, any disability, but—that you cannot do all, that you would.
>
> The spontaneous outburst of this faith in you, was touching, beyond expression.
>
> Some one intimated, that You might be forced into some, form of Colinization [*sic*].
>
> "God wont let him," shouted an old woman. "God's in his heart," said another, and the response of the Congregation was emphatic.[60]

* * *

One of the crowded churches was First African Presbyterian. Jonathan C. Gibbs, the seminary-trained pastor, had a sermon ready for the moment when the news arrived:

> The morning dawns! The long night of sorrow and gloom is past, rosy-fingered Aurora, early born of day, shows the first faint flush of her coming glory, low down on the distant horizon of Freedom's joyful day. O day, thrice blessed, that brings liberty to four million native-born Americans. . . .
>
> The Proclamation has gone forth, and God is saying to this nation by its legitimate constitute head, Man must be free.

Gibbs took a moment to warn against any shipping of free Americans to a colony "in the Torrid Zone." But he welcomed the new language that had cropped up—as if in colonization's place—in the Emancipation Proclamation; the final version authorized black men's enlistment in the

[60] Benjamin Rush Plumly to Abraham Lincoln, Jan. 1, 1863, Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/mal:@field(DOCID+@lit(d2088100)).

"armed service" of the Union. "Many persons are asking, Will black men fight?" Gibbs orated. "That is not what they mean. The question they are asking is simply this: Have white men of the North the same moral courage, the pluck, the grit, to lay down their foolish prejudice against the colored man and place him in a position where he can bear his full share of the toils and dangers of this war?"[61]

* * *

In snowbound Boston, white intellectuals gathered in the Music Hall to await the news—among them essayists and poets Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and John Greenleaf Whittier, as well as the elfin giant of abolitionism, William Lloyd Garrison. An orchestra played Beethoven's Fifth, and a cheer went up for Harriet Beecher Stowe. The author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (a novel that endorsed colonization even as it exposed slavery) daubed her eyes with a handkerchief as thousands chanted her name.

A few blocks away, at Tremont Temple, another audience, three thousand strong, gathered in the same high-ceilinged hall where two years earlier a white mob of "gentlemen" and "roughs" alike had broken up a biracial antislavery meeting, "knocked down and trampled upon" blacks in the audience and thrown Frederick Douglass "down the staircase."

On January 1, 1863, the only things pulling Douglass down were his doubts. Would Lincoln's wife, "from an old slaveholding family, influence him to delay and give the slaveholders one other chance?" Would Union losses in battle or Republican losses in the fall elections persuade the president to reconsider his timetable?

Messengers were put in place between the hall and the telegraph office. All that Douglass, William Wells Brown, and other speakers could do was make their speeches—and wait. "Every moment of waiting chilled our hopes, strengthened our fears," Douglass wrote. "Eight, nine, ten o'clock came and went. . . . A visible shadow seemed falling on the expecting throng."

Then came the word. "'It is on the wires!' . . . and the scene was wild and grand. Joy and gladness exhausted all forms of expression from shouts

[61] *Christian Recorder*, Jan. 17, 1863, in *Lift Every Voice: African American Oratory, 1787–1900*, ed. Philip S. Foner and Robert J. Branham (Tuscaloosa, AL, 1998), 381–83; Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 240.

of praise, to sobs and tears." Douglass noted that the celebrants included both races, "but we all seemed to be about of one color that day."[62]

At the Shiloh Presbyterian Church in New York, Rev. Garnet was presiding. Hymns were sung, speeches delivered; pews filled up as midnight approached. The reverend announced that a hero of abolitionism had just walked in—"I allude to Hon. Horace Greeley." The audience rose and applauded. Then Garnet noticed something: "Greeley" was clapping, too! He corrected himself: "A gentleman right here before me looked so much like Mr. Greeley that I thought it was him, but when I mentioned Mr. Greeley's name, he clapped as hard as the rest, and then I saw my mistake." The congregation laughed with the reverend.

As the hour approached, Garnet called for order. From 11:55 p.m. until midnight, he led a silent prayer.[63]

In Washington, Rev. Turner, who had quipped about 240 years' back wages due, stood in the crush outside the *Evening Star*'s offices, waiting for the edition with Lincoln's news. Here, again, blacks and whites were at close quarters, and no one seemed to mind. As soon as he got his hands on a newspaper, or at least the portion with the Proclamation's wording, Turner ran "for life and death" to his church, nearly a mile down Pennsylvania Avenue. His flock raised an "almost deafening" cheer. Men hoisted him to a platform to read the words—but Turner was out of breath. He handed the sheet to a friend to read aloud. As the words rang out, "Men squealed, women fainted, dogs barked, white and colored people shook hands, songs were sung."[64]

* * *

Other crowds waited and celebrated in black churches from New England to Nevada. At Port Royal, Charlotte Forten, freedmen, white soldiers, freed slaves who had become soldiers, and their white officers, including Thomas Wentworth Higginson of Massachusetts, assembled in a clearing under the live oaks. "It all seemed, and seems still, like a brilliant dream," Forten wrote in her journal. She described "an eager, won-

[62] *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass, Written by Himself* (1892; repr. with introduction by Rayford W. Logan, London, 1962), 428–29; Mayer, *All on Fire*, 545–46; Quarles, *Lincoln and the Negro*, 141–44.

[63] *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Jan. 10, 1863, in *BAP*, accession no. 03420; *New York Times*, Jan. 1, 1863; Biddle and Dubin, *Tasting Freedom*, 278.

[64] Edwin S. Redkey, ed., *Respect Black: The Writings and Speeches of Henry McNeal Turner* (New York, 1971), 3–4.

dering crowd of freed people in their holiday-attire, with the gayest of head-handkerchiefs, the whitest of aprons, and the happiest of faces." Troops paraded in red pantaloons, a "fine soldierly-looking set of men. . . . To us, it seemed strange as a miracle,—this black regiment . . . doing itself honor in the sight of the officers of the other regiments, many of whom, doubtless, 'came to scoff.'"[65]

Colonel Higginson recorded in his diary:

> prayer by our chaplain . . . proclamation read. . . . There followed an incident so simple, so touching, so utterly unexpected . . . just as I took & waved the flag, which now for the first time meant anything to these poor people, there suddenly arose . . . a strong but rather cracked and elderly male voice, into which two women's voices immediately blended, singing as if by an impulse . . . the hymn
>
> "My Country 'tis of thee,
> Sweet Land of Liberty."
>
> People looked at each other & then at the stage to see whence came this interruption . . . irrepressibly the quavering voices sang on, verse after verse; others around them joined; some on the platform sung, but I motioned them to silence. I never saw anything so electric; it made all other words cheap, it seemed the choked voice of a race, at last unloosed . . . & when I came to speak of it, after it was silent, tears were everywhere.[66]

* * *

Within days, a new tone rippled through the words of the Northern black intelligentsia.

In Philadelphia, a writer witnessed Robert Purvis's conversion from insurgent to patriot, remarking, "It sounded odd, and indicated changed times, to hear Mr. Purvis speak of America in connection with the subject of slavery, without his customary invective; and it brought moisture to many eyes to hear him—who for thirty years had stood a shining mark for the shafts of prejudice—say: 'Forgetting the past, I, too, am proud of the land of my nativity!'"[67]

[65] Charlotte Forten, "Life on the Sea Islands," *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1864, 668–70; and entry for Jan. 1, 1863, in *Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 428–30.

[66] Journal entry, Jan. 1, 1863, in *The Complete Civil War Journal and Selected Letters of Thomas Wentworth Higginson*, ed. Christopher Looby (Chicago, 1999), 75–77; also quoted in Biddle and Dubin, *Tasting Freedom*, 277–79.

[67] "The Proclamation in Philadelphia. Speeches of Robert Purvis and Alfred Green," *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, Jan. 24, 1863, in *BAP*, accession no. 03501. See also Robert Hamilton's editorial in the *Weekly Anglo-African*, Jan. 17, 1863, in *BAP*, vol. 5, doc. 35.

In Grove City, Ohio, the black Philadelphia poet Frances Ellen Watkins Harper was taking time away from meetings and lecture tours to raise her year-old daughter, Mary, when word of the celebrations reached her. Harper had married and moved to Ohio. As she told her friend William Still in a letter, friends in nearby Columbus implored her to come and speak. She was ailing. No matter—the memoirs and itineraries of Harper and other black abolitionists make clear that no malady short of death itself was going to silence their voices. She accepted the invitation and made her way to Columbus.

Her speech began in a solemn, biblical cadence. "Yes, we may thank God that in the hour when the nation's life was convulsed, and fearful gloom had shed its shadows over the land, the President reached out his hand through the darkness to break the chains on which the rust of centuries had gathered."

Then the poet let her hair down. "Well," she said to the audience. "Did you ever expect to see this day?"[68]

* * *

Of course, many enslaved people were denied word of Lincoln's act, the "grapevine telegraph" notwithstanding. In old age, one man said he learned of the Proclamation when Sherman's army liberated him more than a year later. On June 19, 1865—Juneteenth—when Union officials read the Proclamation to black Americans in Texas, the news came as a surprise.[69]

But in the North, black men promptly began enlisting, and with great encouragement. The only change to rival former slaves' conversion into soldiers was the wave of black radicals who, like Purvis, became army recruiters—men who had ranked among Uncle Sam's fiercest critics.

Meanwhile, the Île-à-Vache deal that Lincoln had signed ended in disease and disgrace. As for Chiriquí's coal, US scientists deemed it unreliable after all.[70] By 1864, Lincoln had "sloughed off that idea of colonization," as his young aide John Hay wrote with relief.[71]

[68] Frances Ellen Watkins Harper to William Still, n.d., quoted in Still, *Underground Rail Road*, 765–66.

[69] Kenneth Chelst, *Exodus and Emancipation: Biblical and African-American Slavery* (New York, 2009), 262.

[70] Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 233.

[71] Tyler Dennett, ed., *Lincoln and the Civil War in the Diaries and Letters of John Hay* (New York, 1988), 203; Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (New York, 2004), 160.

Black leaders came to admire the president they had doubted and derided. The president who once denied ever having met with African Americans invited Douglass into the White House as his friend and commissioned Delany an army officer. Later, a grieving Mary Todd Lincoln made gifts of her late husband's walking sticks to Douglass and Garnet.[72]

Jacob White Jr.'s Cincinnati friend William Parham did not go to Jamaica after all; he rose to become superintendent, after the war, of his city's colored schools.[73] White became the first black principal of a Philadelphia public high school.[74] His friend Octavius Catto would die bullet-riddled—not by the hands of Confederates but by the organized wrath of northern white Democrats seeking to snuff black voting power in its cradle. He was gunned down in daylight, as his ally Isaiah Wears put it, by "the Ku Klux of the North."[75]

But on that New Years' night in 1863, no one doubted that the hinge of history, however ponderous and halting, had at last begun to move. As Rev. Gibbs told his flock, African Americans free and enslaved could see a new day dawning. And if they could not yet see where the long arc of Parker's moral universe might end, on Watch Night they could at least begin to calculate the curve.

Philadelphia, PA DANIEL R. BIDDLE and MURRAY DUBIN

[72] David W. Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst, MA, 2002), 79.

[73] Darrel E. Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in the Ohio River Valley* (Lexington, KY, 2006), 286, 288.

[74] See Harry C. Silcox, "Philadelphia Negro Educator: Jacob C. White Jr., 1837–1902," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 97 (1973): 75–98.

[75] Isaiah Wears eulogy quoted in *Christian Recorder*, Nov. 18, 1871, in Foner and Branham, *Lift Every Voice*, 512–14; Biddle and Dubin, *Tasting Freedom*, 439.

"You Feel So Out of Place": Germantown's J. Gordon Baugh and the 1913 Commemoration of the Emancipation Proclamation

A FRAGILE ALBUM OF PHOTOGRAPHS made in 1913 by an African American resident of the Germantown section of Philadelphia may seem an unlikely addition to a collection of essays on the Emancipation Proclamation. Yet, J. Gordon Baugh Jr.'s *A Souvenir of Germantown Issued during the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation at Philadelphia, PA, September 1913* not only offers an illuminating glimpse of African American life in the half century after the Civil War—it explores the memories of emancipation.[1] In ways both commemorative and journalistic, the 1913 souvenir album gives valuable insight into a sector of Germantown's community frequently left out of its well-documented historical memory—and, one might fairly extrapolate, an indication of blacks' thinking about the meaning of emancipation in the early twentieth century.

Baugh's *Souvenir of Germantown* surveys one neighborhood in one northern city, but his presentation of the everyday life of his community has implications for the ways historians view the political, social, economic, and heritage activities among African Americans at that time. Baugh's description of the vibrant religious and educational institutions at work in Germantown reveals the kind of world blacks made in northern cities to support the influx of workers arriving from southern states during the "Great Migration" of the early 1900s. In the fifty years since 1863, Germantown's African American population had grown from 150 to

The author would like to thank Alex Bartlett of the Germantown Historical Society and Sloan Seale for their assistance while preparing this article.

[1] J. Gordon Baugh Jr., *A Souvenir of Germantown Issued during the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation at Philadelphia, PA, September 1913* (Philadelphia, 1913), located in "African American Files," at the Germantown Historical Society. A version annotated by Louise L. Strawbridge, with the assistance John E. Jones Jr., is reproduced in the *Germantown Crier* 36 (winter 1983–84).

J. Gordon Baugh Jr., *A Souvenir of Germantown Issued during the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation at Philadelphia, PA, September 1913* (Philadelphia, 1913), courtesy of the Germantown Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

nearly 5,000.[2] Baugh used photographs and captions to record the institutions and clubs that had emerged during this time to promote self-reliance in black communities, such as the Sunday school clubs of local churches, the Germantown Education Association, and the Wissahickon Boys Club. These community groups exemplified the sort of local efforts that ultimately became part of established national organizations such as the National Association of Colored Women or the YMCA. Baugh's depiction of Germantown associations reveals that what historian Stephanie Shaw argued specifically for black women was true for blacks in general, namely, that through clubs, blacks could continue the struggle

[2] On Germantown's changing population during this period, see Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton, NJ, 2004), 6 and 58–65. For an analysis of Germantown's African American community, see Robert F. Ulle, "Blacks in Germantown, Pa., 1683–1900" (unpublished manuscript, printed by the Germantown Mennonite Church Corporation, 1980), 8–9. For comparisons to other cities, see James R. Grossman, *Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration* (Chicago, 1989); and Joe William Trotter Jr., ed., *The Great Migration in Historical Perspective: New Dimensions of Race, Class, and Gender* (Bloomington, IN, 1991).

to improve their personal lives and the general standard of life in their communities.[3] Baugh's souvenir album memorializes individual clubs, churches, businesses, and education associations that, taken as a whole, suggest that fifty years after emancipation, a burgeoning community was in place for new arrivals to Germantown.[4]

While certainly not a political manifesto, *Souvenir of Germantown* includes nods to the ideas of Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Du Bois, whose supposed opposing political philosophies framed black activism and uplift in the period before World War I. Since Baugh prominently quotes Washington's writing in his album's sparse text, one can infer that he agreed with Washington's belief in self-reliance as a means for blacks to assimilate into an integrated community. Baugh makes no mention in his album of Washington's opponents, such as Du Bois or William M. Trotter, founders of the 1905 Niagara Movement, who advocated resistance and organization to combat segregation. Interestingly, however, Baugh organized the album's photos and text in ways that reflected the sociological analysis Du Bois set out in his study of Philadelphia's Seventh Ward in *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), with sections devoted to the livelihood of Germantown according to its religious, economic, educational, and community institutions, right down to the amount of taxes paid by African Americans.[5] The images Baugh selected showed that in everyday life, Washington's view often coexisted with Du Bois's.

Like many African American leaders in 1913, Washington and Du Bois participated in formal public events commemorating the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. Congress failed to approve funds for a national commemoration in 1913, opening up a variety of public, and often contested, celebrations. Washington gave an address in Virginia, and Du Bois took part in events in Chicago and New York City.[6]

[3] Stephanie J. Shaw, "Black Club Women and the Creation of the National Association of Colored Women," *Journal of Women's History* 3, no. 2 (1991): 10–20. See also Elizabeth Lindsay Davis, *Lifting as They Climb* (1933; repr., New York, 1996).

[4] For a discussion of how vernacular buildings served as redemptive spaces and helped cultivate volunteerism in northern cities during this period, see Daphne Spain, *How Women Saved the City* (Minneapolis, MN, 2001), 63–122.

[5] See W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (1899; repr., Philadelphia, 1995). Also, see the introduction by Michael B. Katz and Thomas J. Sugrue to *W. E. B. Du Bois, Race, and the City: "The Philadelphia Negro" and Its Legacy*, edited by Michael B. Katz and Thomas J. Sugrue (Philadelphia, 1998).

[6] Booker T. Washington, speech before the Negro Organization Society, Richmond, VA, Nov. 7, 1913, published as "Negro Progress in Virginia, " *Southern Workman* 43 (Jan. 1914): 39–43, also

Richmond and other southern cities had commemorations, some of which reflected divisions in society at large and in the black community in particular.[7] The order of programs, organization of parades, and particular speakers chosen or snubbed for public events were revealing of racial, class, and gender stratification.[8] Baugh's contribution was to forego the commemoration itself, opting instead to record black life as it existed fifty years after emancipation.

The unique perspective found in this thirty-page album and booklet derives from the fact that J. Gordon Baugh Jr. was not a scientist, scholar, or public official; he was a printer who worked in a camera and printing shop behind his house on Duval Street, on the cusp between Germantown and what is now Mt. Airy.[9] Out of his one-room shop, he operated Baugh Press with his brother, Philander Baugh (the two of them also published music), until two years before his death in 1946. As a businessman, his emphasis was on self-reliance and self-worth, a theme he carried over to *Souvenir of Germantown*'s references to blacks' investments, the value of their property, and understanding of their heritage. Baugh's souvenir album also presented a history that centered on black achievement and promise. In a community that remembers American history and takes pride in how well it preserves itself, Baugh created a space for newly migrated blacks by placing them in Germantown's history—with a chronology beginning, not with the founding of Germantown in 1683, but with the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.

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available online at http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/WasProg.html. On Du Bois and his participation in 1913 commemorations, see Craig Michael Stutman, *Reconstruction in the Mind of W. E. B. Du Bois: Myth, Memory, and the Meaning of American Democracy* (Philadelphia, 2008), 215–18.

[7] See, for instance, Kathleen Ann Clark, *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration and Political Culture in the South, 1863–1913* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2005); and Joshua Berrett, "The Golden Anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation," *Black Perspective in Music* 16 (1988): 63–80.

[8] Mitch Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808–1915* (Amherst, MA, 2003); William H. Wiggins Jr., *O Freedom! African American Emancipation Celebrations* (Knoxville, TN, 1987); and William H. Wiggins Jr. and Douglas DeNatale, eds., *Jubilation! African American Celebrations in the Southeast* (Columbia, SC, 1993). On the racial tension in Philadelphia's 1913 events, see Charlene Mires, "Race, Place, and the Pennsylvania Emancipation Exposition of 1913," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 128 (2004): 257–78.

[9] The German Township includes the communities now known as Germantown, Mt. Airy, and Chestnut Hill. Baugh Press was located on Jefferson (now Cherokee) Street on the 6300 block until 1944. See Gloria Davis Goode, *African American Heritage Guide to Philadelphia's Historic Northwest* (Philadelphia, 2007).

Souvenir of Germantown opens with a poem, "Song of the Times," written in the style of a Negro spiritual. Presented in African American dialect, it contains the verse, "They say bein' po's no sin, and povahty no disgrace / But Lawd it's inconvenient, you feel so out of place."[10] The poem's author is listed as "W. A. W. Baugh," likely a family member; it is possible that the booklet served as a personal testament to J. Gordon Baugh Jr.'s own heritage and how far his family had come in a few generations.

The album's next page quotes the last lines of Booker T. Washington's 1904 book, *Working with the Hands*, in which the author addresses the importance of education and opportunity for African Americans:

> All the Negro race asks is that the door which rewards industry, thrift, intelligence, and character be left as wide open for him as for the foreigner who constantly comes to our country. More than this, he has no right to request. Less than this, a Republic has no right to vouchsafe.[11]

The album therefore calls on the personal and folksy as well as on the documentary to show that people of African descent had made good on the promise offered other immigrants that one might realize success in America.

Baugh's own words set out the mission of his commemorative offering:

> This year being the fiftieth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, and in view of the fact that it is being celebrated in various ways, we deem it an opportune time to present this booklet, showing in some degree what has been done in Germantown.
>
> It would be impossible to obtain every fact that may be of interest, and to give a picture of every house occupied by our people would make too large a book, the cost of which would also be too much for the purpose.
>
> We have, therefore, endeavored to select those places that would tend to show the greatest progress, comparing same with a few of the earliest localities, without any preference or partiality.[12]

Houses were not the only items left out of Baugh's descriptions of blacks' economic impact in the neighborhood. Unlike Du Bois, who meticulously

[10] Baugh, *Souvenir of Germantown*, 1.

[11] Booker T. Washington, *Working with the Hands: Being a Sequel to "Up from Slavery" Covering the Author's Experiences in Industrial Training at Tuskegee* (New York, 1904), 246.

[12] Baugh, *Souvenir of Germantown*, 2.

showed the enrollments of students at schools for blacks, Baugh offered general estimates in his captions.[13] Evidence of crimes or contemporary indicators of poverty were also missing. While his images and the associated captions may have shown "in some degree what has been done" by Germantown's African Americans, Baugh selected images to make a case that was largely positive and emphasized with pride what the community had worked together to achieve.

As a small businessman, Baugh would have fit into the category established by Du Bois as the "best class of Negroes, though sometimes forgotten or ignored."[14] We do not know whether Baugh was familiar with Du Bois's scholarly work, but, like Du Bois, he emphasized the role of education and volunteer associations in creating opportunities for blacks in the city. Du Bois used interviews, economic statistics, and descriptions of languid conditions to argue the second-class status of blacks. Pauperism, he pointed out, was easier to spot than investment. Du Bois considered some types of businesses, such as barbers, laundry services, and chauffeurs, inherently negative because they kept African Americans in servile employment. Baugh, in contrast, pointed with great pride to people who held these very jobs; from his perspective as a businessman, they were successful as revenue-generating contributors to the community. He also highlighted the teachers, caterers, and other professionals who in Du Bois's terminology constituted "the aristocracy of Negroes."[15]

Where Du Bois, the scholarly sociologist, wrote of "the whole race," Baugh, the businessman, described "our people," often in neighborly ways. The images in *Souvenir of Germantown* take one through the neighborhood's primarily African American sections: Pulaskitown, Duval, and the Green Street commercial district. Businesses are identified with titles such as "Office of Our Real Estate" and "Our Antique Dealer." Captions on photos of other shops note which ones were built or owned by "colored contractors." Among them is an image of John Trower's catering business, one of the most successful African American businesses in the city. A photo of William Byrd's quarry shows Byrd posing with shovel

[13] For instance, Du Bois lists enrollment in all Philadelphia schools serving blacks, including two in Germantown, Hill and Coulter schools ("84 boys and 89 girls; 45 boys, 39 girls all colored," respectively). See Du Bois, *Philadelphia Negro*, chap. 8.

[14] Du Bois, *Philadelphia Negro*, 7. Du Bois also explored this topic further in "The Talented Tenth," chap. 2 in *The Negro Problem: A Series of Articles by Representative Negroes of To-day* (New York, 1903).

[15] Du Bois, *Philadelphia Negro*, 7.

Pulaski Ave , below Queen Street, (east side.) A row partly owned and entirely occupied by our people

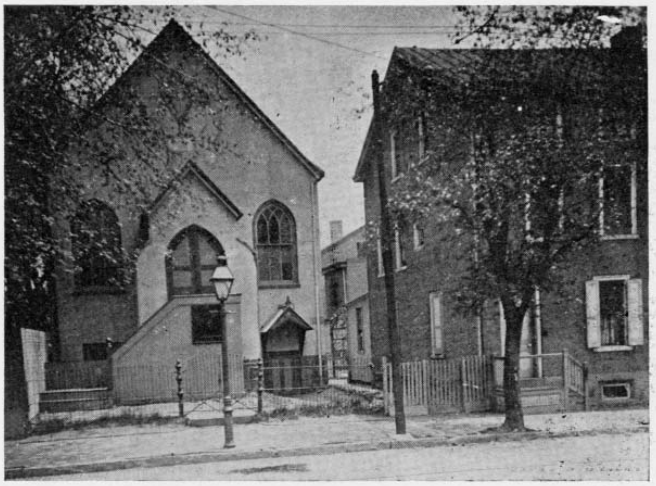
Courtesy of the Germantown Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

in hand as if to honor the owner-worker as he helped to build this emerging community. Album pages describe the offices of black doctors and dentists and list their names. Whether referring to Robinson's Restaurant or the truck operated by a laundry service, Baugh used the first person plural more often than not. A photograph of rowhouses on Pulaski Street below Queen Street (east side), for instance, bears the caption: "A row partly owned and entirely occupied by our people."[16]

Intriguingly, Baugh's collection of photographs provides hints regarding physical segregation in Germantown. The neighborhood, though diverse, saw blacks and whites living near one another but with clearly understood, if not well-marked, divisions. Baugh presented Germantown as if this thriving neighborhood was integrated. Throughout its history, and particularly in a community whose memory included multiple festivals run by competing ethnic groups, often in the same week, the neighborhood's residents had little ethic of living and working together.[17]

[16] Baugh, *Souvenir of Germantown*, 13–16.

[17] In a memorable quote from the head of the Germantown business association in 1923, "There are too many groups and too little coordination." The numerous and complicated factors that extended



Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, West Coulter Street.
Organized 1879. Valuation of real estate (including Church, Home Missionary Building and house on west side, adjoining) $15,900.00

Courtesy of the Germantown Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

Germantown's settlement houses and relief agencies, established since the 1880s, served mainly Irish and Italian immigrants, not blacks.[18] The photographs and captions reinforce the message of Baugh's canvass that the everyday achievements of his people were integral to Germantown's progress, even though they were in some ways kept separate from it.

Baugh highlighted housing, churches, schools, and neighborhood associations, including boys' and girls' clubs, in his album. He listed the churches first, organized by location and denomination and often identifying the pastor. Interestingly, as Du Bois had done in his study, Baugh noted the year of founding as well as the real estate value of each recorded church. Janes Methodist Episcopal Church, for example, was founded in 1872, with a "valuation of property $15,000."[19] He then similarly com-

beyond race are explored in David W. Young, "The Battles of Germantown: Preservation and Memory in America's Most Historic Neighborhood in the Twentieth Century" (PhD diss., Ohio State University, 2009), 60–61 and 148–52.

[18] Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock*, 61.

[19] Baugh, *Souvenir of Germantown*, 15–16, 20–22. While Baugh listed individual church property values one by one, Du Bois listed the aggregate value in the Seventh Ward. See Du Bois, *Philadelphia Negro*, 221; and Katz and Sugrue, *W .E. B. Du Bois, Race, and the City*, 9.

Members of the cast of "Sleeping Beauty" produced during 1913 by The Germantown Education Association which was organized in 1910 purposely to encourage co-operation among our High and Other School Graduates.

Courtesy of the Germantown Historical Society, Philadelphia, PA.

memorated Germantown's schools. Photographs capturing the neighborhood's social and education clubs, such as the Wissahickon Boys Club and Germantown Education Association, show children in dress for plays and presentations. On the whole, the album shows burgeoning community-based groups, the kinds highlighted by Du Bois, which helped black people prepare newcomers and young people with vocational training, educational opportunities, and social skills.

Two images from the album illuminate the idea of blacks working together in voluntary associations. One photograph focuses on a Wissahickon Boys Club teacher working at basket making with seven boys of the club. The organization, founded in 1885, exemplified the sort of institution that Du Bois encouraged for its assistance to black community youth education.[20] A second image of sixteen children and four teachers includes the caption, "Members of the cast of 'Sleeping Beauty' produced during 1913 by the Germantown Education Association in 1910 purposely to encourage co-operation among our High and Other

[20] Though she goes unnamed in Baugh's album, the teacher was Olivia Yancy Taylor, who in the 1920s became the first director of the black branch of Germantown's YWCA.

School Graduates."[21] Baugh emphasized cooperation between organizations much as Du Bois stressed the importance of the associations themselves.[22]

Throughout his commemorative album, Baugh presented a sense of community solidarity. The influx of people from different states during the Great Migration heightened the collective need for a sense of place that might help newcomers develop a sense of community in their new surroundings. As Robert Gregg shows in his study of African American churches in Philadelphia, one way that migrants to Philadelphia established their own identity solidarity was to create new and separate congregations, self-dividing a racial group by class, region of origin, or denomination.[23] Baugh's survey, however, shows black churches as part of a larger whole, so that the variety of churches became an anchor for all blacks in Germantown. Like its other black institutions, Germantown's black churches helped ground new arrivals in a community that made possible their progress.

Souvenir of Germantown is more reportorial than analytical, a portrait or snapshot more than a sociological survey. Where Du Bois interviewed thousands of African Americans and described the terrible condition of black families and record of minority businesses in his study published in 1899, Baugh pointed to the quality, breadth, and investment of Germantown's black professional and economic efforts. Where Du Bois saw pauperism, Baugh boasted that beggars were practically nonexistent in his neighborhood. Where Du Bois chronicled problems with the goal of enlisting Progressive Era support for remedies, Baugh saw evidence of support to be celebrated, as in the example of almshouses and settlement associations.[24] While at once typical of traditional guidebooks to Germantown that celebrated the neighborhood with fondness for its past, Baugh's album suggests that the present, at least for his people at that time, revealed a narrative of progress.

[21] Baugh, *Souvenir of Germantown*, 14–15.

[22] Du Bois, *Philadelphia Negro*, 13.

[23] Robert Gregg, *Sparks from the Anvil of Oppression: Philadelphia's African Methodists and Southern Migrants, 1890–1940* (Philadelphia, 1993), 14–25; Baugh's survey, however, shows ninety churches and three mosques line an eight-and-a-half-mile stretch of Germantown Avenue, at a rate of over ten places of worship per mile. Katie Day, *Prelude to Struggle: African American Clergy and Community Organizing for Economic Development in the 1990s* (New York, 2002); .

[24] Katz and Sugrue, *W. E. B. Du Bois, Race, and the City*, 9–13.

Even with its similarities and overlap with other commemorative works of the time, Baugh's souvenir album remains unique as a small, commemorative offering. It does not quote the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation directly. Unlike sermons from the church community marking the fiftieth anniversary, *Souvenir of Germantown* does not look backward at the sins of slavery but forward to a future of achievement.[25] It does not mention any leaders or abolitionists who worked to end slavery. Instead, it celebrates blacks at work and in social settings who were making lives from the freedom they had gained. With his album, Baugh added a new source documenting one marginalized racial group in a neighborhood where Germans and English actively remembered the importance of their own ancestors, along with the many religious groups who claimed Germantown as a heritage site in their place in America.[26]

Meanwhile, Baugh's personal captions and descriptions of "our people" clearly draw on the highly personal, local flavor of historical memory that John Fanning Watson employed in his *Annals*, the wide-ranging and often inaccurate (as well as bigoted) memory pieces about colonial and revolutionary history in Philadelphia and Germantown.[27] Baugh placed the community squarely within Germantown's sense of itself. His album includes a brief summary of Germantown's general history, touching on Pastorius's initial settlement in 1683, Rittenhouse's 1690 paper mill, and the role of Germantown in printing the first Bible, in the American Revolution, and in the nation's early government under George Washington, who stayed at the Deshler Morris House during the 1793 yellow fever epidemic. Baugh also noted that even after Germantown was incorporated into the city of Philadelphia in 1854 it kept some of its own institutions, particularly ones that served the African American community—for example, an almshouse, a branch tax house, and separate elementary schools for blacks. Baugh's use of photographs and captions, built on the antiquarian use of testimonies, annals, or idealized illustra-

[25] See for instance, "A New Emancipation," in *African Methodist Episcopal Church Review* 29, no. 3 (1913): 260–62.

[26] Works about German history in Pennsylvania marked the anniversaries of the early 1900s. The first was a genealogical study by Samuel W. Pennypacker, *The Settlement of Germantown* (Philadelphia, 1898). The second was a professionally researched book by a university German professor, Marion Dexter Lerned, *The Life of Francis Daniel Pastorius, Founder of Germantown* (Philadelphia, 1908), for which Pennypacker wrote the preface.

[27] Susan Stabile, *Memory's Daughters: The Material Culture of Remembrance in Eighteenth-Century America* (Ithaca, NY, 2004), 4. See also Deborah D. Waters, "Philadelphia's Boswell: John Fanning Watson," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 98 (1974): 3–49.

tions from the olden days, resembles Watson's unfinished 1859 brochure, a booklet for which Frederick DeBourg Richards was commissioned to photograph images of sites in the neighborhood. Baugh's album distinguishes buildings with some connection to black history from those that were owned by blacks.

Stenton, the 1730 Logan house, for instance, features prominently in *Souvenir of Germantown* because legend had it that an enslaved servant named Dinah had saved the house from being burned by the British during the 1777 Battle of Germantown. The story was repeated for years, and in Baugh's telling, Stenton was the place saved by "the old colored woman left in charge." Likewise, a drawing of the Thones Kunders house shows the building in which the 1688 Germantown antislavery protest was drafted by four early Germantowners. The remainder of the album is part description and part affirmation of the good citizenship of Germantown's growing African American community. The sites of black history are identified, including some with more traditional colonial history, but the buildings actually depicted are primarily nineteenth- or early twentieth–century structures such as the first black-owned home or an early black church. For example, an image of Penn and Newhall Streets is prominently shown on the grounds that it was the "center of Negro population 30 years ago."[28]

Baugh's album was thus a version of the traditional memory infrastructure—Germantown's colonial and revolutionary markers, museums, and monuments—but one in which the past became a platform for a different narrative, one emphasizing progress over nostalgia. Rather than preserving and commemorating the past for its own sake, Baugh's souvenir book was a guidebook for what freedom looked like.

In the last section of the book, Baugh used lists and examples vigorously. The last few pages of the album explain his reasons for doing so:

> The Negro population is made up largely of people from Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware and some may be here from several other states. Coming as most of them did, without money, friends, or anything to depend on except menial labor and no one to fire their ambition their progress is good. It is only within the past fifteen years that the necessity for owning real estate has been forced upon them. It must not be forgotten that every family paying rent, pays the taxes indirectly.[29]

[28] Baugh, *Souvenir of Germantown*, 5.
[29] Ibid., 19.

Even the churches, including the many storefront churches, were presented to illustrate not just the diversity of faiths but the investments of taxpayers; "Eleven churches, estimated value $180,000: (five Baptist, three Methodist, one Episcopalian, one Catholic, one Presbyterian)," Baugh recorded.

As if to bolster Germantown's Twenty-Second Ward in contrast to Du Bois's Seventh Ward, Baugh's Germantown African American community could boast

> four physicians, two trained nurses, one dentist, one real estate agent, one contractor, three paperhangers, three upholsterers, one cabinetmaker, three printers, twelve dressmakers, six hairdressers, one milliner, one tailor, 3 laundries, 5 barber shops, 3 restaurants, 12 landscape gardeners, 4 bootblack stands, one butter and eggs dealers, 3 caterers, 3 coal and ice companies, 3 grocery stores, 2 garages, 4 expressmen, 18 school teachers, 2 post office employees, one custom house employee, 2 policemen, one retired policeman, 2 janitors of apartment houses, 3 branch offices of undertakers and embalmers, one orchestra, 3 inventors, 3 second hand dealers, one dramatic organization.[30]

Nowhere is Baugh's laudatory presentation more evident than in the explanations of tax investment:

> Total assessed valuation of taxable property in the Twenty-second ward is $87,077,345.00. The branch tax office estimates that the Negro pays taxes on an assessed valuation of $120,000. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the market value is at least $160,000, and it probably cost him more to obtain it.[31]

The meaning was clear: Germantown was a place where "our people" had built a community. As such, it was a magnet for freedom and progress. Its churches, schools, institutions, and associations had proved over fifty years since the Emancipation Proclamation that there was a place where a black migrant moving to Philadelphia would not "feel so out of place."

Baugh's essay concludes argumentatively, giving the summary of investment and occupations indicated while admitting that much had been left out. As Baugh noted:

[30] Ibid., 22.
[31] Ibid., 24.

> Owing to the difficulty in compiling these statistics there are probably some commendable occupations overlooked. If so, it was not intentional. There are quite a large number of chauffeurs, seamstresses and men and women engaged in doing work in all the ordinary walks of life that any other race is doing. The Delmar, Coulter Inn and Cresheim Arms are hostelries giving employment to a large number of our people; also Elder's Mill, Woods and Logan, comfortable manufacturers, and the Midvale Steel Works employs a large force of our men, some highly skilled mechanics at good wages.[32]

The final sentence of the album explains that what Baugh left out probably would make an even stronger case for how well Germantown's African Americans had applied themselves: "While there may be a number who won't work, the percentage is hardly greater than among other races, and a Negro beggar is seldom, if ever, seen on the streets."[33] Certainly, such paupers existed and probably deserved more mention, but Baugh's purpose was noting progress, not recording poverty.

The residential neighborhoods and business districts depicted in Baugh's album were isolated sections apart from the mainstream community and even separated from one another. There was not one unified black community, but, rather, pockets of several different ones. One would not know from Baugh's album that the black residential sections were only a block away from white streets, a pattern of segregation common in Philadelphia throughout the nineteenth century. The number of churches described suggests a concentrated community of believers with a variety of different congregations, all well established in valuable properties, but without context it is not clear that some of these congregations met in isolated storefronts in a black section of the community and were next door to established white churches. The dispersal of black residents and institutions made the idea of one black community complicated. This was not unlike the message of Germantown's Founders' Week or the many celebratory pamphlets published by the established Site and Relic Society, which trumpeted what had been done by a particular group of people—so much so that each descendent group had separate celebrations. Baugh similarly promoted a specific group, presenting its places of pride, its contributions, and its heritage.

[32] Ibid., 24.
[32] Ibid., 21.

Baugh's souvenir album is a remarkable source for historians of the period after emancipation, documenting how people like Baugh helped build a new foundation for the heritage of a people finding their way in a new city. It shows that at least from 1863 on, blacks had a place in the historical narrative of Germantown and, by extension, that of Philadelphia and America. Showing Germantown's blacks in ways that underscored the district's pride of place in American history, Baugh's *Souvenir of Germantown* provided a framework for a new narrative of the neighborhood's public memory—one that emphasized progress and hope for the future over nostalgia and the authority of the past.

Cliveden DAVID W. YOUNG

"A Measure Alike Military & Philanthropic": Historians and the Emancipation Proclamation

As New Year's Day of 1863 approached, and with it the signing of President Abraham Lincoln's final Emancipation Proclamation, black Americans and white abolitionists prepared to celebrate "the day of jubilee." A few feared that at the last moment the warring nations might forge a compromise that would result in the president rescinding his decree. They watched nervously as New Jersey Democrats advanced a series of "peace propositions" that offered the state's services as "mediator." But the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society gathered in Boston to rally "in favor of that godlike object," asserting that as long as "four millions of the inhabitants of the land" remained enslaved, their crusade remained unfinished. At the nearby Tremont Temple, a combination museum and Baptist church, congregants met to pray and sing. A rousing "Blow Ye the Trumpet, Blow" was followed by a solemn prayer of thanksgiving, then by cheers "for the President and for the Proclamation." In Manhattan, blacks braved howling winds to celebrate a "Watch Night of Freedom" at the Shiloh Church. New York Democrats were less enthusiastic. The Proclamation "will be the opening of Pandora's box of evils upon the country," warned one editor. The consequence, he feared, was "the employment of negroes as soldiers in the service of the government" and the resulting "war to the savage extremities of mutual extermination."[1]

The final emancipation order that was read aloud that January morning at so many churches and celebrations was a brief, 719-word statement, counting the president's signature, which he atypically signed with his full name rather than his first initial. As both a debater and courtroom

The author thanks Eric Burin, Erik Chaput, Leigh Fought, and Alan Gallay for their comments and suggestions.

[1] *Liberator*, Jan. 2, 1863; *Boston Journal*, Jan. 2, 1863; *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Jan. 1, 1863; *New York Herald*, Jan. 1, 1863.

performer, Lincoln was renowned for his oratorical skills, yet the short decree was lawyerly, written in the bland, dispassionate style of a senior officer handing down orders to his junior staff. Those who knew the president best were already familiar with his penchant for crafting succinct letters, as well as his tendency to keep his innermost thoughts private. Observers, colleagues, and critics had debated the president's policies and evolving views on emancipation since his first moments in office, and his businesslike Proclamation did little to satisfy those who desired greater clarity regarding the administration's ultimate objectives. Newspaper editors, Louis P. Masur observes, pondered "the mystery of how and why the Emancipation Proclamation was issued," and specialists have debated many of its ambiguities ever since.

Timed to coincide with the sesquicentennial of the final decree are a number of important new books on the origins, character, and effects of the Proclamation. Some of them focus entirely on the two Proclamations, while others contextualize those turbulent few months between Lincoln's issuance of his preliminary Proclamation in September 1862 and his signing of the official Emancipation Proclamation January 1, 1863, within larger studies of emancipation or the war's impact on slavery. In the process, a consensus of sorts has emerged, at least regarding most of the central questions that previously divided historians. Yet, if very few recent authors find it particularly constructive to battle over simplistic views of Lincoln as the Great Emancipator, the question of whether the president "was an enthusiastic or reluctant" liberator, as Harold Holzer remarks, "continues to test our will to understand the complex past as its participants lived it."[2]

Perhaps the most contested terrain remains the question of who established the framework for emancipation. To borrow the phrase used by so many essayists, "Who Freed the Slaves?" Some writers point directly to the president, while others emphasize the role played by the most progressive Republicans in Congress—the so-called Radicals. Still other scholars insist that freedom first arose, as Barbara J. Fields put it, "from the initiative of the slaves." Ira Berlin agrees that the First Confiscation Act of August 1861, which confiscated property—including bondmen—being used by the Confederate military, was too weak a "hook on which

[2] Louis P. Masur, *Lincoln's Hundred Days: The Emancipation Proclamation and the War for the Union* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 107; Harold Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln: The Proclamation in Text, Context, and Memory* (Cambridge, MA, 2012), 3.

to hang [black] hopes for freedom," especially when Union commanders proved hostile to black liberty. But large numbers of slaves "continued to press their case," he notes, fleeing toward federal lines in ever growing numbers. They forced the federal government to deal with the reality of black flight, and in the process, as Steven Hahn argues, "began to reshape Union policy." Not all specialists agree. The "self-emancipation" thesis, Allen C. Guelzo replies, "asks for too great a suspension of belief." Were it not for the legal freedoms guaranteed by Lincoln in 1863, he adds, "no runaway would have remained 'self-emancipated' for very long." True enough, although that backward-gazing formulation says little about the thousands of fugitives who forced politicians and generals to devise policies and laws to accommodate "contrabands." Curiously, Guelzo begins his *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation* with the story of an unnamed black boy paddling his canoe out to Fort Sumter on the eve of the war, having heard rumors that the government was finally in the hands of an antislavery administration.[3]

Even those who depict the struggle against slavery as a triangular war instigated by runaway slaves concede that the second corner in this partnership was held by congressional Republicans. Some writers, and particularly those who find Lincoln's march toward emancipation painfully sluggish, emphasize the way in which Illinois senator Lyman Trumbull's Second Confiscation Act, which emerged out of conference committee on July 12, 1862, compelled the president to issue a "public warning and proclamation" that the law would go into effect sixty days after its final passage. While its predecessor of the previous year provided for confiscating property associated with the Confederate war effort, Trumbull's 1862 revision threatened to liberate any slave owned by known Confederate officials. Just one week before, Senator Henry Wilson offered an amendment to the 1795 Militia Act that allowed for the enlistment of "persons of African descent" as soldiers. For Phillip Shaw Paludan, this was evidence that congressional Republicans "were helping Lincoln arrive at a decision on emancipation." Both Paludan and Masur, in the latter's new *Lincoln's Hundred Days*, argue that any qualms the

[3] Barbara J. Fields, "Who Freed the Slaves?" in *The Civil War: An Illustrated History*, ed. Geoffrey C. Ward (New York, 1990), 181; Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA, 2003), 252; Steven Hahn, "But What Did the Slaves Think of Lincoln?" in *Lincoln's Proclamation: Emancipation Reconsidered*, ed. William A. Blair and Karen Fisher Younger (Chapel Hill, NC, 2009), 110; Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (New York, 2004), 8–9, 13.

president had about the bill pertained only to its constitutionality. In a draft veto message, Lincoln thought it "startling" that Congress believed it had the right to liberate slaves within a state. Worried always about the response of Supreme Court chief justice Roger Taney, Lincoln believed it wiser for Congress to first transfer ownership of runaways to the federal government, which could then liberate them as confiscated rebel property. Having made his point, Paludan adds, the president signed the bill but forwarded his unused veto message along with the measure, perhaps as guidance in the future.[4]

Among those who regard Lincoln as lagging far behind both black activists and congressional Republicans is journalist Lerone Bennett Jr. As early as the 1960s, the Morehouse-educated Bennett charged that Lincoln was a "cautious politician" who devoted the first sixteen months of his presidency to "a desperate and rather pathetic attempt to save slavery." In a 1968 article and subsequent book, Bennett advances the argument that Lincoln finally issued his preliminary Proclamation of September 22 merely to outflank congressional progressives who envisioned a more comprehensive emancipation. Whether Lincoln was "forced into greatness," as Bennett would have it, or acted in conjunction with Congress, he presented the first draft of his Proclamation to his cabinet only five days after he signed the Second Confiscation Act on July 17. And as the late LaWanda Cox observed, he arrived at his decision to issue a presidential decree by July 13 at the very latest.[5]

Biographer Stephen B. Oates sees it differently. Even Lincoln's preliminary statement, Oates argues, "went further than anything Congress had done." Equally worried about a court challenge, Trumbull had exempted loyal slaveholders in the Confederate South in his confiscation bill, whereas Lincoln's Proclamation emancipated "*all* slaves" in those regions still under rebel control, "those of secessionists and loyalists alike." Glenn David Brasher, the author of *The Peninsula Campaign and the Necessity of Emancipation*, agrees that by mid-1862, "Lincoln was now determined to do more than just enforce the Second Confiscation Act." Whereas Bennett's president was dragged along by events on Capitol

[4] Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation*, 113; Phillip Shaw Paludan, *The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln* (Lawrence, KS, 1994), 147; Masur, *Lincoln's Hundred Days*, 75.

[5] Lerone Bennett Jr., "Was Abe Lincoln a White Supremacist?" *Ebony*, Feb. 1968, 35–42; LaWanda Cox, *Lincoln and Black Freedom: A Study in Presidential Leadership* (Columbia, SC, 1981), 14–15; Stephen B. Oates remains Bennett's most determined critic. See his *Abraham Lincoln: The Man behind the Myths* (New York, 1984), 26.

Hill, Brasher's resolute, decisive leader "welcomed suggestions" from his cabinet regarding his Proclamation, "but would not be swayed from the decision" to issue his decree.[6]

The most nuanced discussion of this question appears in James Oakes's voluminous new *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861–1865*. Oakes believes it a "myth" that the Proclamation was designed to have little impact on the South, even as he admits that nobody "contributed more to the mythology" on this matter than the cagy "Lincoln himself." Bennett's Lincoln was a "cautious politician," but Oakes instead finds him a prudent and savvy one. Careful not to get too far out in front of Congress on this explosive issue, Lincoln repeatedly claimed that while the nation had gone to war over slavery in the West, few initially thought the war itself would affect the peculiar institution directly. "This was nonsense," Oakes observes, served up for the public. By the end of the war's first month, Lincoln and his cabinet agreed not to return slaves escaping from the seceded states, and by July 1861 Lincoln announced that slaves who reached Union pickets would never be restored to bondage. Oakes notes that while Lincoln quoted from two of the three sections of the Second Confiscation Act in his initial Proclamation, he then went beyond them, using his powers as commander in chief to order all military personnel to obey and enforce the act. "This was more than a 'preliminary proclamation,'" Oakes concludes.[7]

Given Lincoln's tendency to maintain his own counsel, precisely when he determined to issue his preliminary Proclamation remains a matter of considerable debate. Vice President Hannibal Hamlin later assured family members that Lincoln had shown him a draft statement as early as mid-June 1862, a timeline Eric Foner dismisses as "an unlikely story," because Hamlin appeared surprised when the president made his decision public in September. Orville H. Brown penned a diary entry on July 1 recording that Lincoln had read him a statement as to how to prosecute

[6] Stephen B. Oates, *With Malice toward None: A Life of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 1977), 319; Oates, *Abraham Lincoln*, 104–6; Glenn David Brasher, *The Peninsula Campaign and the Necessity of Emancipation: African Americans and the Fight for Freedom* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2012), 212; Arthur Zilversmit, "Lincoln and the Problem of Race: A Decade of Interpretations," *Papers of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 2 (1980): 23–32, contains a useful distillation of the Bennett-Oates debate.

[7] James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861–1865* (New York, 2012), 352–53, 332. Oakes makes some of the same points regarding Lincoln's preparation of the public mind on emancipation in his *The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics* (New York, 2007), 187–95.

the war "in its relation to slavery," but Foner doubts that Lincoln finalized any details until he returned from his unsatisfactory meeting with General George McClellan at Harrison's Landing on July 10. Biographer David Donald, on the other hand, suspected that Lincoln began "to formulate his ideas for a proclamation of freedom" shortly after overruling General David Hunter's attempt to declare martial law and liberate the slaves in three Southern states the previous May. Donald was also more inclined to credit Hamlin's story, although it was only after the possible June 18 conversation with the vice president that Lincoln, while visiting the Washington telegraph office, asked an officer for some foolscap, as "he wanted to write something special." Donald also believed it likely that Lincoln discussed the possibility of a decree with Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton that May.[8]

Far greater consensus exists on why, having written the preliminary Proclamation, Lincoln temporarily held it back. James M. McPherson accepts the majority view that Lincoln heeded the advice of Secretary of State William H. Seward and New York's Thurlow Weed "and was only awaiting a Union military victory to announce it." In Donald's telling, Lincoln only "reluctantly [set] the document aside" after conferring with Weed, and he quotes Lincoln as explaining to an exasperated Senator Charles Sumner, "*We mustn't issue it* till after a victory."[9]

Not surprisingly, the leading critic of this accord is Bennett, who concludes that Lincoln hoped the war could be over after Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Maryland invasion, rendering any proclamation unnecessary. Bennett cites the president's "attitude, arguments, and body language" as proof that he "had no intention on September 13 of issuing" a decree. Lincoln's cabinet, he adds, "had no idea what Lincoln was trying to do," although it might be more accurate to suggest that they were unsure of just what he *would* do, and when. Interestingly, William B. Hesseltine once chided John Hope Franklin for "accept[ing] Lincoln's own lame explanation" as to why he waited for a military victory. As McPherson observed more recently, however, in the aftermath of Antietam Lincoln "reminded [cabinet] members of their decision two months earlier to postpone" the announcement of his policy, lamenting

[8] Eric Foner, *The Fiery Trial: Abraham Lincoln and American Slavery* (New York, 2010), 216–17; David H. Donald, *Lincoln* (New York, 1995), 363.

[9] James M. McPherson, "'The Whole Family of Man': Lincoln and the Last Best Hope Abroad," in *The Union, the Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim*, ed. Robert E. May (West Lafayette, IN, 1995), 143; Donald, *Lincoln*, 366.

only that McClellan's victory was not more decisive. Although he believes that Bennett's views "must be taken seriously," McPherson remarks, rather facetiously, that the journalist "is not deceived by the [president's] tricks that fooled Frederick Douglass and Martin Luther King Jr."[10]

Bennett, however, was not the first writer to take the normally eloquent president to task for the wording of his decree. The Proclamation, Richard Hofstadter famously groused, "had all of the moral grandeur of a bill of lading." By comparison to the soaring rhetoric found in so many of Lincoln's speeches both before and after, his brief statement contained "no indictment of slavery" but simply spoke of the "military necessity" of freeing slaves in large portions of the South. Yet Hofstadter was not the first writer to be disappointed in the document's wording, merely the first modern historian to be so. A century before Hofstadter's "devastating criticism," Holzer observes, Congressman Thaddeus Stevens condemned Lincoln's earlier 1862 pronouncements on compensated emancipation as "the most diluted milk-and-water-gruel proposition[s]," while Karl Marx characterized the prose as "the trite summonses that one lawyer sends to an opposing lawyer." Undeniably, McPherson concedes, the Proclamation was designed to weaken the Confederate war effort. "Here we have in a nutshell," he writes, "the rationale for emancipation as a military strategy of total war."[11]

But was it more than just that? Lincoln issued the Proclamation, John Hope Franklin countered, under severe "legal handicaps." Hofstadter appeared to desire the decree framed within the context of the Declaration of Independence, but Jefferson, Franklin sensibly added, crafted his document after "a clean break" with Britain, while Lincoln "was compelled to forge a document of freedom for the slaves within the existing constitutional system." The Lincoln administration had already tangled with Taney in the 1861 Merryman case—albeit in his lesser role of circuit court judge—and, as Joseph E. Stevens writes, the president's response to those who claimed his decrees were unconstitutional was to

[10] Lerone Bennett Jr., *Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream* (Chicago, 2000), 496; William B. Hesseltine, review of *The Emancipation Proclamation*, by John Hope Franklin, *Journal of Southern History* 29 (1963): 532; James M. McPherson, "How President Lincoln Decided to Issue the Emancipation Proclamation," *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 37 (2002): 108; James M. McPherson, review of *Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream*, by Lerone Bennett Jr., *New York Times*, Aug. 27, 2000.

[11] Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (New York, 1948), 131; Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln*, 83; James M. McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York, 1991), 84.

defend them as actions "he was entitled to take as commander in chief." Historian and former senator George McGovern, who knew a good bit about hostile reactionary courts, agreed that the "doctrine of military necessity justified Lincoln's actions." A more dramatic statement might have fired the hearts of those progressives who hoped that the ghastly death toll might be justified by the creation of a more perfect Union, but Lincoln the attorney understood that a brief order had a better chance of withstanding a Constitutional challenge. "In this situation," McGovern observed, "the constitutional war powers of the president worked to override the constitutional protection for slavery."[12]

Reading between the lines of the short decree, and contextualizing the Proclamation within the president's other correspondence, William W. Freehling discovers pages bristling with "antislavery power." Not only did Lincoln's wording read "not like an entrepreneur's bill for past services but like a warrior's brandishing of a new weapon," but Freehling places Lincoln's message beside a letter he wrote only eight days after the final decree. An unnamed Confederate officer had contacted him about the possibility of restoration with slavery. Just one month before, Lincoln admitted, he might have been open to negotiation. Now the commander in chief expressed only disdain, fuming that he had given the rebels "a hundred days fair notice." Thomas Krannawitter agrees that modern critics of the decree's dry language "fail to see the consummate prudence—the practical wisdom of knowing the best course of action." Nor was it merely a question of defending the Proclamation by tethering it to military necessity. A more conservative "commander in chief no less committed to victory," LaWanda Cox mused, "but not equally moved by the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the evils of slavery," might not have concluded that emancipation was the only path to triumph. Lincoln, she noted, knew there were no certainties as to how emancipation would play out in the border states or with the common soldiers, yet he claimed his Proclamation would "best subdue the enemy" because he realized that slavery had to die for the nation to live.[13] Where Freehling situates the

[12] John Hope Franklin, *Reconstruction: After the Civil War* (Chicago, 1963), 153; Joseph E. Stevens, *1863: The Rebirth of a Nation* (New York, 1999), 34; George S. McGovern, *Abraham Lincoln* (New York, 2008), 70.

[13] William W. Freehling, *The South vs. The South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War* (New York, 2001), 118; in note 6, 221, Freehling adds that apart from that particular comment, he regards Hofstadter's essay as "one of the most insightful" pieces on Lincoln; Thomas Krannawitter, *Vindicating Lincoln: Defending the Politics of Our Greatest President* (Lanham, MD, 2008), 278; Cox, *Lincoln and Black Freedom*, 13; Herman Belz,

decree within Lincoln's correspondence, Orville Vernon Burton reads it beside the president's messages to Congress and concludes that although "it was a war measure," it was "a justice measure as well." If one requires rhetoric more exalted than that found in a bill of lading, it would be in Lincoln's assurance to Congress that "in giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free—honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve." To that, Eric Foner adds that the Proclamation "was as much a political as a military document." The decision to exempt parts of the South from emancipation, Foner points out, "reflected not only the actual military situation but also his [Lincoln's] judgment about the prospects of winning over white support." Interestingly, the crucial connection between political reform and military success was promptly understood by those living through the chaos of war. "The People are jubilant over your emancipation message as a measure alike Military & Philanthropic," James W. Stone cabled from Boston only one day after the announcement of the preliminary decree.[14]

The extent to which foreign affairs and the dangers of European intercession played in Lincoln's thinking also continues to divide specialists. In part, the answer here depends on how one phrases the question. As Allen C. Guelzo puts it, did the president issue the Proclamation "only to ward off European intervention or inflate Union morale?" By inserting the word "only" into the query, Guelzo elevates what was surely a consideration for Lincoln into his principal concern. Guelzo then answers in the negative, writing that if the British were the administration's "primary" concern, then a decree of emancipation "was probably the worst method, and [came] at the worst time" in the conflict. Both Amanda Foreman and Guelzo have data to support this view, however, and Guelzo points to politicians, such as Alexander McClure, who warned the president that a Proclamation, however just, might invite foreign interference just as much as it might dampen chances of British and French involvement.[15]

Emancipation and Equal Rights: Politics and Constitutionalism in the Civil War Era (New York, 1978), 44–45, concurs that the military language of the Proclamation masked Lincoln's "hostility to slavery based on commitment to republicanism, and the principle of equality on which republicanism rested."

[14] Orville Vernon Burton, *The Age of Lincoln* (New York, 2007), 166; Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 243; James W. Stone to Abraham Lincoln, Sept. 23, 1862, in Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

[15] Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation*, 9; Amanda Foreman, *A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War* (New York, 2011), 318. See also Douglas R. Egerton, "Rethinking Atlantic Historiography in a Postcolonial Era: The Civil War in a Global Perspective," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 1 (2011): 88–89.

Other scholars, and especially those who see the diplomatic factor as merely a part of Lincoln's thinking, are more willing to consider the possibility that Lincoln used the Proclamation to influence British public opinion. John Hope Franklin argued that the president "knew it could be an important factor in preventing European powers from moving closer to the Confederacy." Howard Jones, the preeminent historian of foreign affairs for this period, agrees that the dangers of foreign intervention played at least some role in the question. Letters mailed to Secretary of State Seward from French reformers helped to persuade the administration that the threat preceded apace with the war's prolonged fighting. "If Europeans could argue that the Union had no interest in abolition," Jones concludes, those in Paris and London who argued for action of one sort or another would prevail. "Lincoln concurred," Jones writes. Although he could not be sure what the ultimate impact of emancipation would be in European capitals, Jones emphasizes, Lincoln gambled that it would "further erode the Confederacy's chances of diplomatic recognition," a view then seconded by Confederate envoy James Mason and British foreign secretary Lord John Russell. Louis P. Masur adds that regardless of whether Lincoln intended the decree as a weapon, most American observers believed it would inhibit foreign meddling.[16]

Most writers concede that while reactions abroad were mixed, the Proclamation had the desired effect of keeping the Europeans at bay. News of the decree, together with word of Lee's failure at Antietam, biographers Donald and Oates observe, erased the doubts of Prime Minister Henry John Temple, Lord Palmerston, and "convinced the [British] Cabinet to postpone recognition for now." Howard Jones notes that debates in Parliament confirmed Seward's counsel to await a Union victory, or something approaching one, since some British critics did denounce the decree as a desperate ploy. But conservative opinion and press animosity, McPherson writes, ultimately "signified little." Many British reformers, previously skeptical of Lincoln's goals, "became true believers." As Lincoln hoped, British reformers responded with pro-Union rallies and petitions that complicated any further moves toward

[16] John Hope Franklin, *The Emancipation Proclamation* (New York, 1963), 148; Howard Jones, *Union in Peril: The Crisis over British Intervention in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1992), 143; James M. McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam* (New York, 2002), 143; Masur, *Lincoln's Hundred Days*, 146; Thomas DiLorenzo, *The Real Lincoln: A New Look at Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, and an Unnecessary War* (Roseville, CA, 2002), 37, confuses the foreign secretary's title with his first name and calls him "British writer Earl Russell."

Confederate recognition on Palmerston's part. Ultimately, the question of how great a role diplomacy played in Lincoln's timing depends on whether writers regard it as his chief motivation or merely as a part of his larger considerations. Any astute politician, of course, recognizes that a single policy can have multiple implications and repercussions, and Lincoln was nothing if not astute.[17]

Rather more contentious is the debate over the areas exempted from the Proclamation's reach. James Oakes dubs the lengthy paragraph in which Lincoln explained what parts of the slaveholding Union and captured areas of the Confederacy were not covered by his edict to be "a tedious recitation." The simplistic formulation that the president refused to liberate bondpersons in the border states not only remains a staple of many high school and college courses but was embraced by historians as distinguished as Richard Hofstadter and Stanford University's Thomas A. Bailey. Deriding the Proclamation as "largely illusory," Bailey added: "In short, where he *could*, he would not, and where he *would*, he could not." To that, Oakes replies that Lincoln's adoption of a territorial standard, in which he freed "slaves not of rebellious owners but in all rebellious areas," had little to do with expanding or contracting the scope of emancipation and everything to do "with clarifying the legal basis of the war." Yet even in those areas where the Proclamation was binding, Eric Foner concedes, the Proclamation was only as effective as the generals whose advances brought slaves within Union lines. Slavery had survived the chaos of the American Revolution and black military service in both the Patriot and Loyalist ranks; were the Confederacy to maintain its independence, Foner observes, "slavery would undoubtedly continue to exist."[18]

Skeptics enough remain. Economist Thomas DiLorenzo argues that the president, "one of the nation's preeminent lawyers," craftily designed the Proclamation "in a way that guaranteed that it would not emancipate any slaves," and Lerone Bennett and Vincent Harding essentially agree. "In effect," Harding writes, "Lincoln was announcing freedom to the cap-

[17] Oates, *With Malice toward None*, 321; Howard Jones, "History and Mythology: The Crisis over British Intervention in the Civil War," in *The Union, the Confederacy, and the Atlantic Rim*, 45, 47; McPherson, "The Whole Family of Man," in ibid., 144; Donald, *Lincoln*, 414; McPherson, *Crossroads of Freedom*, 145.

[18] Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People*, 10th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1980), 341; Oakes, *Freedom National*, 378; Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 244; Krannawitter, *Vindicating Lincoln*, 275.

tives over whom he had least control." To give his position additional credence, Bennett quotes John Hope Franklin on this point—if somewhat out of context—and maintains that Lincoln sought to preserve "the Union by freeing *some* of the slaves." As Arthur Zilversmit comments, although many specialists insist that such allegations lack nuance, other scholars skirted close to that view, most notably Kenneth M. Stampp. George Fredrickson, while not endorsing Lincoln's modern critics, adds that Bennett's arguments represent "the culmination of a gradual process of African American disenchantment with Lincoln." Perhaps so, but it remains suggestive that the theory that Lincoln tried to craft a document that freed no slaves today finds support from both Harding—who assisted with the civil rights campaigns of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference—as well as DiLorenzo—once affiliated with the League of the South Institute, the research branch of the pro-secession League of the South.[19]

A larger number of scholars are more interested in *why* Lincoln exempted the loyal upper South. Although sensitive to the desires of runaway slaves, David Brion Davis admits that "any radical policy against slavery" would not only have alienated the growing number of disaffected Unionists within the Confederacy but disrupted the war effort by infuriating "the absolutely crucial slaveholding border states," especially Maryland. Although DiLorenzo suggests that Lincoln might have been able to free the slaves without war, James McPherson responds that even most abolitionists understood that the president's "legal powers extended only to *enemy* property." Guelzo agrees, adding that when it came to the exemptions, "Lincoln had little choice." Apart from any popular animosity such a decree would have generated in the upper South, a Proclamation aimed at Delaware, well away from the front lines, would have been doomed to "melt" under "the gaze of Roger Taney" and other Democratic jurists. Critics then and now might speculate as to the presi-

[19] DiLorenzo, *Real Lincoln*, 36–37; Bennett, *Forced Into Glory*, 551; Vincent Harding, *There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York, 1981), 232; Zilversmit, "Lincoln and the Problem of Race," 25; Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln*, 8; George M. Fredrickson, *Big Enough to Be Inconsistent: Abraham Lincoln Confronts Slavery and Race* (Cambridge, MA, 2008); Harold Holzer, "Picturing Freedom: The Emancipation Proclamation in Art, Iconography, and Memory," in *The Emancipation Proclamation: Three Views*, ed. Harold Holzer, Edna Greene Medford, and Frank J. Williams (Baton Rouge, LA, 2006), 155, aptly describes Bennett's work as a "highly selective interpretation." On DiLorenzo's ties to the League of the South Institute, see "Loyola Professor Faces Questions about Ties to Pro-Secession Group," *Baltimore Sun*, Feb. 11, 2011.

dent's motives, Allen Guelzo observes, but facts are facts: "No slave declared free by the Proclamation was ever returned to slavery once he or she made it to the safety of Union-held territory."[20]

Harder to gauge, or perhaps to prove, is the larger symbolic impact of the Proclamation. The late William E. Gienapp thought it was significant, approvingly quoting Frederick Douglass's view that the decree enjoyed "a life and power far beyond its letter." With this stroke of a pen, Gienapp insisted, "Lincoln had changed the nature of the war," and both sections understood that the conflict was forever "fundamentally transformed." Oakes similarly attacks what he derides as "the anti-myth of the Emancipation—the claim that it did not free a single slave." He acknowledges, however, that the liberation of "tens of thousands of slaves" already within Union lines was not due to the president alone, "but by an accumulating series of policy decisions made by Congress and the Lincoln administration." Although millions of Americans remained enslaved on January 1, 1863, both in the uncaptured Confederacy and in loyal and occupied zones, Guelzo calculates that somewhere between sixty thousand and two hundred thousand contrabands and runaways were in Union hands by September 1862 and fell under the jurisdiction of the Proclamation.[21]

Some writers insist that the symbolism of the Proclamation was the least of it. In response to the assertion that "Lincoln freed the slaves where he could not touch them," Phillip Shaw Paludan observes that "his generals were roughing [slavery] up rather dramatically." The goal of both Congress and the president, Oakes remarks, "was to transfer the productive labor of the slaves from the Confederacy to the Union." Not only would emancipation, together with the Confiscation Acts, deprive the Southern military of its coerced laborers by encouraging runaways, it sowed "discontent among the slaves who remained on southern farms and plantations." Certainly the idea that the Proclamation was an empty gesture would have come as a surprise to an infuriated Jefferson Davis and the Confederate high command. Even before the final edict of January 1 was issued, Edna Greene Medford notes, "slave owners had been com-

[20] David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York, 2006), 309; McPherson, "How President Lincoln Decided to Issue the Emancipation Proclamation," 109; Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation*, 8, 120.

[21] William E. Gienapp, *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America* (New York, 2002), 125; Oakes, *Freedom National*, 344–45, 352; Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation*, 212.

pelled to remove their chattel from coastal areas and regions accessible to Union lines."[22]

To the extent that the Proclamation enticed ever more bondmen to risk flight, it drove "a stake in the heart of slavery's collective psyche," Guelzo concludes, and reminded planters that the people they owned "would consent no longer to be *things*." Always fearful of slave unrest in time of war, Louis Masur adds, white Southerners "began to suspect various conspiracies were under way, designed to trigger a general insurrection," and he compiles an impressive roster of newspaper editorials and private missives to document this claim. The president, however, believed just the opposite. Having come so far, Lincoln warned one group of concerned Tennessee Unionists, the entire black population expected freedom, and if the government pulled back, bondmen would take it for themselves. So once the preliminary edict was announced in September 1862, Masur believes, Lincoln understood that "withdrawing it would incite slave rebellion." Having carped about its tone, even Hofstadter concluded that the Proclamation "probably made genuine emancipation inevitable," if only because its military "limitations" required the security of a constitutional amendment.[23]

The durable legend that Lincoln left slavery untouched in areas that recognized him as president founders on the larger context of his program for gradual, compensated emancipation in the border states. His inaugural pledge not to interfere with slavery where it already existed, David Donald observed, did not mean he refused to offer the considerable resources of the federal government to finance state manumissions. In an assessment shared by Krannawitter, David Brion Davis regards Lincoln's hopes that compensated emancipation in tiny Delaware might shorten the war by discouraging the Confederacy as a "fantas[y]," if only because upper South politicians were irrationally "frozen in their opposition to change." When Missouri officials dragged their feet by offering to postpone the process of emancipation for up to seven years, John Hope Franklin noted, Lincoln "made clear his displeasure" and warned that any

[22] Paludan, *Presidency of Abraham Lincoln*, 148; Oakes, *Freedom National*, 390–91; Edna Greene Medford, "Imagined Promises, Bitter Realities: African Americans and the Meaning of the Emancipation Proclamation," in *Emancipation Proclamation: Three Views*, 24.

[23] Hofstadter, *American Political Tradition*, 132; Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation*, 215; Masur, *Lincoln's Hundred Days*, 124–25, 198; Donald, *Lincoln*, 362; Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York, 1980), 47, also catalogs white fears that the Emancipation could incite servile revolt.

protection his government would afford loyal masters would be "temporary" at best.[24]

Possibly no subject continues to divide scholars and invite the scorn of the president's modern critics as deeply as does his early advocacy of the colonization of freed slaves. As a former Whig and a supporter of Kentucky politician Henry Clay, Lincoln had long endorsed the activities of the American Colonization Society and its scheme of ending slavery by relocating former bondpersons to Liberia. In his preliminary Proclamation of September 22, the president once again raised the prospect of emigration, but whether that passage represented his sincere beliefs or—like his geographical exceptions—was designed to mollify Republican moderates, remains unclear. Lerone Bennett alleges that "Lincoln never abandoned his colonization hobby," and Vincent Harding shares that pessimistic judgment. At a time when black Americans held out hope for a new era of equality, Harding charges, "Lincoln was unable to see beyond the limits of his own race, class, and time" and desired only to rid his nation of a "constantly challenging black presence."[25]

For those writers who suspect that Lincoln had not yet overcome his racism, the best evidence was his disastrous August 14, 1862, meeting with a black delegation. Having penned but not yet issued his preliminary decree, Lincoln invited a group of African Americans to the White House to discuss the possibility of mass emigration. Benjamin Quarles described the delegation as "hand-picked," second-tier men, and the president, Harold Holzer adds, well knew the views of Douglass and other black activists and journalists on the matter of colonization, and, not wishing for an angry confrontation, instead discussed the proposition with lesser-known spokesmen. Both David Donald and James Oakes, however, describe the men as black "leaders," and Kate Masur recently demonstrated that "all five were members of Washington's antebellum black elite and had strong ties to local religious and civic organizations." Consequently, Oakes disparages Lincoln's behavior as "shocking." Rather than requesting the delegation's thoughts on emigration, the president "read his guests a high-handed statement that was insulting in both its tone and substance." Mark E. Neely Jr. goes further still, denouncing the "political ineptitude of Lincoln's colonization address" and suggesting that

[24] Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, 310; Franklin, *Emancipation Proclamation*, 151; Krannawitter, *Vindicating Lincoln*, 276.

[25] Bennett, *Forced Into Glory*, 554; Harding, *There Is a River*, 236.

it put black Americans "at risk in a hostile culture." Only Holzer offers a half-hearted defense, writing that while Douglass and Lincoln's other black critics were "of course right both philosophically and morally," they were also "naïve in terms of the white politics involved." Historians, he adds, have "focused too much attention" on the August meeting, which Holzer clearly believes was designed to appease white moderates, while ignoring Lincoln's "longtime but soon-to-be-discarded interest in colonization."[26]

Like Holzer, Louis Gerteis suspects that Lincoln's 1862 statements on emigration were but lip service designed to gain the support "of Unionists in the border states," not merely for his coming Proclamation but also for his program of compensated emancipation. The "colonization argument," Gerteis observes, "allowed border state Unionists to speak about a future without slavery," but also one without African Americans, the "implausibility of achieving a total separation" notwithstanding. Neely disputes that, pointing out that the white Americans most likely to approve of removal were Northern Democrats, those "potential opponents of emancipation." Since moderate Republicans were inclined to countenance emancipation without removal, he adds, while Democrats were uniformly hostile to Lincoln's administration, the president's public endorsements of colonization alienated supporters while winning over no enemies. Instead, they indicated his own internal struggles with black freedom and equality. Neely is right enough in thinking that nothing Lincoln might have done could have won over even Northern War Democrats, but Gerteis's theory becomes more credible when one realizes that Lincoln's final colonization appeals were to former Whigs who had cast their ballot in 1860 for John Bell and the Constitutional Union Party, and not to the likes of Democratic congressman Clement Vallandigham.[27]

Particularly in politics, words are not deeds, and both Gabor Boritt and Harold Holzer emphasize that after Republicans in Congress appropriated $600,000 to assist with colonization, Lincoln only spent a paltry $38,000 of the sum. The president also refused to discuss the prospect of forced removal. Boritt has no patience with those writers who disparage

[26] Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (New York, 1953), 147; Kate Masur, "The African American Delegation to Abraham Lincoln: A Reappraisal," *Civil War History* 56 (2010): 118; Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln*, 41; Donald, *Lincoln*, 367; Oakes, *Freedom National*, 324–25; Mark E. Neely Jr., "Colonization and the Myth That Lincoln Prepared the People for Emancipation," in *Lincoln's Proclamation*, 53.

[27] Louis Gerteis, "Slaves, Servants, and Soldiers: Uneven Paths to Freedom in the Border States, 1861–1865," *Lincoln's Proclamation*, 175; Neely, "Colonization and the Myth That Lincoln Prepared the People for Emancipation," 54, 69.

the president's projects as "deportations," noting that Lincoln was "no latter-date Assyrian, much less a predecessor of Stalin or Hitler." Lincoln routinely described his program as only "so far as individuals may desire" to emigrate, and Oates, Masur, and Boritt all note that when Postmaster General Montgomery Blair and Attorney General Edward Bates complained that allowing blacks to decide for themselves was tantamount to no policy on emigration, Lincoln refused to debate the point. The easiest group to persuade to emigrate, Boritt observes, were those recently freed contrabands who feared reenslavement and might accept freedom in a foreign land. Yet Lincoln never addressed that possibility. It "is difficult to escape the conclusion that Lincoln's colonization policy," Boritt concludes, "while addressed to black people, was meant for white ears."[28]

When Lincoln issued the final Proclamation on January 1, 1863, the clauses pertaining to colonization were gone. The president's "engagement with the border states continued," Gerteis remarks, "but he viewed the issues with which they struggled in a significantly different light." Gone also, Stephen B. Oates adds, was any discussion of compensation to slaveowners; in its place was the call for African Americans, from both North and South, to be enlisted in Union military forces. George McGovern agreed that as 1863 dawned, Lincoln "seems to have abandoned the idea entirely." Bennett has his doubts, as do Phillip W. Magness and Sebastian N. Page. But as Mark J. Fleszar notes, "Lincoln himself is curiously all but absent" in such accounts, as scholars have yet to identify any reliable presidential endorsements of colonization after the final Proclamation. Rather, as Eric Foner writes, when Lincoln sent his annual address to Congress in December 1864, he ignored colonization for an endorsement of a Thirteenth Amendment to abolish slavery. "We shall hear no more of that suicidal folly," Foner quotes a correspondent of the black-run *New Orleans Tribune* reporting after perusing the 1864 message.[29]

Over the course of the one hundred days between the time that Lincoln issued his preliminary decree and the final Proclamation on January 1, the president labored to address potential constitutional loop-

[28] Gabor Boritt, "Did He Dream of a Lily-White America? The Voyage to Linconia," in *The Lincoln Enigma: The Changing Faces of an American Icon*, ed. Gabor Boritt (New York, 2001), 8–9; Masur, *Lincoln's Hundred Days*, 178; Oates, *With Malice toward None*, 42–43.

[29] Gerteis, "Slaves, Servants, and Soldiers," 176; Oates, *Abraham Lincoln,* 110; McGovern, *Lincoln*, 68; Phillip W. Magness and Sebastian N. Page, *Colonization after Emancipation: Lincoln and the Movement for Black Resettlement* (Columbia, MO, 2011), 109; Mark J. Fleszar, review of Magness and Page, *Colonization after Emancipation*, in *Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 (forthcoming); Foner, *Fiery Trial*, 312.

holes and, as he recalled later, "added or changed a line, touching it up here and there." Apart from dropping references to colonization, the final version differed from its predecessor in several significant ways. As Masur notes, the January Proclamation promised that "blacks would be accepted into the armed services." Undoubtedly, that was one of the reasons that Lincoln abandoned any talk of emigration, for "it would be a cruel policy to allow blacks to serve the country and then expect them to leave." Freehling agrees that the final edict "scrubbed from the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation its soft war temporizing." Although Lincoln created yet another exemption by excluding portions of Tennessee, he unleashed "the entire hard war arsenal that Congress had authorized" by liberating and arming Northern freemen and Southern runaways. The final changes, Holzer observes, allowed Lincoln to "prepare the nation for what he hoped would be an imminent policy revolution." For the first time in the modern world, a nation sought to "redefine its war aims in the midst of the conflict," and the president was "aware it would upend race relations in America forever."[30]

It was this dramatic change in tone that most enraged Lincoln's critics then, and is often ignored today by his modern detractors. The "progress toward emancipation" during the fall months, Don E. Fehrenbacher observed, "infuriated Democratic and other conservative leaders." Whether the Proclamation originated "out of military, diplomatic, moral, or other [reasons of] necessity, or combinations thereof," comments Randall M. Miller, Lincoln "never retreated from" his policy but instead steadily advanced it. Congress may have drafted legislation that banned slavery in the territories and in the nation's capital, but Lincoln had no qualms in signing those bills, and, Miller adds, he "made a strong symbolic statement about the wrongs of slavery" when he refused to commute the death sentence imposed on Nathaniel Gordon for engaging in the outlawed international traffic in humans. To emphasize that his Proclamation was merely the first step toward a "new birth of freedom," Lincoln also affixed his signature to the Thirteenth Amendment, despite the fact that amendments require no presidential mark.[31]

[30] Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln*, 36; Masur, *Lincoln's Hundred Days*, 197; Freehling, *The South vs. the South*, 117.

[31] Don E. Fehrenbacher, "The Anti-Lincoln Tradition," *Papers of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 4 (1982): 10; Randall M. Miller, "Lincoln and Leadership: An Introduction," in *Lincoln and Leadership: Military, Political, and Religious Decision Making*, ed. Randall M. Miller (New York, 2012), 9, 11.

After that, as biographer Ronald White observes, if nationwide emancipation was to be achieved, "it would be by the marching feet of a liberating army." But no longer, Edna Greene Medford notes, would it be "a white man's war." Oakes suggests that while all of the president's critics grasped the implications of his plans to enlist Northern black freemen into the army, his "implicit invitation to slaves to run to Union lines" was so "obscure" a policy shift as to be "largely invisible." But the orders emanating from the War Department to the generals in the field were "unambiguous." The final decree, Oakes argues, "was more than a paper threat." And by allowing black Americans to fight for their country, writes Gregory J. W. Urwin, the president well knew that he was granting them "the opportunity to carve a new place for themselves in the country's postwar social and political order." When it appeared that emancipation might be a political liability in his bid for reelection in 1864, Lincoln refused to distance himself from his Proclamation and cited black military service as vindication.[32]

Tragically, as Jim Downs chronicles in an important new study of African American illness during the later years of the conflict, the Emancipation Proclamation "could not protect formerly enslaved people from health threats." The army readily enlisted healthy young men, but too often their wives and children were housed in "overcrowded unsanitary camps, depriving them not only of economic and political independence, but also of adequate clothing, food, and shelter." Downs agrees that one of the central goals of the Emancipation Proclamation was to "bolster the Union army's manpower" while denying the Confederacy its chief labor force. But policymakers in Washington rarely paused to consider "how the overthrow of slavery would shape the lives" of black veterans and their dependents.[33]

Some readers of this journal will be old enough to recall the nation's centennial celebration of Emancipation, falling as it did in the midst of a new struggle for freedom. Student subscribers will probably live to see the 2063 bicentennial commemoration of Lincoln's decree. Undoubtedly, some specialists will still be insisting that runaways who announced themselves "contraband" forced the administration to act. Others will

[32] Ronald C. White Jr., *A. Lincoln: A Biography* (New York, 2009), 540; Medford, "Imagined Promises, Bitter Realities," 20; Gregory J. W. Urwin, "Seeing Lincoln's Blind Memorandum," in *Lincoln and Leadership*, 51; Oakes, *Freedom National*, 383–84.

[33] Jim Downs, *Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, 2012), 38.

continue to emphasize the role played by progressives on Capitol Hill, or the lobbying efforts of black activists across the North. Lincoln himself, thanks in part to his legendary disinclination to pour his innermost thoughts into letters and diaries, will always attract critics from across the political spectrum. But for now, perhaps the last words should go to those residing in Richmond during the last moments of the war, men and women who understood that the struggle against slavery was not the product of a single person but was waged on a number of fronts. As it became clear that the Confederate capital was doomed to fall, Jefferson Davis and his cabinet fled south on the last secure rail line. The sounds of panic were clear to blacks in the city. One young slave, Mittie, remembered cannons "booming, it seems like everywhere." Mittie's father, who was to adopt the surname of Freeman, began to cheer. "It's victory," he kept shouting. "It's freedom. Now we's gonna be free." Richard Forrester, a seventeen-year-old freeman, scrambled to the top of the capitol building to hoist the American flag. As a boy who formerly ran errands for the legislature, Forrester had hidden the twenty-five-foot flag following secession, and he wanted approaching troops to see the old banner. Fittingly, the first soldiers to do so were black cavalrymen from the Fourth Massachusetts, and the Thirty-Sixth U.S.C.T. were not far behind. Thousands of African Americans filled the streets. Men waved their hats, and women shouted, "You have come our way at last, Glory, Hallelujah!"[34]

Le Moyne College DOUGLAS R. EGERTON

[34] Douglas R. Egerton, *The Wars of Reconstruction: The Brief, Violent History of America's Most Progressive Era* (New York, forthcoming 2013).

BOOK REVIEWS

Antislavery and Abolition in Philadelphia: Emancipation and the Long Struggle for Racial Justice in the City of Brotherly Love. Edited by RICHARD NEWMAN and JAMES MUELLER. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011. 272 pp. Notes, index. $39.95.)

Antislavery and Abolition in Philadelphia is an important monograph that examines how the issues of slavery and freedom affected the city of Philadelphia from the 1680s through the 1850s. The essays featured in this book initially grew out of a debate over the representation of slavery, race, abolition, and historical memory at Philadelphia's Independence Mall. Editors Richard Newman and James Mueller argue that an examination of Philadelphia "illuminates the significance of urban locales in the history of both slavery and freedom" (5).

The nine essays are divided into three sections. Section 1, "Liberating Philadelphia," features a superbly crafted synthetic piece by Ira Berlin that explores the struggle for blacks to gain freedom and equality in society. Berlin's emphasis on the importance of studying the lives of people of African descent embodies much of the recent scholarship on slavery and freedom, which is replicated throughout many of the subsequent essays in this collection. Berlin's essay examines other themes that the book's contributors build upon such as early antislavery movements in the city and the divergent meanings of black freedom in society.

The five essays in section 2, "Black and White Abolitionists in Emancipating Philadelphia," explore reformers involved in Philadelphia's various antislavery movements prior to the 1830s. David Waldstreicher provides an ingenious assessment of early Quaker antislavery activists Thomas Tyson, Benjamin Lay, and Ralph Sandiford, while Julie Winch's essay on free black activists reminds us that African Americans believed that full equality in society must follow emancipation. Richard Newman's overview of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society (PAS) demonstrates that members of the PAS often fought for black rights while remaining unsure about what Winch's black abolitionists considered a fundamental component of emancipation: full citizenship in American society. Gary Nash's essay offers a clear example of the divergent views of black freedom in society through two prominent figures: James Forten and Tench Coxe.

The essays in section 3, "Shades of Freedom," illustrate how abolitionism became a hotly debated topic among members of the Philadelphia community. Caleb McDaniel heightens awareness of how Philadelphia's early antislavery activists sought to cultivate an abolitionist movement that extended beyond national borders. Dee Andrews expands ideas of abolitionism beyond the

Quakers and demonstrates that all denominations within Philadelphia's religious community sought to reconcile their faith with their views on slavery and freedom. Heather Nathan's innovative assessment of Philadelphia's theater shows that issues of slavery, race, and freedom took center stage and illustrated the positive and negative affect of black freedom in society. Elizabeth Varon recounts William Still's involvement in the Underground Railroad and reminds readers of the important role Still and other Africans Americans played in assisting fugitive slaves gain their freedom.

Antislavery and Abolition in Philadelphia features a strong interpretive framework that provides a new lens to help scholars examine how the issues of slavery and freedom affected Philadelphia society. Perhaps the only omission in an otherwise well-structured monograph is a careful examination of women's roles in Philadelphia's antislavery movement. *Antislavery and Abolition in Philadelphia* explores subjects that deserve more attention, and scholars interested in issues of slavery, race, and emancipation in the City of Brotherly Love will want to read these essays.

University of Delaware KATRINA ANDERSON

Gleanings of Freedom: Free and Slave Labor along the Mason-Dixon Line, 1790–1860. By MAX GRIVNO. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011. 296 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. $50.)

Historians have an enduring interest in the lives of ordinary people, but they are frustrated by meager paper trails. As Max Grivno reveals, not only did most ordinary workers pass through history into oblivion, many passed through their own times without mention. Between 1825 and 1841 George Heyser hired and recorded the earnings of 164 farmhands and, in many instances, did not even bother to record his employee's names. His account book lists them as "Six Irish," "Black Woman," and "Little Pennsylvanian" (110). With this kind of documentary record, how are we to understand ordinary lives lived in extraordinary times?

Quantitative historians are convinced that statistical analyses can substitute for qualitative detail in illuminating the lives of ordinary folk. Analysis of census records, city directories, tax rolls, and other documentary records substitute for names and faces, for flesh and bones. For nonquantitative historians, statistical analysis not only fails to rescue ordinary folk from oblivion, it condemns them to the purgatory of statistical tables.

Grivno's is one of a growing breed of books of high-quality, old-fashioned history committed to understanding the lives of common folk using hard-won archival information. Like Walter Johnson's *Soul by Soul* (1999) and Seth Rockman's *Scraping By* (2009), Grivno utilizes court and business records to

understand the conditions of nineteenth-century rural free and bound laborers. Thus, we learn about Harry Luckett's dire, hand-to-mouth existence. Luckett, a farmhand, was employed just an average of fifteen days each month, probably earning between 40 cents and $1.25 per day. In some off-peak months he went without work altogether; even in peak periods, he rarely worked more than twenty days a month. His ability to support himself throughout the winter depended on harvest earnings. Like Luckett, most rural workers were transient, moving from farm to farm to make hay when they could. All workers' lives were precarious, but most scraped by somehow. Grivno has rescued some folk from oblivion, put some flesh on the statistical bones of history, and shown us just how hard scraping by could be.

As much as there is to like about Grivno's book, only two chapters offer much that is original. His discussions of masters' control over indentured servants and slaves, the emergence of temperance and antigambling societies to inculcate better work habits among workers, the ways that race undermined the development of a working-class consciousness, and the effects of incipient industrialization on employer-employee relationships plow already well-tilled fields. For Grivno, the material inequality between rural capitalists and workers reduced workers' control over their own lives. The economically powerful, for example, wrote laws that allowed the children of free blacks to be taken from intact households and bound into servitude, ostensibly for the benefit of the children. He does, however, acknowledge that the capitalist-landowner-farmer's well-being was—while perhaps not as in thrall to the worker's whims as the worker's well-being was to his—made more difficult by the worker's transience, intemperance, gambling, whoring, and other unproductive behaviors.

Gleanings of Freedom is best read as a history of a tumultuous period in which the transportation revolution reordered the economy, slavery reordered the polity, and the nation hurtled toward its defining crisis. Grivno's book shows that markets are relentless taskmasters that limit the choices of workers and capitalists alike. It also provides refreshing first-person narratives describing how employees and employers responded to each other in an emerging modern economy. In accomplishing this last, not insignificant, feat, Grivno deserves our gratitude.

Clemson University HOWARD BODENHORN

"We Will Be Satisfied With Nothing Less": The African American Struggle for Equal Rights in the North during Reconstruction. By HUGH DAVIS. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011. 232 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. $45.)

We may wonder if a definitive history of Reconstruction is possible. Reconstruction, after all, refers both to a complicated and evolving body of policies as well as to a two-decade-long era. Eric Foner's *Reconstruction* is a magisterial survey of Reconstruction policy, yet important aspects of the era's history are overshadowed by his almost singular focus on the South and the nation's capital. More recently, in *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War*, Heather Cox Richardson has placed the West at the center of Reconstruction. Now, with *"We Will Be Satisfied With Nothing Less,"* Hugh Davis demonstrates the importance of including the North, and especially northern African Americans, in any account of the Reconstruction era.

Davis's book concisely and persuasively charts northern black activism on behalf of campaigns for universal male voting rights, access to public education, and the abolition of all racial and caste discrimination. He unapologetically focuses on black political elites, such as Henry Highland Garnett, Octavius Catto, George B. Vashon, John Mercer Langston, and James B. Forten, and such organizations as the National Equal Rights League. Davis explains that the paucity of sources relating to African Americans in the North stymie any attempts to draw a full portrait of black activists. Nevertheless, he does a laudable job of drawing attention to working-class and women's activism whenever possible.

Among the insights that Davis offers is the continuity in tactics and ideology that connected black northern activism before the Civil War with black activism later in the century. Reliance on suasion was unavoidable, and recurring invocations of sentiment and of the founding principles of the republic were at once pragmatic and principled. Davis recounts how blacks steadfastly implored whites to recognize the justice and necessity of universal male suffrage. Blacks calibrated their appeals to principle; some blacks endorsed restrictions (e.g., literacy and property qualifications) on male suffrage as a pragmatic concession to prevailing white preferences. Others shunted the question of black female suffrage to the future on the grounds that black male suffrage was within grasp and any intransigent insistence of woman suffrage would jeopardize whatever protection black male suffrage might offer the larger community. Davis traces the fissures that the debates over suffrage revealed in the black community but concludes that their lasting influence was constructive rather than debilitating to blacks' goals.

Another major thrust in northern African American activism was access to quality public education. Davis outlines the array of techniques that white northerners used to segregate, discourage, and harass black students. Through appeals to white conscience, legal suits, and lobbying, blacks made headway in expand-

ing their access to public education in some communities. But they had to overcome pervasive racism and the hostility of the Democratic Party in the North to any reforms that eroded white supremacy. If northern blacks could point with pride to their contributions to the writing and passage of the Fifteenth Amendment, they had only a few victories to celebrate in their campaign for access to public schools.

The successes and disappointments of northern black activists during Reconstruction are a reminder of the obstacles to reform in the nineteenth-century United States. For the small black communities in the cities of the North, meaningful political influence was possible only when the white vote was evenly divided. Then blacks could cast decisive votes, helping to secure victory for the Republican Party. But that very possibility inevitably rendered black communities targets for white violence and repression. In cities with a robust Democratic Party, including Philadelphia, the northern city with one of the oldest and largest black communities, blacks needed indefatigable optimism to sustain their activism.

Written in crisp and clear prose, *"We Will Be Satisfied With Nothing Less"* is a valuable addition to the crowded field of Reconstruction scholarship. As Davis makes clear, we are indebted to these lonely black activists in the North during Reconstruction for prodding, cajoling, and swaying the nation to grapple with racial injustices that would otherwise have been endorsed, elided, or ignored.

University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill W. FITZHUGH BRUNDAGE