Study of the Union and the Confederate reactions to the Emancipation Proclamation

Robert J. Zorick
The University of Montana

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd
Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation
Zorick, Robert J., "Study of the Union and the Confederate reactions to the Emancipation Proclamation" (1964). Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers. 3760. https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/3760

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.
A STUDY OF THE UNION AND THE CONFEDERATE REACTIONS TO THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

by

Robert J. Zorick

B.A. Montana State University, 1959

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY 1964

Approved by

[Signature]
Chairman, Board of Examiners

[Signature]
Dean, Graduate School

OCT 21 1964 Date
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PREFACE</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. NORTHERN REACTIONS</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. SOUTHERN REACTIONS</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On September 22, 1862, President Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation warning that, unless the several states of the Union were restored to their proper relationships under the Constitution, he would proclaim all slaves in "rebel" hands forever free as an act of military necessity. One-hundred days later, January 1, 1863, the President issued the final Emancipation Proclamation.  

While historians have dealt with Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation as an aspect of the Civil War, they have given scant attention to the impact of that document upon contemporary opinions, and indirectly to the effects of the decree upon the sectional attitudes toward the war. An exception to the general historical treatment

1The first chapter of this study is more a background section than an introduction. Consequently, these prefatory statements have been placed at this point in order to acquaint the reader with the aim, scope, and method of this study.

2It should be remembered that the two Proclamations are in many instances considered as one in a general emancipation policy. If they are referred to separately, they will be identified as the preliminary Proclamation or the final Proclamation.
of the Proclamation is the recent (1963) work by historian John Hope Franklin, *The Emancipation Proclamation*. Franklin recreates some of the excitement aroused by the promulgation of Lincoln's decree, and notes the importance of the edict to the Negro race. Franklin's work is a valuable aid in gaining a clearer perspective of reactions to the Proclamation; this paper, however, is not a recapitulation of Professor Franklin's work.

The aim in this paper is to identify and explain the reactions to the Emancipation Proclamation, and to evaluate the effect of the edict in the light of these reactions. The general plan is simple in form.

Chapter one is designed as a sketch of the slavery controversy as it developed into a sectional dispute that ultimately contributed to the secession of one section from the Union. The purpose of presenting the background of the controversy is to give the reader a summary view of the arguments used by the proslavery and antislavery forces to justify their positions and to gain popular support for their cause. The limitations of chapter one lie in the fact that it is designed to give a general background of slavery from the time of the founding of the Federal System (1789), and not to elaborate on the emotions aroused by the
slavery controversy. Some of the political, social, and psychological ramifications and implications of slavery and the program to free the slaves are merely noted; to have examined all of the implications would have required a paper of far greater breadth and depth than was intended.

It has become fairly well established, both by the express claim written into the emancipation document and by historians of the Civil War period, that the Emancipation Proclamation was a war measure. There has not been, however, agreement as to what purpose this measure served and the impact it had on the general public; nor have there been detailed studies concerning the different contemporary views on the subject. Chapters two and three have been undertaken to present the different reactions to the Emancipation Proclamation by the people of the Union and the Confederacy respectively. The reactions cited in these two chapters have been, in many instances, published interpretations of the Proclamation designed to arouse the public to action. The reasons for the reception of the Proclamation by the two principal sections should become apparent as they are presented.

Whereas it would have been desirable to make an exhaustive study of the recorded impressions and responses
of different groups with regard to emancipation, the availability of material within existing library facilities, even combined with inter-library loan selections, has precluded this. These limitations have been met as well as possible by concentrating on three main interest groups—the Executive and Legislative branches of the governments, the press, and the military. Where it was possible to note the effect of the emancipation policy on private citizens, this has been done.

Newspapers were selected from the largest population centers because they had proportionately greater circulations than had those in the thinly populated areas. An attempt, however, was made to give a cross section of the newspaper coverage of both the Union and the Confederacy. Similarly, the expressions of the administration officials and Congressmen have been cited in order to provide a cross section of the opinions of government leaders in both the North and the South. The reactions recorded by private individuals in diaries and letters have been accepted as genuine expressions of opinion toward the emancipation policy. These individual views apparently had some effect on the emancipation policy; however, they served primarily to illustrate the diversity of opinions
concerning slavery and the prospects for society after the Negro had been liberated. When these views involved prejudices, government leaders and other propagandists were quick to exploit the opportunity to turn the prejudices to their own advantage.

Chapter two deals with effects of the Emancipation Proclamation upon the Union, while the third chapter deals with the Confederate States. The emancipation policy of President Lincoln is evaluated mainly in the light of the sectional reactions to it.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Emancipation of the Negro race in the United States was not merely an accidental by-product of a great civil war. It was the result of long years of determined labor by those who dedicated themselves to use all means to remove the fetters of slavery. Those so dedicated came to be known as abolitionists and antislavery crusaders. As with all crusades, there obviously was an opposing group that must be converted—by reason or other means. In this crusade it was the slave owners who formed the opposition. But before emancipation could be achieved, there was a still more formidable obstacle to be surmounted. This was the Constitution of the United States. Hence, the slavery controversy developed in two parallel phases. One was the Constitutional phase which involved arguments of a technical and legalistic nature, while the other was philosophical and moralistic in character.

The Federal Constitution recognized the existence of slavery, provided for the return of fugitive "persons" who
fled from one state to another, and specifically forbade any legislation aimed to outlaw the slave-trade prior to 1808.¹ These provisions in the basic law of the Union were generally accepted as an implicit denial and authority to the Federal Government to interfere with the institution of slavery within the limits of the separate states.² However, means to effect the Constitutional provision for the return of fugitive slaves, the question of slavery in the territories, and international slave-trade were extra-territorial considerations which necessitated the participation of a central authority. As a result of these exigencies, the delicate question of slavery could not be avoided in the national councils.

The initial efforts of the abolitionists at the outset of the Republic combined religious crusades with practical politics by petitioning Congress to exercise its


powers to mitigate the severity of slavery and to strive for its final dissolution. The first petitions presented to the legislature appeared in the second session of the First Congress in February and March, 1790. The arguments then presented against slavery were based on several premises: that it was against the law of nature, that it was incompatible with the Golden Rule of Christianity, that it negated the Declaration of Independence, and that it was contrary to the genius of a republican form of government.\(^3\)

The great preponderance of proslavery defense revolved around Constitutional questions. The principal task was to deny the existence in Congress of any power to legislate against the subject of slavery. The protagonists of slavery, however, undertook to rebut the moral arguments against the institution as conveyed through the petitions. They argued that "the observations which have been advanced against the toleration of slavery" were drawn from "a misguided and misinformed humanity." Biblical arguments were presented as evidence that slavery was not contrary to but

\(^3\)Annals of the Congress of the United States (Washington: Printed and published by Gales and Seaton, 1834), 1 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 244; and ibid., 1 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 1239. For petitions which followed shortly thereafter, ibid., 2 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 241; and ibid., 2 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 728.
consistent with the laws of God. It was insisted that Negroes were by nature an inferior race; thus the Declaration of Independence did not apply to them. The defenders of slavery began at this time the subtle intimation that an entire section (the South), not just individuals, were concerned with the activities of the abolitionists. The proponents of slavery declared that the general emancipation of slaves by law would never be submitted to by the South without a civil war. They explained further, that the South would never have adopted the Constitution had it not provided some measure of security against the machinations of abolitionists.4

Despite the remonstrances of the proslavery Representatives in Congress, the antislavery crusaders, led by such distinguished men as Benjamin Franklin, Dr. Benjamin Rush, John Jay, and Thomas Jefferson, did realize a moderate degree of success in their campaign to put an end to slavery. Perhaps the first notable measure of success was the abolition of slavery within the respective

---

4The defense of slavery took form in a series of remonstrances of Southern Representatives against the antislavery memorials. See Annals of Congress, 1 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 1228, 1240, 1242, 1244 (Feb., 1790); ibid., 1 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 1242, 1455-1460, 1463 (Mar., 1790); also ibid., 4 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 1734.
limits of the Northern states. By 1799, the states of New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey had initiated programs for emancipation.5

Following the abolition of slavery in the Northern states, abolitionists turned to the task of curbing the operations of existing slavery wherever they found the means to do so. Prompted by President Jefferson in his sixth annual message (December 2, 1806),6 a bill to prohibit the slave-trade was passed and approved March 2, 1807, to take effect January 1, 1808. This was the earliest possible date authorized by the Constitution.7

The historian, Dwight L. Dumond, pointed out that reasons other than antislavery lent support to the measures against slave importation. Two of these reasons were, the desire of the slave owners to maintain a premium market value on the slaves they owned, and the fear that the slaves might get out of control if they became too numerous, thus


7U.S., Statutes at Large, II, pp. 426-430.
placing the lives of the masters and their families in jeopardy.  

Another step Thomas Jefferson thought to be necessary to make the abolition of slavery more gratifying and realistic was the colonization of manumitted slaves "to faraway places." This idea was drawn out in the history of abolition by Robert C. Finley, a Presbyterian minister and untiring promoter of antislavery sentiment. The result of Finley's labor was the creation of the American Colonization Society. Though the society was initiated by antislavery sentiment, support was given for various and divergent reasons, most of which appeared to have come from other than abolition considerations. "Social Purists" who wished to prevent the amalgamation of free blacks with whites, and slave owners who saw in colonization an opportunity to eliminate a great source of insecurity to slave property, joined and worked for the organization.

---

8Dumond, Antislavery Crusade, p. 109. This author has a thorough discussion of the slave-trade debates in Congress. Ibid., pp. 76-86.


Some individuals like Francis S. Key, and certain church organizations supported the society for humanitarian and antislavery reasons.\textsuperscript{11} 

In its long life (1816 to approximately 1909) the Colonization Society experienced but a small token of success.\textsuperscript{12} A great deal of criticism was heaped upon the organization through the years from both proslavery and antislavery factions. Proslavery arguments against the society hinged directly on the premise that its founder envisioned the final dissolution of slavery through colonization.\textsuperscript{13} The antislavery faction challenged the colonizationists' motives and described them as "self-styled benefactors" who had arrogated the right to "decree that other men are miserable."\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid., pp. 28-31.

\textsuperscript{12}By the time the Civil War erupted, the Society had colonized over 12,000 Negroes. To do this the Society collected funds amounting to approximately two and a half million dollars. Nevertheless many of the Negroes perished from deprivation. Ibid., p. 248.

\textsuperscript{13}Annals of Congress, 15 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 234. See also, William Sumner Jenkins, Proslavery Thought in the Old South (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935), pp. 74-76.

From the inception of the Republic, through the formation of the American Colonization Society, the proponents of slavery, with a few exceptions, were relatively passive or apologetic in the defense of their peculiar institution. The antislavery attacks were annoying only insofar as they attempted to impugn the character of the Southern slave owner. Still, the crusaders represented no immediate danger to the continued existence of slavery since the institution was seemingly well-secured by the structure of the Constitution. Upon the application of the Missouri territory for admission into the Union, however, things happened which caused the entire slavery controversy to take on new light and new vigor.

On February 13, 1819, James Tallmadge of New York proposed an amendment to the bill admitting Missouri. This amendment, which prohibited the future introduction of slavery into the area, brought on an extended discussion in both houses of Congress concerning the duty of Congress to guarantee to every state a republican form of government. It was in this debate that the moral arguments against slavery were intricately blended with the argument concerning the powers Congress was authorized by the Constitution to exercise over the territories.
The antislavery men in Congress wished to require Missouri to include a clause in her Constitution to restrict slavery, because it was incompatible with the republican form of government. The defenders of slavery on the other hand pointed to the clauses of the Constitution, which recognized slavery, and maintained that slavery was an element of the Constitution.

Missouri was admitted but without reference to the restrictive clause on slavery, while Maine, which had in the meantime applied for statehood, was admitted as a free state. A sectional balance was thus established in the Union of twelve free and twelve slave states. A further provision of the "Compromise" was that all Federal territory north of latitude 36°30' was to be closed to the extension of slavery. As the area which became Arkansas was the only portion of land south of this parallel left for organization and statehood at this time, most of the Louisiana territory was designated to be free soil.


16 Ibid., pp. 410-413, 993, 1028; also ibid., 16 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 51-77.

17 U.S., Statutes at Large, III, 548.
The heated sectional dispute over Missouri aroused a positive and even aggressive approach to the defense of slavery. Beginning in 1820, proslavery literature became more prevalent and challenging. Slavery was forcefully pronounced as a thing good in itself with no need of apology for its existence. The abolitionists of the North were blamed for what unrest and disaffection developed in the institution. Both writers and statesmen in defense of slavery developed theories based on scripture, history, science, philosophy, economics, and Constitutional law to the end that the defense became a desire not only for the perpetuation of slavery but also for its extension into territories not yet annexed to the nation.¹⁸

In January 1832, the legislature of Virginia launched into a two-week debate on the question of continuing or abolishing slavery. Virginia had just experienced the nightmare of a slave insurrection perpetrated by Nat Turner at Southampton which brought death to nearly sixty of the

white inhabitants. The western representatives of the state were practically unanimous in opposing slavery but the slaveholders were unwilling to give up their institution. By effectively defeating proposed plans for emancipation and colonization and pleading property rights, the slaveholders brought Virginia to support slavery. From this point, the South became more solidly united in the active defense of the slave institution.¹⁹

As if to counteract the unity of the South, the abolitionists in 1833 formed an organization which became known as the American Antislavery Society. The Society was formed to promote and maintain a systematic national abolition movement. Their demand was for immediate emancipation. ²⁰

The Antislavery Society carried its crusade through such media as abolition newspapers, pamphlets, and petitions, together with the firebrand missionaries who sought to proselytize the American public to the cause against slavery. Many are the stories of the castigations and physical abuses


²⁰Barnes, Antislavery Impulse, pp. 55-56.
endured by antislavery zealots who struggled for a hearing. Well-known, were William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator* and C. W. Dennison's *Emancipator*. These newspapers bombarded the public with a constant harangue against slavery and the slaveholder. The Society's pamphlets evoked such a hostile reaction in the South that the distribution of abolition literature was halted to that section. The flow of anti-slavery petitions to Congress followed the suppression of the pamphlets. This action, in turn, provoked Southern Representatives to move a resolution to prohibit the reading of such material in the House.

By 1835, the sectional division over slavery became more distinct and more consolidated. In their attempt to arrest the promulgation of abolition propaganda, the proponents of slavery gave strength to the antislavery cause in the North. With subtle intimations and loud protests

---

21 Some of the more prominent abolition missionaries were Wendell Phillips, Theodore Weld, James Birney, the Tappan Family, and Charles G. Finney. The latter is credited with having organized the forces from which evolved the American Antislavery Society.

22 *Barnes, Antislavery Impulse*, pp. 88-99.


24 *Sydnor, Southern Sectionalism*, p. 233.
against the South's suppressive action, the abolitionists persuaded the Northern public to accept the half-truth that the defenders of slavery stood opposed to the right of petition, and that slaveholders were willing to subvert the Constitution to maintain their institution of slavery.  

The Colonization Society which had supporters as well as opponents in both sections began to lose the support of free Negroes in the North, as well as abolitionists who believed that colonization impeded the effort for emancipation.  

The South unified in a challenging temper without apology. In January 1838, Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina told the Senate: "Many in the South once believed that it was a moral and political evil; that folly and delusion are gone; we see it now in its true light, and regard it as the most safe and stable basis for free institutions in the world."  

On May 26, 1836, John Quincy Adams, as Representative of Massachusetts, arose at role call and denounced the resolutions to stop the reading of antislavery petitions. He then sat down amidst cries of "order;" Congressional Debates, XII, part 4, p. 4053.  

See footnote 14 above, p. 6; see also, Dumond, Antislavery Crusade, p. 177.  

of elaborate theories justifying slavery on the one hand, and the contention by antislavery groups on the other that the system of slavery was morally wrong and should be abolished seemed to be only preliminary efforts of each side to influence a decision of slavery where it was most assailable—outside the boundaries of the slaveholding states.

In 1846, Representative David Wilmot of Pennsylvania proposed a rider to an appropriation bill of two million dollars which was earmarked to negotiate a peace with Mexico. The Mexican War itself was bitterly opposed by the antislavery group on grounds that the war was waged to annex territory for the spread of slavery. The rider, a proviso to shut slavery out of all lands acquired as a result of the war, was designed to thwart the extension of slavery now that the acquisition of more territory was apparent. Although the "Proviso" did not get past the Senate, it achieved the purpose of cutting across party lines and setting Southern Whigs and Democrats against their colleagues of the North.

In the debate over the "Wilmot Proviso" the South argued two positions. In one direction, the slaveholders

28 Congressional Globe, 29 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 214.

29 Sydnor, Southern Sectionalism, p. 247.
argued that the right of citizens to carry their institutions into the territories was not only unrestricted, but that the Federal Government should defend that right. In the other direction, the slave owners insisted that if restrictions were to be applied as in the 36°30' line of the Missouri Compromise, then the dividing line should merely be extended so that the establishment of a slave institution would be a foregone conclusion in the newly acquired territories of the Southwest region.  

Two years later (February, 1848) the Mexican War ended with a treaty in which New Mexico and Upper California were ceded to the United States. In the North, the Free-Soil party grew with explosive force. The Free-Soilers nominated former President Martin Van Buren as their candidate for President, and Charles Francis Adams, son of John Q. Adams, for Vice-President. The Free-Soil party platform called for "the rights of free labor against the aggressions of the slave power" with the slogan "Free Soil, Free Speech, Free Labor, Free Men." John C. Calhoun, Jefferson Davis, Robert B. Rhett, and others of the South

---

began, openly, an attempt to organize secession of the
Southern states from the Union.\footnote{31}

At mid-century, there were fifteen states aligned on
each side of the slavery question, when California applied
for admission to the Union as a free state. This was seen
by Southerners as a threat of a permanent loss of sectional
balance. Added to this, the growing population of the North
was making the South a woefully impotent minority in the
national legislature. The slaveholders were demanding Fed­
eral action against the "Personal Liberty" laws which some
Northern states had adopted to frustrate the attempts of
slaveholders to reclaim their runaway slaves.\footnote{32} Proposals
were before Congress to abolish the slave-trade in the
District of Columbia. There were outspoken threats of
immediate secession. In all, the Union was on the brink
of disruption.

\footnote{31}{In a letter to John J. Crittenden, Robert Toombs
wrote, "The action of these Southern Democrats is based not
on the conviction that Genl. T. \textit{sic} can not settle our sec­tional difficulties, but that he can do it. They do not wish
it settled." Ulrich B. Phillips (ed.), "The Correspondence
of Robert Toombs, Alexander H. Stephens, and Howell Cobb,"
American Historical Association, Annual Report, 1911, Vol. II,
p. 139. For continued efforts toward secession see, \textit{ibid.},
pp. 141-143, 145, 154, 159, 172, 178. See also Laura A.
White, \textit{Robert Barnwell Rhett: Father of Secession} (New York:

\footnote{32}{Dumond, \textit{Antislavery Crusade}, pp. 307-309.}
After the months of heated debate, the immediate threat of disunion was abated by a compromise which admitted California, established "popular sovereignty" to resolve the question of slavery in the territories, and added more stringent enforcement measures to the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793.  

It was hoped that the compromise measure of 1850 had finally resolved the problem of slavery as it related to the organization of territories, but in 1854, the issue broke out anew. Senator Stephen Douglas, Democrat from Illinois, was responsible for the "popular sovereignty" doctrine which was used to settle the territorial dispute of 1850. As chairman of the Territorial Committee, he reported the bill which would create two organized territories (Kansas and Nebraska) rather than one (Nebraska) as originally suggested. As a further enactment, to avoid misconstruction of the question of slavery, "popular sovereignty" was adopted for the Kansas-Nebraska territories.

33 The foregoing account drawn primarily from: Congressional Globe, 31 Cong., 1 and 2 Sess., see Index pp. XXXII to XXXIII.

34 Ibid., 33 Cong., 1 Sess., part 1, p. 222.
Passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, after a long and heated debate, did not ease the sectional strife. The grounds of contention were merely shifted. William Seward, the Republican Senator from New York, expressed the feeling that the free states had lost the battle in the new territorial controversy. Seward further described the outcome of the battle as the end of compromises and regarded the decision as a challenge. Since public attention had been so well and effectually directed toward the subject, he felt that slavery might be prevented from gaining a foothold in Kansas. "We will engage in competition for the virgin soil of Kansas," said Seward, "and God give the victory to the side which is stronger in numbers as it is in right." 35

Theory and talk gave way to action as a lawless struggle ensued to determine whether the territory of Kansas was to have a proslavery or antislavery Constitution. Outside of Kansas, however, a great national transition had begun to take place. 36 In the place of two national political parties two sectional parties took hold. The Whig party was virtually


destroyed with Northern Whigs aligning themselves with the antislavery Republican party of the North, and Southern Whigs joining the camp of the strong proslavery Democrats of the South. The Democratic party lost a great deal of its influence in the North by supporting the doctrine of "popular sovereignty" in Kansas and Nebraska, which was made possible by the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. The antislavery and proslavery forces thus had maneuvered their differences onto the political battlefield where the politicians secured or lost their seats according to the position they took on the moral question of slavery.

The Charles Sumner--Preston Brooks episode indicated the intensity with which each section held to its own thinking. The news that Brooks had cane-whipped Senator Sumner into unconsciousness for the slander on his kinsman gave a great advantage to antislavery leaders, who ignored the personal angle, and insisted Sumner had spoken for freedom, while at the same time denouncing the barbarism of the South. Brooks was heralded as a hero upon his return to South Carolina, but spokesmen from other Southern states rightly stated that Brooks' action was unwise, and that by his rash attack he had done more harm than good for the Southern cause. 37

---
The two major contenders in the Presidential election of 1856 were James Buchanan of Pennsylvania who ran on the Democratic ticket, and John C. Frémont from California on the newly formed Republican ticket, which party was formed from dissident Whigs, Democrats and Free-Soilers. The Democrats were straining to preserve their image as a national party, but there was no mistaking the fact that the Republican Party was sectional. In the Republican national convention no delegates from the deep South attended and only a few represented the border states.

The results of the election showed Buchanan had carried twenty-one states with a total of 114 electoral votes.\textsuperscript{38} Although the Republican party lost the election, it scored a significant achievement for an organization hardly two years old. The results of the election also showed that the crusade against slavery had taken a giant step. The Republican party had become the voice of anti-slavery sentiment ranging from the extreme abolitionists to the moderates. They were now a potential power that might soon be in a position to determine national policy, including the maintenance or destruction of slavery.

\textsuperscript{38}\textit{Congressional Globe}, 34 Cong., 3 Sess., p. 652.
In 1858, Abraham Lincoln, as a Republican candidate, opposed Stephen Douglas for his Senatorial post. Lincoln lost the election, but in the famous debates with Douglas, he had earned himself a prominent position in the Republican party.

In 1860, Lincoln was nominated for the Presidency by the Republican National Convention held at Chicago, Illinois. The Republicans had developed a strong party organization with a sophisticated program designed to embrace nearly all the interests of the Northern segments of the nation. The Republican platform had planks in which they declared the party's support for Federal railroad building programs and harbor and canal improvements. They carried the preservation of the Union as their highest goal. The party stood opposed to the extension of slavery, but with Lincoln's moderation they hoped to allay the fears that a Republican victory meant a direct assault on the South or on state institutions guaranteed by the Constitution.\(^{39}\)

The Democratic National Convention in Charleston, South Carolina did not nominate a candidate and the party


split, with Douglas as standard bearer for the Northern Democrats and Vice-President Breckinridge as the nominee for the Southern Democrats. The South feared and even anticipated a Republican victory, but the Breckinridge supporters could not (or would not) follow the lead of Stephen Douglas.

When the fact of a Republican victory was established, the cotton states set into motion the legislative phases in the drive for secession. But first they launched a campaign of words to justify their actions. The secessionist forces, following the lead of such men as William L. Yancy and Robert B. Rhett, had manipulated the precise dramatic event of secession. Even though the national count showed a strong Democratic vote in the North, that entire section was accused by secessionists of abolition tendencies. The North was accused of having perpetuated over forty years of continuous and increasingly intensified hostility against the South. The secessionists charged the North with flagrant disobedience of the articles of the Constitution and the acts of Congress designed to secure the return of fugitive slaves. The John Brown raid at Harper's Ferry on October 16, 1859, gave rise to the charge that the North had prompted armed insurrection. The North was further charged with having disrupted churches, destroyed national parties,
and now finally with having organized a sectional party composed of men dedicated to the destruction of the South.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 367-372.}

Robert Barnwell Rhett, a Congressman of six terms and a U. S. Senator of one term, the editor of the \textit{Charleston Mercury}, a lawyer and a churchman, and the father of twelve children, had dedicated his life to the one main object of winning secession and Southern independence. He hoped to build a confederacy on the cornerstone of African slavery and restore the African slave-trade outlawed as of 1808. Rhett organized "minutemen" and vigilance committees to make sure delegates were pledged to secession. On December 15, 1850, the Ordinance of Secession, written by Rhett, passed with the unanimous approval of 159 delegates in St. Andrew's Hall at Charleston, South Carolina.\footnote{White, \textit{Rhett}, pp. 6, 37-40, 133-134, 145.} By February, 1861, seven states had seceded from the Union and formed a new alliance with each other known as the Confederate States of America. Despite the assertion of many Southerners that they wanted their rights in the Union and not secession out of it, and despite the appeals for conciliation and feverish effort by many Northerners to find
some way of propitiating the South, the efforts of less
than two thousand men in conventions made secession an
accomplished fact. Under these grave conditions, Lincoln
assumed the office of President, with the words:

One section of our country believes slavery
is right, and ought to be extended, while the other
believes it is wrong, and ought not to be extended.
This is the only substantial dispute . . . .42

President Lincoln assessed, in his first inaugural
address, the grave problems of slavery confronting the new
administration. The President was cognizant of the declared
intention of seven Southern states to be separate from the
Union and in confederation with one another for the avowed
purpose of protecting the principles of state sovereignty.43
He was also aware that the question of slavery was a primary

42Lincoln's Inaugural Address, March 4, 1861, in A
Compilation of Messages and Papers of the Presidents, pre­
pared under the direction of the Joint Committee of Printing
of the House and Senate (New York: Bureau of National
Literature, Inc., 1909), V, 3206-3213. Hereafter cited as
Lincoln's Inaugural Address.

43Mark M. Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary (New York:
David McKay Co., Inc., 1959), p. 729. By the end of
February, 1861, South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida,
Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas had declared their
separation from the Union. On February 4, these States
held a delegate assembly at Montgomery, Alabama, and by
the eighth of that month they had adopted a provisional
Constitution and elected Jefferson Davis for their President.
reason for their desire to secede.\textsuperscript{44} With regard to their contentions, Lincoln held that he had no intention, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery; he further beseeched the people of the land to exercise reason in facing the issue of slavery and appealed to the "better angels of their nature" to restore harmony and affection.\textsuperscript{45} This did not prevent the war.

Before the smoke cleared from the first battle, the status of the institution of slavery broadened from a social and political argument to one of direct military concern. On May 23, 1861, slightly over a month after the Fort Sumter episode, Fortress Monroe under the command of General Benjamin F. Butler, received three escaped Negroes. Butler dealt with the matter strictly as a military problem; he permitted the fugitive slaves to enter his camp and refused to restore them to their master on the grounds that they were being forced into hostile service against the United States. He later held women and children for what he termed "humanitarian" reasons.\textsuperscript{46} This action of Butler's was

\textsuperscript{44}Commager, \textit{Documents}, p. 367.

\textsuperscript{45}Lincoln's \textit{Inaugural Address}, p. 3213.

\textsuperscript{46}Benjamin F. Butler, \textit{Butler's Book} (Boston: Thayer and Co., 1892), p. 256.
neither the last word nor the cure-all for the stigma posed by slavery.

Other commanders, such as General Williams at Baton Rouge and General Halleck in Missouri, refused to permit fugitive slaves to enter their army camps, and in some cases even went so far as to return them to their masters. The arguments given for this exclusion were that they were withholding information from the enemy, and that the returning of escaped slaves was a matter of making this exclusion effective.\(^{47}\)

Congress, in the meantime, moved to consider some measures which would provide a more effective means of quelling the rebellion and at the same time be in the sphere of their declared policy of not carrying on the Civil War "in any spirit of oppression nor for any purposes of conquest or subjugation, nor for the purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights or established institutions of those states."\(^{48}\) Of their war measures, one of the first affecting the institution of slavery to any extent was the first Confiscation Act which was made


\(^{48}\)Congressional Globe, 37 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 257.
into law August 6, 1861. The nature of this act provided some discriminatory powers for the use of slaves as contraband of war, but at the same time, did not proclaim the slaves free. 49

As the months of war continued, the judicial and executive departments became further involved in international, as well as domestic incidents, relating to slavery. The new Lincoln government ushered in the new policy of uncompromising suppression of the slave-trade. On February 21, a captain of a slave ship, Nathaniel P. Gordon, was hanged. Gordon was the first to be captured, tried, convicted, and executed for the federal offense of importing slaves. 50 This action was followed by a treaty with England to suppress the African slave-trade negotiated by the State Department on May 20, and approved by Congress on July 11, 1862. 51 The New York Times declared with respect to Gordon's execution, "henceforth the Government of the

49 U.S., Statutes at Large, XII, 319.


United States washes its hands completely of all complicity in the slave-trade.\(^\text{52}\)

By the time international questions on slavery had been properly channeled and acted upon, many further actions regarding slavery had been taken. On March 6, 1862, the President, in a special message, had appealed to Congress to consider compensated emancipation of slaves by co-operation of the Federal Government with any state which might adopt gradual abolition.\(^\text{53}\) Correspondingly, the House of Representatives formed a Committee to study emancipation and colonization of Negroes.\(^\text{54}\) In addition to this, the House and Senate passed a joint resolution to adopt the President's plan for pecuniary assistance to states exercising gradual abolition of slavery.\(^\text{55}\) Congress then advanced legislation, first to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia,\(^\text{56}\) and later to abolish slavery in the Territories

\(^{52}\)\textit{New York Times}, May 2, 1862.


\(^{54}\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1112.

\(^{55}\)\textit{Ibid.}, p. 1180.

\(^{56}\)\textit{U.S., Statutes at Large}, XII, 376.
of the United States existing at that time or thereafter, to be formed or acquired. 57

On July 17, 1862, the thirty-seventh Congress extended the President's war powers so as to call for militia duty, men between eighteen and forty-five years of age, and to receive qualified colored persons for military service. Congress also passed the Second Confiscation Act, which authorized the seizure of property held by rebels for the payment of expenses of the Federal Army, and declared free the slaves of all persons engaged in rebellion. 58 A few days previous to the enactment of the Militia Act, Lincoln held council with two of his cabinet members, Secretary of State, William Seward, and Secretary of Navy, Gideon Welles. The subject of their discussion was the feasibility of emancipation of the slaves as a war measure for the salvation of the Union. 59 But, after the new slavery legislation was enacted, the President called a cabinet meeting and informed the members that he had not called them

57 Ibid., 432.
58 Ibid., 597-600.
together to ask their advice as to whether he should proclaim emancipation, but to lay the subject matter of a proclamation before them. He said he would welcome their suggestions after they heard it read. In the main, the Cabinet accepted and gave their support to the President's Proclamation. Secretary Seward, however, considered the recent military set-backs and suggested postponement of the Proclamation's issuance "until you can give it to the country supported by military success."

The President did not commit himself at the meeting, however, he observed Seward's argument was sound and decided to hold the Proclamation until a significant military victory had been accomplished by the Federal Army. Lincoln later told the artist, F. B. Carpenter, that:

The wisdom of the view of the Secretary of State struck me with great force. It was an aspect of the case that, in all my thought upon the subject, I had entirely overlooked. The result was that I put the draft of the Proclamation aside, as you do your sketch for a picture, waiting for a victory.

---


61 *Welles's Diary*, p. 71.

Until that success, however, Lincoln and his associates had a secret to keep. This at times put the President in the embarrassing position of having to appear noncommittal and even hostile toward a policy upon which, in fact, he was determined. From the "immediate abolition" faction came the complaints of a lack of policy and Horace Greeley's "Prayer of Twenty Millions" published in the New York Tribune on August 20. To Greeley's outcry that "attempts to put down the Rebellion and at the same time uphold its cause were perposterous and futile," Lincoln replied, "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery." Beset by an anti-slavery delegation from Chicago that urged him to issue a declaration against slavery, Lincoln argued that he did not want to declare a policy which everyone could see would be ineffectual, "like the pope's bull against the comet." He closed the meeting with the question, "Would my word free the slaves, when I cannot even enforce the Constitution in the rebel states?" The delegation departed, not knowing

---

that the President had his draft for proclaiming emancipation set aside waiting for a military victory.\textsuperscript{64}

In retrospect we find that the nature of the Civil War caused the Union government to shift, from an initial stand of noninterference with state institutions, toward policies of emancipation. As the war efforts of both sides grew to ghastly proportions, questions of constitutional authority gave way to measures on belligerent rights, contraband, confiscation, and Federal compensation. The government did not close its eyes to popular demand or individual actions. To some observers it was one thing to preserve the Union and another thing to emancipate the slaves. To others the preservation of the Union and the abolition of slavery were coterminous with one another.

With regard to the problems of military emancipation, Lincoln maintained that these were questions directly under his responsibility which he reserved for himself.\textsuperscript{65} That he would not permit military commanders to force his hand in this matter, was amply illustrated in the early stages of the war. On August 30, 1861, General John C. Frémont, as

\textsuperscript{64}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 317-319.

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 222.
Commander of the Department of the West, published a proclamation establishing martial law throughout the State of Missouri and the slaves of rebels (proven) were to be declared freemen. The President, in a mild rebuke, asked Frémont to tone down his proclamation and keep it within the limits of the Confiscation Act of August 6. Frémont said he would, only if ordered to do so. He was so ordered. Lincoln had to again assert his authority on May 9, 1862. On that date, General David Hunter who was commanding the Department of the South, declared that "Slavery and martial law in a free country are altogether incompatible; the persons in these three states—Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina—heretofore held as slaves are, therefore, declared free forever." Upon receiving news of Hunter's act, Lincoln immediately issued a proclamation declaring Hunter's order entirely unauthorized and void.66 The actions of General Frémont and General Hunter in proclaiming freedom for the slaves of rebel owners in their respective commands brought cheers and praise from the abolitionists, the press, and from the radicals in Congress. At the same time came


67 U.S., Statutes at Large, XII, 1265.
the condemnation from spokesmen of the Copperheads and border states in Congress, together with the determination of combatants to refuse to do battle if the actions of these generals were sanctioned by the President. Further, the possibilities of foreign intervention were imminent and the consideration of slavery weighed heavily. The arguments of the abolitionists against a slavocracy were difficult to advance when in fact the Federal Government demonstrated no strong inclination to destroy that institution.

Regardless of the arguments the Radicals and Conservatives pressed for or against an emancipation policy, the Chief Executive made a pact with his Maker on the outcome of the battle which took place at Antietam (or Sharpsburg). Here on September 17, 1862, Lee's attempt to thrust into the heart of the Union territory was checked by McClellan's forces. Although McClellan failed to deliver the final blow to the Confederacy, the battle of Antietam did give Lincoln the opportunity to deliver his decree of Emancipation.

---

68 Basler, Works, p. 222.

69 U.S., Statutes at Large, XII, 1265.

70 Welles's Diary, p. 71.
Proclamation Issued

Five days after the Union-Confederate encounter at Antietam Creek, President Lincoln issued the Preliminary Proclamation. Using the phrase, "Commander-in-Chief for the Army and Navy," he thus gave his document a military bearing. Lincoln reiterated his oft stated position as to the purpose of the war by declaring that "... hereafter, as heretofore, the war will be prosecuted for the object of practically restoring the constitutional relation between the United States and each state and the people thereof, in which states that relation is or may be suspended or disturbed."\textsuperscript{71}

Never deviating from his sense of what was "statesmanlike, equitable, and legally sound,"\textsuperscript{72} the President declared his intentions to continue his quest for Federal compensation to those slave states not in rebellion which would consider "abolishment of slavery within their respective limits." In addition, he would continue his efforts "to colonize persons of African descent with their

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{71}Emancipation Proclamation, in U.S., Statutes at Large, XII, 1267.}

"consent" wherever it was deemed practical. It should here be noted that although Congress had earlier made a joint resolution to adopt the President's plan for compensated emancipation in principle, the plan was never carried out. The main argument advanced to explain the ineffectiveness of this plan was that the border states were not yet willing to depart with the institution of slavery.\footnote{Nicolay and Hay, \textit{Lincoln: A History}, V, p. 213.}

On the question of colonization, a month prior to the issuance of the Preliminary Proclamation, Lincoln held an interview with a group of free Negroes. At this interview the President is reported to have stated:

\begin{quote}
Your race suffers greatly. many of them by living among us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word we suffer on each side. If this is admitted, it affords reason why we should be separated. If not for the institution of slavery, and the colored race as a basis, the war could not have an existence.\footnote{Basler, \textit{Works}, V, pp. 371-372.}
\end{quote}

Despite this line of reasoning, the Proclamation contained, along with the idea of colonization, a desire to have the consent of those to be colonized. For, as might be suspected, not all Negroes relished the thought of being ostracized as an undesirable element. An interesting
reflection on Lincoln's words is that of the Negro contemporary, Federick Douglass, who wrote:

No, Mr. President, it is not the innocent horse that makes the horse thief, nor the traveler's purse that makes the highway robber, and it is not the presence of the Negro that causes this foul and unnatural war, but the cruel and brutal cupidity of those who wish to possess horses, money, and Negroes by means of theft, robbery, and rebellion.\(^75\)

Regardless of any desired plans to meet the problems of slavery up to this point of the war, the time had come for action. Hence the core of Lincoln's edict wherein he stated his hundred day advance warning:

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 then be, thenceforth, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain 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.\(^76\)

The Chief Executive then went on to designate his course of action as one of executing the already formulated


\(^76\)U.S., Statutes at Large, XII, 1267.
laws of a duly elected Congress. He called attention first to an act of Congress approved March 13, 1862, entitled, "An act to make an additional article of war," which prohibited the return of fugitives by the military or naval personnel; and second, to Section 9 and 10 of the "Confiscation Act" approved July 17, 1862, which declared slaves of rebels coming into Union hands as free, not to be delivered up under any pretense by military or naval persons as of that date.

The edict, which showed no hostility toward the slaveholders, closed with a promise that:

The Executive will in due time recommend that all citizens of the United States who shall have remained loyal thereto throughout the rebellion shall (upon restoration of the constitutional relation between the United States and their respective states and people, if that relation shall have been suspended or disturbed) be compensated for all losses by acts of the United States, including the loss of slaves. 77

One hundred days later, January 1, 1863, the second and definitive edict was issued, without which the first would have had no significance.

The preamble of this decree referred to the earlier proclamation of warning and then declared the emancipation

77 U.S., Statutes at Large, XII, 1267.
of slaves in areas designated as in rebellion. The areas listed included the ten states of Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia. Thirteen parishes of Louisiana, including the city of New Orleans, the forty-eight counties which were designated West Virginia, plus five other counties of Virginia, were marked out as not to be effected by the Proclamation.

The President then enjoined those declared free to eschew violence and the use of it whenever possible and to work faithfully for wages if afforded the opportunity. Further he declared all qualified persons so emancipated "... will be received into the armed services of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts." He then closed with "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." The final Proclamation of Emancipation thus left the impression that the President struggled with Constitutional problems, 

78 Ibid., pp. 1268-1269.
invoked his decree as a military necessity, and left it to rest on the will of Providence.
CHAPTER II

NORTHERN REACTIONS

The composition of President Lincoln's cabinet consisted of men who, as a body of advisers, represented a wide range of public opinion in the North.¹ Three of the members of the cabinet, Secretary of State William F. Seward of New York, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, and Attorney General Edward Bates of Missouri, were strong contenders for the top executive position in the Republican convention in 1860. Each of the three men commanded noteworthy support as presidential aspirants. Postmaster General Montgomery Blair was a man who represented, through himself and his relatives, the important opinions of the border states. Secretary of Interior Caleb B. Smith, although not a man of commanding influence, represented the more conservative opinions of the Republican party. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, an old-line

¹As stated here, North refers to the fifteen free states and the four slave states of the border, Kentucky, Missouri, Maryland, and Delaware, that remained loyal to the Union.
Whig who as a Republican candidate had made an unsuccessful bid for the governorship of Connecticut in 1855, represented the moderate faction of the anti-slavery forces. All of the members of the Cabinet served as two-fold barometers of opinion. As important political leaders their views were of prime importance, and because they were closely attuned to local ideas, they reflected the opinions of their areas toward President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.  

From the time he read the first draft of a proclamation to the cabinet in July, to September 22, when he brought the subject up again, Lincoln had thought deeply about the subject of emancipation. Consequently, the phrasing of his proclamation was considerably altered by September.  

In the cabinet meeting on September 22, the President repeated his previous statement that he was not asking the advice of the members as to whether or not he

---


should proclaim emancipation, for he had already decided on that. The President did, however, want to hear the cabinet members' comments (for or against), and any constructive criticism they had to offer on the way the Proclamation should be phrased. 4

After he had read the Proclamation, Lincoln called for discussion on the matter. Secretary of State Seward responded by noting that the question had already been decided. Yet, the Secretary of State also felt that the President's decree should be more decisive and convey the feeling that the policy would be far more lasting than the term of the Lincoln administration. Seward urged that the decree should "not merely say the government recognizes, but that it will maintain the freedom it proclaims." The cabinet concurred and it was so adopted. 5 Seward also suggested that if any persons of African descent were colonized, such action should take place only with the consent of those to be colonized and after agreement had been reached with the governments in those parts of the world


considered for colonization. This proposal was also adopted, but not with the unanimous approval of the Cabinet. On the matter of colonization, President Lincoln held that it was essential to provide asylum for a race "we had emancipated but which could never be recognized or admitted to be our equals."7

Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, Jr., member of the Blair family of Maryland which commanded a great deal of political influence in the border states, was also greatly interested in some plan of deportation, but he did not offer a matured plan for carrying out such a program. Attorney General Edward Bates disagreed with Secretary Seward's amendment which required the consent of the potential deportees. He recommended compulsory deportation, because the Negroes had great local attachments and would not go voluntarily.8 President Lincoln objected to compulsory deportation, thus it was overruled.

Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase, regarded the President's Proclamation as satisfactory. Prior to the

---

6Ibid.
7Welles's Diary, p. 52.
8Ibid.
meeting, Chase had suggested that emancipation could be much more effectively and quietly effected by allowing the army commanders in the field to organize and arm the slaves, and pronounce emancipation within their commands. Nevertheless, he stated that Lincoln had given to every proposition which had been made, a "kind and candid consideration," and that the Chief Executive's conclusion had been arrived at "clearly and distinctly." Although the Secretary pointed out that the Proclamation did not "mark out the course" he preferred, he would give it his full support.

Postmaster Blair went into a prolonged discourse expressing his views on emancipation and his reasons for objecting to the measure at that time. In the main, he had no objection to the principle of emancipation. He said he was always ready to emancipate "rather than submit to the perpetuation of the system." But Blair also felt that the edict placed in jeopardy the loyalty of the patriotic element in the border states. The Postmaster, a political organizer in Maryland, felt that the patriotism of the border area had been severely tried and that this Proclamation would, as


10Commager, Blue and Gray, p. 1088.
soon as it reached them, be likely to carry over those States to the secessionists. He further cautioned that the emancipation policy could be used to advantage by the opposition parties to defeat the administration in the coming elections.\(^{11}\) The President expressed his apprehension as to the danger of losing the votes and possibly a portion of the army from the border states, but the Postmaster General's argument concerning the opposition parties was obvious and Lincoln did not acknowledge it with any special concern. Mr. Blair asked that his paper stating his objections be filed with the Proclamation as it was to be issued.\(^{12}\) Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton, sat and listened but offered no comment.\(^{13}\)

Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, wrote of the Emancipation Proclamation:

> It is momentous both in its immediate and remote results, and an exercise of extraordinary power, which cannot be justified on mere humanitarian principles \(^{11}\)Such use of Federal powers\(^{12}\) would never


\(^{12}\)Welles's Diary, p. 144.

have been attempted but to preserve the national existence. The slaves must be with us or against us in the war. Let us have them. These were my convictions during the Cabinet meeting and this was the drift of the discussion.¹⁴

After the Proclamation had been fully discussed by the President and his Cabinet, and the suggested alterations had been made, a plan for future proceedings to effect the intended policy had to be established. The first step was to place the decree before public leaders to observe their reactions. As an initial gesture, a group of citizens from the Washington area came to the White House with a brass band and expressed its appreciation and support to the President for his act of emancipation. Lincoln told the group that he had done what he thought was right in the face of the problems and hardships before him, which he said were nowhere near as difficult as were those upon the battlefield. He could only hope he had made no mistake.¹⁵

The crowd cheered and sang, the band played, and then the group of citizens made its way to the home of Secretary Chase who was in the company of the colorful statesman from Kentucky, Cassius M. Clay, and Lincoln's private secretary, John Hay. Chase and Clay made speeches to the people

¹⁴Welles's Diary, p. 144.

expressing their pleasure at the momentous declaration. Pleasantries were exchanged and the serenaders then went to the residence of Mr. Bates to hear more about the emancipation plan. Bates disappointed them, however, by telling them it was not his place to comment on a statement of policy which emanated from one of a higher station.

Hay remained at the Chase mansion after the serenaders had departed and took note of the conversations among the "old fogies" who stayed at the mansion and drank wine. Chase spoke seriously of the Proclamation and referred to the secession movement as a serious mistake on the part of the slaveholders. The Secretary of the Treasury believed that the President's edict would prove to be the death blow to "slavocracy." He maintained that the institution of slavery might have continued in existence for a long time had the South remained in the Union. Mr. Chase's argument was that neither the Republican party nor any antislavery sentiment of the North, prior to the rebellion, ever could have destroyed slavery. But by divorcing themselves from

---


the Union and its Constitution, the Southern leaders had placed their once protected institution in the "very path of destruction." According to John Hay, Chase's guests agreed and they all seemed to become relaxed, as if the weight of slavery had been lifted from their shoulders. They referred to each other and themselves as abolitionists, and everyone seemed to enjoy the appellation with the exception of Hay, who referred to abolitionist as "that horrible name."\textsuperscript{18}

The attitude of Chase and his friends, as portrayed by Hay, was not universal in official circles. Lincoln, himself, only one week after the issuance of his Proclamation, wrote an apprehensive note to the Vice-President, Hannibal Hamlin. Lincoln explained to Hamlin that the South would feel the effect of the decree in time, but he said that he had hoped for a more favorable response from the North. The President appreciated the support given by the newspapers and the commendations of distinguished individuals, but he watched nervously as the stock market showed a decline and fewer volunteers came into the army. Lincoln's head was not turned by praise when he saw the

economic and military campaigns continuing to falter even after the promulgation of his Proclamation.  

Within the same week, other groups called on the President to pledge support for his Proclamation, and, in at least one instance, to demonstrate Union-wide acceptance of this policy. In a manner, they appear to have been expressing a fear lest the convictions of the President should wane and the intent of the preliminary proclamation not be carried out. One group, a committee representing the Congregational Churches of New York, led by the abolitionist Reverend Henry Ward Beecher, editor of the Independent, and leading critic of Lincoln's non-interference policy, insisted that emancipation was the right course of action to use against the secessionists. Then Beecher presented Lincoln with a set of resolutions which declared unqualified endorsement of the President's action. Perhaps more concrete backing was given by a delegation of governors who urged Lincoln to pursue his newly declared course with courage. Sixteen of the twenty-


20 Franklin, Emancipation Proclamation, p. 60.
one governors who attended a conference at Altoona, Pennsylvania, "to take measures for the more active support of the government" endorsed the Emancipation Proclamation. The remaining five governors pledged support for the Union, but emancipation was yet a subject too extreme for their constituencies. Governor Bradford of Maryland told the conference if he were to sign the resolutions he would be a ruined man. Apparently governors of Kentucky, Missouri, and New Jersey interpreted the opinions of their states in the same way.  

To a certain extent the governors' delegation to Washington was a staged performance. Governor Curtain of Pennsylvania and Governor Andrew of Massachusetts collaborated to draw the loyal governors into a conference for the purpose of taking united action toward giving the war a definite aim. Andrew and Curtain, however, had spoken to Lincoln of their actions beforehand. The President told them of his prepared proclamation and said if they wished he would withhold it until they presented him with a formal request to act. The governors felt that the President

---

should issue the Proclamation; they would then give it a strong endorsement.\textsuperscript{22}

The legislators from the border states had negated several provisions similar to those in the Emancipation Proclamation. In March 1862, President Lincoln had called a conference of the congressmen from the border states to consider a plan for compensated emancipation, which to Lincoln's mind, had strong possibilities for the shortening of the war.\textsuperscript{23} The results of the conference were disappointing to Lincoln. The border states took offense at this approach; they were not willing to admit that their institution of slavery would be extinguished by the war as Lincoln had said,\textsuperscript{24} and they jealously guarded their Constitutional right to maintain the institution sanctioned by their own state government.\textsuperscript{25} The representatives of the border states in the National Congress argued in vain against the drastic Confiscation Act of July 17, 1862. Through that

\textsuperscript{22} Allen Nevins, \textit{The War for the Union} (New York: Charles Scribners & Sons, 1960), II, 239-240. Hereafter cited as Nevin, \textit{War for the Union}.

\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Lincoln: Collected Works}, V, 160.

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Lincoln: Collected Works}, V, pp. 317-319.

\textsuperscript{25}Nicolay and Hay, \textit{Lincoln: A History}, V, 213.
measure, the only way a slaveholder could reclaim his runaway slave was by pledging his loyalty to the Union. This not only created hardships for the loyal slaveholders, but also caused them to question the value of this loyalty to the Union. It was therefore not surprising that the governors of the border states should refuse to endorse the President's edict.

Although the refusal of the governors from the border states to endorse the Proclamation was disappointing to the President, he was even more disappointed by the reactions of his appointee, Edward Stanley, the Military Governor of North Carolina. Mr. Stanley expressed his astonishment at the Proclamation and declared that the edict was a perfidious act. The Military Governor could not condone the President's act against slavery and offered his resignation. Before abandoning his post, Governor Stanley had several audiences with Lincoln in which the President tried to explain the circumstances surrounding the matter. The President reportedly told Stanley he believed, "That, without the proclamation for which they had been clamoring, the Radicals would have taken the extreme step in Congress of withholding supplies for carrying on the war--leaving
the whole land in anarchy." Stanley remained at his post.26

Certain questions probably cannot be answered with positive assurance. For example, it is not known definitely whether President Lincoln delayed the issuance of the Proclamation because of his Secretary of State's advice or in order to allay possible agitation from the border states and conservative Republicans. Moreover, it can only be conjectured whether he issued the emancipatory decree because the pressures of the hard-core abolitionists became too weighty, or because of his alleged promise to God to offer emancipation if saved from a military defeat at Antietam. However, as the President announced his policy on slavery in the Fall of an election year, he had an opportunity to ascertain objectively the popular response to the issue throughout the Union on the basis of the election results.

It is true that the opponents of Lincoln and his supporters in Congress had more than the question of the status of slavery to put before the public. Issues ranged

from the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus for those resisting the draft through such political blundering in military affairs as McClellan's "slows." Although Lincoln was aware of the public's dissatisfaction with military failures and the existence of the heavy hand of military law in the civilian communities, he was anxious to know the disposition of Union supporters toward his Emancipation Proclamation. In a directive to General U. S. Grant, commanding in the Tennessee theatre, Lincoln asked the General to take possible steps to give the people there a chance to express their feelings at the elections. The President cautioned the General to follow the forms of the law as far as convenient, but to get the expression of the largest possible number of people, and to ascertain how the election results would connect with and affect the proclamation of September 22.  

The President followed the course of the political campaign throughout the country but especially in his home state of Illinois. David Davis, a circuit judge, and Lincoln's foremost campaign manager of the 1860 campaign

27 Nevins, War for the Union, II, 323-324.

kept the President posted on the political developments there. In his home district, Lincoln's two friends, John T. Stuart and Leonard Swett, were opposing one another. The Democrats nominated his old law-partner, Stuart, while Swett, who had campaigned vigorously for Lincoln in the presidential nominating convention in Chicago, was endorsed by the Republicans. Stuart argued that Lincoln had transgressed the Constitution by suspending the writ of habeas corpus, but he was non-committal on the Proclamation, while Swett carried on the emancipation crusade in his campaign. At the outset, Davis reported that the Proclamation seemed to have been well received, Swett had endorsed it and people were uniting in the belief that it was the duty of the Federal Government to launch an overwhelming attack upon the rebels if they refused to give up the rebellion.  

As the political campaign gained momentum, the disposition toward emancipation in many states changed from a favorable attitude to one of resentment and antagonism toward those who endorsed it, and in many cases may have caused their defeat. Unwittingly. Secretary of 

War, Stanton, gave substance to the Democratic charges against the Republican administration. The Secretary ordered the Negroes who were sent to the Army post at Cairo, Illinois, colonized, and urged the white leaders of the state to make a special effort to find temporary jobs for them. The Constitution of Illinois forbade the entrance of Negroes into that state, and as a result of Stanton's actions, even War Democrats (those loyal to the cause for the Union but opposed to Republican doctrine) considered their civil liberties threatened. The order was countermanded but too late to stop the vitriolic attacks from being disseminated throughout the land. The slogan of the Democrats in the election was "The Constitution as it is and the Union as it was," but the general theme in the campaign from New York to Iowa was, "Every white laboring man in the North who does not want to be swapped off for a free nigger should vote the Democratic ticket." Other states had laws and constitutional restrictions which prohibited the immigration of free Negroes and mulattoes.

---

30 Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, p. 248.
31 King, David Davis, p. 198.
32 Franklin, Emancipation Proclamation, p. 84.
In regard to these legal restrictions, it was argued that if the war measures on slavery could cause military disregard for Illinois law, then "emancipation would inundate" other states with free Negroes. In his reports to Lincoln, David Davis noted the change from wide acceptance to general dissatisfaction with the idea of emancipation. The President saw his own congressional district go to the Democrat, Stuart. In the country at large, the Democrats carried Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Horatio Seymour, who was fiercely hostile to attacks on slavery, the Confiscation law, and the draft, achieved a sweeping victory for the Democrats by gaining New York's top executive position.

Those candidates who upheld the Emancipation Proclamation in the election generally argued that it was good military strategy, and that it would bring victory with freedom in its wake. Along with these arguments, the Republicans attempted to brand the opposition party as

---


34 King, David Davis, p. 199.

35 Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, p. 249.
disloyal because of its criticism of the wartime administration.\textsuperscript{36}

The party associated with Lincoln maintained a slim majority in Congress. Antislavery candidates in New England and the proslavery border states were retained. The votes of Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, Kansas, Oregon, and California likewise gave a vote of confidence to their representatives. Although the Republican majority was reduced in the 1862 election, it still retained control of the House by a ratio of 101 to 81.\textsuperscript{37}

The Northern press analyzed the relationship of the Emancipation Proclamation to the election in three major ways. One concludes that factors other than the Proclamation were most prominent in influencing the voters. Another analysis supported the idea that the Proclamation placed the Republicans at a disadvantage, because of the absence at the polls of antislavery partisans who were at war. As an example of the first analysis, the \textit{New York Times} underscored the "want of confidence" as the cause for the Republican setback, and indicated that the administration

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{36}Younger, \textit{Kasson}, p. 137; Franklin, \textit{Emancipation Proclamation}, p. 84-85.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{37}\textit{Congressional Globe}, 38 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 6.
\end{quote}
heads should have put pressure on the President to move more decisively and vigorously to close the war. The Times made it a point to state that the President's patriotism was beyond reproach, but it insisted that Lincoln lacked the determination that is "inspired by the consciousness of infinite interests at stake" to prosecute the war effectively. The Times made no reference to the Emancipation Proclamation as a cause for the setback. The New York Tribune supported the second analysis in its attack on the conservative element in which the Tribune editor, Horace Greeley, saw the Proclamation as a reason for the setback because of the absence at war of thousands of ardent Republicans while "every partisan of slavery, every sympathizer with the rebellion, and every coward who feared the drafts" was available at the polls. The New York Herald exemplified the third position in its explanation that the election results were the voters' notice to Lincoln that they (the voters) were supporting the war for the restoration of the Union and not the "bloody extermination of slavery."


40 Cited in Sandburg, Lincoln: War Years, III, p. 610.
Lincoln studied the election results very carefully and agreed in part with the Tribune's interpretation. He thought that the Democratic victories were partly owing to the absence of many Republicans who were taking part in the war effort. He also believed that Democratic leaders had made an all out effort to secure control of Congress. The President blamed the part of the Republican press, which by "villifying and disparaging" attacks against the administration, had given the Democrats lethal weapons with which to assail the Republicans. Lincoln also thought that the people had become depressed by the ill success of the war and thus were susceptible to anti-administration propaganda. The President did not believe, or at least he did not express the belief that his Emancipation Proclamation was a cause for the political reverses which took place.  

The reports the President received from re-elected Congressmen, and messages from Republican candidates during his campaign, more frequently reflected anxiety over military matters than apprehension concerning the emancipation edict. In addition, in the states of Iowa, Kansas, and

---

41 Lincoln: Collected Works, V, 493-495.

42 New York Times, Nov. 5, 1862.
Missouri, where emancipation was the major campaign issue, the Republicans were victorious. That the public voted against the administration because of military defeats and a hesitancy to press the enemy, was demonstrated to the President by a report he received from J. K. Moorehead, a re-elected Representative from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Moorehead was in agreement with his constituency that General McClellan, who was severely criticized for not having followed through with the Antietam campaign in an attempt to crush the Confederate army, had been placated too long by President Lincoln. The Pennsylvanian Representative told of his constituents' chagrin over Lincoln's support for McClellan and declared that some of the voters would be glad to hear that the President "had been found hanging from the post of a lamp at the door of the White House." Mr. Lincoln said if it happened, he would not be surprised. He realized that his recent behavior "must be incomprehensible" to some people, but it could not "now be explained." The President felt that he was being made the target of slander and invective not because of his own war measures, but because of the support he had given

\[43^\text{Nevins, War for the Union, II, 320.}\]
to seemingly incompetent military leaders.\footnote{Sandburg, \textit{Lincoln: War Years}, III, 606-607.}

Aside from keeping abreast of the campaigns and elections, the President, Cabinet, and Congressional leaders were occupied with working out the details associated with emancipation so that the program might be carried out in accordance with the concepts proclaimed on September 22, i.e., compensation and colonization. A week after the preliminary proclamation was issued, the cabinet met to discuss the matter of colonization. The President had already expressed his firm opposition to Attorney General Bates's suggestion of compulsory deportation, but at the September 29 meeting, Bates read a paper which he had carefully prepared in order to give a clear expression of his views. The Attorney General outlined the need for an executive contract with the government of those countries where freed Negroes might be colonized. President Lincoln was not satisfied with the idea of a contract and pointed out the need for a treaty that would give those colonized a guarantee of citizenship in the nations where they were relocated.\footnote{Welles's Diary, I, 153. That Lincoln wanted to insure would-be colonists the rights of citizenship was attested in his Annual Message to Congress in December, 1862.}
Secretary of the Interior, Caleb Smith, stated that the Senate would never ratify a treaty conferring any power over an American enterprise, and advised that Seward should make a contract. Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy from Kansas espoused with great zeal a scheme to colonize Negroes in Chiriqui, Panama, where supposedly large quantities of coal could be mined for the use of the Navy. A sum of $600,000 had been voted to Congress earlier in the year for the purpose of locating emancipated Negroes. The President had earlier given his Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, the maps, reports, titles and evidence having to do with the Chiriqui land grants. Welles was instructed to make the decision of whether or not the Navy Department should contract to buy the coal to be mined there by colonized free Negroes. The Secretary spent several days studying the data and decided there was "fraud" 

46Smith had not forgiven Lincoln for refusing to consult the Cabinet on the decision to issue the Proclamation; but had sought advice only on matters of form. King, David Davis, p. 284.

47Welles's Diary, I, 153.

48Welles's Diary, I, 156.

49U.S., Statutes at Large, XII, 378, 582. (Approved Apr. 16, 1862, for $100,000. Approved July 16, 1862, for $500,000).
in the affair. Secretary Smith, under orders from President Lincoln, also studied colonization projects. Smith warmly endorsed the Chiriqui settlement scheme, and outlined the particulars of an arrangement he had made with the American-owned Chiriqui Improvement Company. Welles described Smith's report as "skillful" and one that dealt with both coal and Negroes. Nonetheless he refused to adopt Secretary Smith's views. Subsequently Central American ministers protested that the United States government was preparing to intrude into their territories, create alien colonies, and defy the sovereignty of the Central American Republics. The legality of the Chiriqui grant was also challenged by the ministers. The plan was abandoned but the initial question of colonization remained for further study.

Although the process of emancipation was not to begin until the states or parts of states in rebellion had been

50 Welles's Diary, I, 156.


52 Ibid., p. 248.

53 Welles's Diary, I, 151; Rice, p. 61.
designated, or until the hundred-day warning period had been exhausted, efforts were made to inform the men and officers of the Army and Navy of the President's decree on emancipation. Fifteen thousand copies of the President's Proclamation were distributed as General Order 139 to the commanders in the field.\textsuperscript{54}

The reactions of the troops were so varied and conflicting that no generalization of their attitude toward the emancipation policy can be firmly established as indicative of universal acceptance or rejection of it. Some of the men and officers whole-heartedly endorsed the Proclamation with hopes that the war would now be prosecuted more vigorously. Some of the soldiers became depressed and expressed grave disappointment, while still others denounced the war measure with bitterness to the extent that some officers resigned and returned to their homes.\textsuperscript{55}

For General McClellan, who had recently been credited with checking the Confederate thrust into Maryland, the Proclamation caused a great deal of consternation. The General's first reactions were violent and unreasoned; he

\begin{footnotes}
\item[54] Franklin, \textit{Emancipation Proclamation}, p. 79.
\item[55] Ibid., pp. 79-80; Nevins, II, 238-239.
\end{footnotes}
called the President's edict an outrage and threatened to submit his resignation, but this was in the privacy of his headquarters and with few witnesses. The General was aware of his duties as a soldier but he was also aware that Democrats spoke of him as their next Presidential nominee. Before issuing a statement to his men regarding the Proclamation, therefore, McClellan sought matured advice. In a letter to the New York millionaire, William H. Aspinwall, who dabbled in politics, McClellan stated that he was very anxious to learn how men like Aspinwall regarded the President's decree which he (McClellan) thought would inaugurate servile war. The General also held a conference with a few of his officers wherein he explained his political position and informed them he had been advised to openly oppose the Proclamation. He asked them for their views on the matter. His officers warned him that the Army would not support the flaunting of civil authority and further that he was "skirting on the edge of treason as well." Aspinwall went to McClellan's camp where he

56 Sandburg, Lincoln: Prairie Years and War Years, p. 326.
57 Nevins, II, 238.
58 Bruce Catton, This Hallowed Ground (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1956), p. 171.
counseled the presidential aspirant "to go along with Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, say nothing, and be a good soldier." Following that advice, McClellan decided to issue a short statement to the soldiers, explaining that, whatever private feelings they might have, they were bound as soldiers to support the orders from the government. In a later order, General McClellan warned against discussion of public measures on the grounds that such a pursuit "impaired and destroyed discipline and efficiency."

Then in a letter to his wife, after pointing out his superiority socially, morally, and intellectually over certain heads of government to whom "the good of the country required him to submit," the General vented his anguish with the assertion that "there never was a truer epithet applied to a certain individual than that of 'Gorilla'."

The soldiers' feelings were not complicated by political ambition, as were those of General McClellan. Samples of their letters and diaries indicate that few of

59 Sandburg, Lincoln: Prairie Years and War Years, p. 327.
60 Catton, Hallowed Ground, p. 171.
61 Franklin, Emancipation Proclamation, p. 79.
62 Sandburg, Lincoln: Prairie Years and War Years, p. 327.
the fighting men intrinsically supported the Emancipation Proclamation. Some of the soldiers gave qualified support to the edict, while there were those who were flatly opposed to it. Most of the soldiers felt their main reason for serving in the Union Army was to save the Union. However, reports from high ranking officers indicated that a majority of the Northern soldiers indirectly approved of the Proclamation because it signified a more aggressive pursuit of the enemy.

Some troops were more concerned with the liberating aspect of Lincoln's decree than with his provision to solve the race problem by colonization. Even with his doubts that the Proclamation would be duly carried out, one soldier wrote home, "I do not intend to shirk, now there is really something to fight for. I mean freedom. I do not expect any great success at present, but so long as I am convinced that we are on the right side I trust no failure will dishearten me." Others accepted the implications of the Proclamation and relied upon the proposal to colonize the freedmen. A colonization program was looked upon as a means

63Nevins, War for the Union, II, 239.

of relieving the apprehensions of the Northern states who were fearful of a Negro inundation of their areas. An Illinois soldier praised the Emancipation Proclamation, but he commented that it would be a mistake to permit freed Negroes to mingle with the Whites. The soldier was confident however, that "Old Abe" would "send them off and colonize them." The Illinois soldier explained that preparations were being made and all could be assured that colonization would be put into effect. Some of the soldiers may have supported the Proclamation because they saw a possibility that commissions would be issued to men who took command of units of Negro troops.

Officers who observed the reactions of their men toward the new emancipation policy reported general approval. The approval expressed, however, was not so much from humanitarian motives on the part of the soldiers as it was a feeling that the edict might initiate a more aggressive prosecution of the war. A letter from Colonel W. H. Blake to Speaker of the House, Schuler Colfax, provided a closer

66Wiley, Billy Yank, p. 112.
estimate of the general attitude of army personnel toward the Emancipation Proclamation. The Colonel showed no sympathy for the abolitionists, yet he saw that emancipation might serve a useful military purpose. He saw "a desire to destroy everything that in aught gives the rebels strength," and he believed there was a universal desire among the soldiers to take the Negro from the "secesh" master. "This army," wrote Blake, "will sustain the emancipation proclamation and enforce it with the bayonet."68

Discontent that verged on disloyalty was expressed by soldiers who were chagrined with the thought of having to live in the same community with free Negroes. "As soon as I get my money," said a bedridden soldier, "I am coming home let it be deserting or not, but if they don't quit freeing the niggers and putting them in the north i won't go back to the army any more."69 The argument that the war was for the restoration of the Union and not to abolish slavery was conveyed by other troops in their letters. A self-appointed spokesman for the Army related that the disposition of the men in the Army was

68Ibid., p. 239.
69Wiley, Billy Yank, p. 112.
against emancipation. "They do not wish to think they are fighting for Negroes," he said, "But to put down the Rebellion." An Ohioan with brevity and less refinement maintained that the soldiers had no affection for the Negro or anyone who sympathized with them. As far as he was concerned both were malignant infestations of society.\(^{70}\)

For General Ulysses S. Grant, the sword was to be used to restore the Union. If possible Southern rights should be preserved, but he was determined that if the rebellion could not "be whipped in any other way than through a war on slavery, let it come to that."\(^{71}\) The General had already been engaged in the problem of providing food, shelter, and clothing for large numbers of slaves who had left their masters. Grant commissioned John Eaton, a teacher and Presbyterian minister, to handle the problem. Eaton's duties were carried on without the sanction of law and without any special Federal appropriations.\(^{72}\) Probably the Proclamation was welcomed by the men who worked to enable the Negro to sustain himself. They might now begin

\(^{70}\)Ibid., p. 42.

\(^{71}\)Catton, Hallowed Ground, p. 150.

to look for at least some financial assistance or supplies from the government.

To those charged with administering the spiritual needs of the fighting men, emancipation could bring only good. They recognized the great task that was before them in caring for a race which had exercised little independence and practically no responsibility. Slavery, to the Union clergy concerned with the war, was inherently evil. The burdens of liberation were accepted as their good works to save the nation from the curse of slavery.\footnote{Clay Trumbull, \textit{War Memories of an Army Chaplain} (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), pp. 367-412.} Ten days before he issued the Preliminary Proclamation, Lincoln was beseeched by a delegation of Christians of all denominations from Chicago to proclaim general emancipation. This group held that the recent military disasters were tokens of Divine displeasure and that it was the solemn obligation of Christianity to bear the burden of emancipation.\footnote{Lincoln: \textit{Collected Works}, V, 419-425.} Now that the declaration of intent was before them, they had no intention of letting the President waver or forget the day of reckoning. Prayers and thanks were offered, and appeals
were made to Europe to keep hands off now that the war was "invested with sanctity."\textsuperscript{75}

Newspapers in the North during the war were relatively free agents. Northern papers, as instruments of propaganda, disseminated the opinion and thoughts of various groups, according to the management of the paper and as a rule were not influenced by governmental pressure or restraint. The press reports on the Emancipation Proclamation bore testimony to governmental leniency in news control during the Civil War. Much as in normal times, the papers of the war period continued to bear the partisan stamp of the particular groups which they represented.

The Northern journalists gave their readers four alternate ways of looking at the Proclamation. It was what the people had been waiting for; it was a step in the right direction but did not go far enough; it was not valid, and therefore meant nothing; or it was a surrender to radical abolitionism and would wreak havoc on the economic and social structure of the nation.

Horace Greeley, editor of the \textit{New York Tribune}, representing the first view in his "Prayer of Twenty

\textsuperscript{75}Franklin, \textit{Emancipation Proclamation}, p. 61.
Million," had the Proclamation printed in full and on the bottom added his only comment, "God Bless Abraham Lincoln." The next day the Tribune explained all that the President's decree meant, and the significance of the act in history. "In all ages there has been no act of one man and of one people so sublime as this emancipation of a race." The New York Times took a similar view, but traced the importance only as far back as the "foundation of the government." A week later the Times presented several issues raised by the Proclamation. It noted that contrary to the worst expectations of some there had been no servile insurrections. Predicting the future, in the event that the secessionists did not comply with the preliminary edict, the Times declared there would be disorganization in the South; that Negroes would fill the draft quotas in the North; and that the Southerners would respond with fierce reprisals. The Times then concluded with, "how much wiser for the vast future would be a rational return by the cotton states to the Union." In the months of November and December the

77 Ibid., Sept. 24, 1862.
79 Ibid., Sept. 28, 1862.
Times acknowledged the Emancipation Proclamation by publishing resolutions and petitions from various social groups with pledged support for Lincoln's decree.\textsuperscript{80} The National Republican prophesied that the Proclamation would restore all old friends to the President, and that the country would form a solid line of support for the war effort.\textsuperscript{81} From Boston the editors of the Evening Transcript declared that the Emancipation Proclamation was the endorsement of an antislavery principle which would be succeeded by its practical application.\textsuperscript{82}

In the West,\textsuperscript{83} Joseph Medill, editor of the Chicago Tribune, had advocated the unconditional and uncompensated

\textsuperscript{80}Ibid., Nov. 28, Dec. 10, 1862.

\textsuperscript{81}National Republican, Sept. 23, 1862.

\textsuperscript{82}Evening Transcript, Sept. 23, 1862.

\textsuperscript{83}In the Northwest area (Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, and Wisconsin) the Democrats had played on the concept of "white supremacy" and argued that emancipation would cause a black invasion of the area. The Preliminary Proclamation of Sept. 22 served as a prime target for Democratic newspapers. See Detroit Free Press Sept. 28, Oct. 23, 28, 31, Nov. 2, 1862; Chicago Times Sept. 23, 27 and Oct. 3; Dubuque Herald Sept. 30, Oct. 3, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 1862. Columbus Crisis Oct. 22, 29, 1862. The Republicans generally avoided a defense of the Proclamation on humanitarian grounds, but insisted that slave confiscation and emancipation was desperately needed to win the war and restore the Union. See Terre Haute Express Sept. 16, 1862; Columbus Ohio State Journal, Sept. 4 and Oct. 8, 1862; Chicago Tribune, Sept. 21, 23 and Oct. 8 and 19, 1862; Milwaukee Sentinel, Oct. 10, 31, and Nov. 3, 1862.
abolition of slavery from the beginning of the war. Although Lincoln's Proclamation came short of his expectations, he declared that "the President has set his hand and affixed the great seal to the grandest proclamation ever issued by man." Medill explained further that "from this proclamation begins the history of the Republic, as our Fathers designed to have it--let no one think to stay the glorious reformation." The Chicago Tribune gave thorough coverage to every public demonstration which acclaimed the Proclamation. In the fall elections of 1862 in which the Democrats took nine of the fourteen seats in the House available from Illinois, the Chicago Tribune counseled fellow Republicans to justify the Emancipation Proclamation in terms of its effect upon the "happiness, the freedom and the prosperity of the Whites in the North. We need not go beyond that; if we do we bring the prejudices of casts and races into full play, and by weakening the efforts of the North we impair the good the proclamation promises." The opinion of the Springfield Republican was that the

84 Chicago Tribune, Sept. 24, 1862.
85 Ibid., Sept. 27, Oct. 21, 1862.
86 Ibid., Nov. 3, 1862.
President's action was thorough, neither excessive nor "defeating itself by halfway measures." The editors declared that "the greatest social and political revolution of the age will be triumphantly carried through in the midst of the Civil War." The effects of the election did not change the Springfield Republican's opinion, while from Missouri, the Missouri Democrat claimed that the Proclamation helped the Republican party in the November elections.

Proponents of the second notion, that the President's edict was a good, though timid start, were extreme abolitionists who did not support any political figure unless he advocated the complete destruction of slavery. From this camp, William L. Garrison, editor of the Liberator, explained that the edict was an act of uncommon historical importance, but not one equal to what was required. Garrison said Lincoln's Proclamation called for the emancipation of three-fourths of the slave population as fast as they became accessible. It forbade the return of fugitive slaves. But it was objectionable to the

87 Springfield Republican, Sept. 24, 1862.
88 Missouri Democrat, Nov. 7, 1862.
Liberator's editor because it returned to "bloody stripes, horrible torture, and lifelong slavery any hunted bondsmen on mere oath of the villain claiming him, that he is loyal." Garrison objected further, because the Proclamation proposed to make a new offer to the slave states to save their slave system, and because of its "mean, absurd, proscriptive device to expatriate the colored people from their native land."  

James Welling, editor of the National Intelligencer, supported the third contention, that the Proclamation was of no value. He said:

With our well-known and oft repeated views respecting the inutility of such proclamations, it can hardly be necessary for us to say that, where we expect no good, we shall be only too happy to find that no harm has been done by the present declaration. Between the Proclamation of Hunter and that of President Lincoln, we see little difference except in the signatures respectively attached to them.

Welling later wrote of the issuance of the "Emancipation of Abraham Lincoln" as "a day of elemental stir." He found the ground "still quaking beneath our feet." The New York Journal of Commerce declared it was useless to discuss the Proclamation as it was proclaimed and could not be

---

89 Liberator, Sept. 26, 1862.

90 National Intelligencer, Sept. 23, 1862.

91 Rice, Reminiscences of Lincoln, p. 557.
recalled, but qualified this statement by noting "it is not law for we have not reached a point where the President makes law by proclamation." From Maine the Portland Age thought that it was absurd to cite "military necessity as justification for doing an unconstitutional act three or four months hence." 

In the fourth journalistic construction of Lincoln's emancipation policy, it was pointed out that commercial interests saw in the destruction of slave-labor and the deportation of the slaves, the destruction of Northern shipping, as well as Southern cotton and tobacco industries. The New York Journal of Commerce asked: "What interest has commerce in prosecuting a war upon such destructive and revolutionary principles?" The New York Express warned that "This fools cap thunder would add 300,000 men to the rebel armies, and bring 30,000 Kentuckians to the side of Bragg. It is grandscale bunkum, swaggering bravado, which, alas: has converted a war for the Constitution into a war

---


against Southern rights and liberties." The *New York World* believed that the South would fight harder, and that "the Union could never be restored without a reversal of the President's actions." The *Buffalo Courier* criticized the President for inciting a servile war. The *Chicago Times* in its denunciation of Lincoln's Proclamation, concluded that by the issuance of the edict, "the war is reduced to a contest of subjugation. It has assumed that character that abolitionism has designed from the outset it should assume."

In the days immediately following the issuance of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, President Lincoln had encountered some very disturbing circumstances. The Republican party had a setback in the Congressional elections. Efforts to effect colonization were fruitless. The border states had spurned his plan for compensated emancipation. And there was grumbling within military ranks. The President, nevertheless was determined to carry through

---

95 *New York Express*, Oct. 20, 1862.


98 *The Chicago Times*, Sept. 23, 1862.
his declared policy on emancipation. In his Second Annual Message to Congress (December 3, 1862), Lincoln explained the unsuccessful attempts to carry out the colonization program but he sounded a note of optimism for augmenting a "considerable migration to Liberia and Hayti err long."

He reviewed the events of the past year and then outlined the future needs of the country which he believed would eventually attain a population of two-hundred million people. The President recommended that Congress, in the form of a joint resolution, propose to the legislatures of the several states, that they adopt a constitutional amendment consisting of three articles: one providing compensation in bonds for every State which would abolish slavery before the year 1900; another securing freedom to all slaves who, during the rebellion, had enjoyed actual freedom by the chances of war --also providing compensation to legal owners; and the third authorizing Congress to provide for Colonization. President Lincoln said that this recommendation was "not in exclusion of, but additional to, all others for restoring and preserving the national authority throughout the Union."

In order to be sure that no one would misconstrue the motives for his plan, the President explained: "Nor will the war, nor proceedings under the proclamation of
September 22, 1862, be stayed because of the 'recommendation' of this plan. Its timely 'adoption', I doubt not, would bring restoration and thereby stay both."^9^9 It was thus made clear that in spite of the unfavorable circumstances which prevailed, he had not intended to modify his announced policy regarding freedom for the slaves.

Congress began immediately to discuss Lincoln's emancipation policy as it was outlined in his message. The anti-administration critics demonstrated that they had no intention of complying with the President's request. The Representative from Kentucky, George H. Yeaman, placed before the House of Representatives two resolutions. One to the effect that the President's proclamation of September 22 was not warranted by the Constitution. The other Yeaman resolution denied that the policy of emancipation was either conducive to a rapid restoration of peace or suitable as a war measure. Moreover, such an assumption might prove dangerous to democratic institutions. Yeaman followed these resolutions with a long speech wherein he attempted to demonstrate, that the President's

Proclamation was a usurpation of power detrimental to the welfare of the nation. The Kentucky Congressman called attention to the sentiments expressed by the Senate, the House, and President Lincoln immediately after the rebellion broke out in 1861. He noted that at that time both chambers of Congress in conjunction with the Chief Executive, maintained there was no constitutional right to interfere with the domestic policies of the separate states. Congress­man Yeaman asked why and how this construction had changed. After completing his long review of past events, Mr. Yeaman gave the bases for his own opposition and those of his constituents to the Emancipation Proclamation. He listed reasons for humanity and Christianity, but above all, he was "against it as being the cause to which the friends and leaders of the rebellion may and will attribute their ultimate success, if ever a calamity so unmeasured overtakes the fortunes of the republic." The protest supposedly was not leveled against the President but against the "vengeful and blood thirsty" influences on the Executive.¹⁰⁰ The

Kentuckian's resolution was defeated by a vote in the House of ninety-four to forty-five. 101

President Lincoln's critics in the House were relentless in their attacks against his Proclamation. The Ohio "Peace Democrat," Clement L. Vallandigham, champion of the cause against the Lincoln administration, keynoted the attacks by proposing a resolution that anyone attempting to turn the war into one that would overthrow the institutions of the States shall be guilty of a high crime. 102 Hendrick B. Wright of Pennsylvania requested that Congress adopt a resolution stating that the war was being fought solely for the purpose of restoring the Union and not to undertake any crusades. 103 With the 1862 Congressional elections just past, some of the Democratic Representatives undertook to interpret the meaning of the election results to the House. On December 15, Samuel Cox, of Ohio, opposition leader in the House, took the floor and delivered a speech on "The Meaning of the Late Election." Mr. Cox began by calling attention to the developing practice in

101 Congressional Globe, 37 Cong., 3 Sess., p. 79.
102 Ibid., p. 15.
103 Ibid., p. 23.
England of the administration, which had lost the confidence of the electorate, of surrendering its offices. "But here, sir," explained Cox, "in this boasted free country, when our great States have pronounced against the Congress and against the emancipation and other schemes here hatched, we have mockery, defiance, and persistency in wrong doing."

The Congressman insisted that the people had condemned the edict of emancipation but the President with brazen affront-ery had brought the scheme before Congress in his annual message. Piece by piece, Congressman Cox tore at the Presidential message. He alluded to the radicalism of the North and branded it as more dangerous than the radicalism that had brought secession. Throughout his speech he held to the theme that the election results served as a notice against abolitionists.

John W. Menzies, a Representative from Kentucky explained that he had never belonged to the Democratic party but he did rejoice at the success of that party in its opposition to abolition in the late election. He wanted personally to "thank the Democrats of the North for the noble stand they had taken against the Administration. And," he

104 Congressional Globe, 37 Con., 3 Sess., pp. 94-100.
said, "I think I can safely say that the Union men of the border States will co-operate with them."\(^{105}\)

Many of the attacks against the administration were introduced as resolutions before the House. But when voted upon, they ultimately were defeated. Nevertheless, the dissenters were able to use the resolutions as a sounding board for their views against the emancipation policies and as a means of expressing their displeasure with the conduct of the war. The more radical abolitionists in Congress, however discouraged they might have been with the substance of the Emancipation Proclamation, refused to be cheated of their gain towards abolition by the maneuvers of the opposing party.

The Congressional defenders of the President's Proclamation carefully checked each inroad against the emancipation program. William D. Kelley, Representative from Pennsylvania decried the use of arguments based upon the constitutional rights of rebels. He insisted that slavery and freedom were incompatible and hence that the war itself had been inevitable. The Congressman proclaimed that emancipation would be enforced; this was as certain as the

\(^{105}\)Ibid., pp. 79-82.
coming of the new year. To the charge that the decree was unconstitutional, Kelley replied that no one would "dispute the validity of the proclamation of the Commander-in-Chief inviting to our flag people of the rebel States, and promising them protection and the enjoyment of Constitutional rights." Representative John Hutchins of Ohio said that he preferred the proclamation of September 22 to the plan the President had submitted to Congress in his annual message. The idea of amending the Constitution to purchase the slaves of all the States, including those in rebellion, was, to Hutchins, harmless amusement if it did not precede "the throwing at them the hard stones of war." The Ohioan argued that "if the President's proclamation is abandoned for this buying-off process, I fear we shall lose the last best hope of the earth." Hutchins firmly believed that the President not only had the right to issue his Emancipation Proclamation, but that by the nature of the rebellion he was obligated to issue it. 107

The Republicans were as tenacious in upholding the President's Proclamation as were the Democrats insistent

---

107 Ibid., pp. 77-79.
upon censuring it. Several days after the defeat of the Yeaman resolution (Dec. 11), Representative Samuel C. Fessenden from Maine proposed that the House endorse the President's decree. He listed five reasons: the decree was warranted by the Constitution; the Proclamation was well adapted to hasten the restoration of peace; emancipation was a sound war measure; the edict was a judicious exercise of power with proper regard for State's rights; and finally emancipation made good the prosperity of free government. The resolution was adopted. As the vote against the Yeaman resolutions was in a two-to-one ratio (94-45), it is interesting to note that Fessenden's resolution was adopted by a much narrower margin (78-51). 108

As the hundred day period of grace passed, the emancipation idea continued to be the subject of discussion by newspaper editors and on the floor of Congress. There were indications that the President's Proclamation had strong support in many areas, but there also were severe attacks against the policy and its author. Some felt the need to visit the President and assure him of their support and get his assurance that the final edict would be issued. Senator

108 Ibid., p. 79.
Charles Sumner, during his campaign for re-election in Massachusetts, exulted over the Proclamation. "Thank God, the skies are brighter and the air is purer, now that slavery has been handed over to judgment." But Sumner, too, became apprehensive lest something might interfere to cause the President to modify his stand. He therefore paid a Christmas Eve visit to President Lincoln and discussed the final Proclamation with him. The Senator was relieved when the President told him he would not stop the Proclamation if he could and could not if he would. An Illinois Senator and friend of Lincoln, Orville Browning, felt that the Proclamation was unfortunate and would do no good. He attempted to dissuade Lincoln from issuing it. As Browning saw the situation, it was inevitable that Lincoln would issue the final edict. He concluded that, "the Proclamation will come—God grant it may not be productive of the mischief I fear."


112 Franklin, Emancipation Proclamation, p. 90.
Welles, observed that the Proclamation was in its immediate effects less exciting than he had feared. In his opinion "it caused but little jubilation on one hand, nor much angry outbreak on the other." The Secretary reflected that the speculations as to the sentiments and opinions of the Cabinet on the measure were "ridiculously wild and strange."

From New York, came letters urging the President to issue his final Proclamation. Henry J. Raymond, editor of the New York Times, wrote to express his support and revealed his hope that the war would not be "subservient to the sweeping abolition of slavery" as he feared the "border States would be driven from the Union. I suggest then," wrote Raymond, "that the Proclamation to be issued in January, take the form of a military order." The New York lawyer, Charles Kirkland, wrote Lincoln and enclosed a copy of his reply to Benjamin Curtis who had published an attack on the Emancipation Proclamation. In his rebuttal of Curtis, Kirkland pointed to an appeal made by the Governor

113 Welles's Diary, I, 158.
114 Lincoln: Collected Works, V, 544-545.
of Georgia for Negro labor to build fortifications around Savannah. Kirkland's purpose was to show how the Proclamation would deprive the rebels of a vital means of carrying out the war. Kirkland asked: "In reason, in common sense, in national law, in the law of civilized war, what objection can exist to our using our war power to attain an end so just, so lawful, and I may say so beneficient, and so humane; as thus depriving our 'enemy' of his means of warfare?" The lawyer denied that the Proclamation was either absolute or unconditional. He pointed to the hundred-day grace period, and the recommendation that compensation should be made to the loyal citizens who had sustained losses due to operation of the Proclamation. The President thanked Kirkland for himself and the nation saying it appeared to him (Lincoln) to be a paper of great ability.

For the abolitionists and Negroes there was tense anticipation and much preparation to herald the coming New Year and the promised Emancipation Proclamation. The literary stylists of the day tried to capture the thoughts...

---

116 Ibid., p. 8.
117 Lincoln: Collected Works, V, 544.
and emotions of those who would be welcoming the President's Proclamation, for the liberating power it would possess.

Quite eloquent and moving were the lines of Ralph Waldo Emerson who deliberated on the deeper meaning of Lincoln's measure:

A day which most of us dared not hope to see, an event worth the dreadful war...seems now to be close before us. October, November, December will have passed over beating hearts and plotting brains. Then the hour will strike, and all men of African descent who find their way to our lines are assured of the protection of American law.

It is by no means necessary that this measure should be suddenly marked by any signal results on the Negros or on the Rebel masters. The force of the act is that it commits the country to this justice. It is not a measure that admits of being taken back. Done, it cannot be undone.

The act makes clear that the lives of our heroes have not been sacrificed in vain. It makes a victory of our defeats. Our hurts are healed. The health of the nation is repaired.

With a victory like this, we can stand many disasters. We have recovered ourselves from our false position, and planted ourselves on a law of Nature. It is well to delay the steamers at the wharves, until this edict could be put on board.

Happy are the young who find the pestilence cleansed out of the earth, leaving open to them an honest career. Happy the old, who see Nature purified before they depart. Do not let the dying die; hold them back to this world until you have charged their ear with this message to other spiritual societies."

118 Atlantic Monthly (November 1862), X, 638-642.
During the closing days of the year, the 29th, 30th, and 31st of December, cabinet sessions were held to make preparation for the final Proclamation. The President showed great solicitude. His preliminary draft was printed and distributed to each member of the cabinet so that each could examine, criticize, and make such recommendations as occurred to them. Chase felt the paper was so important and involved the liberties of so many, it should make some reference to the Deity. The President assented and asked Chase to work something out. The next day, the Secretary of the Treasury presented what was to be the closing phrase of the President's document: "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."  

When the part of the Proclamation, containing the exception of States and parts of States not to be affected by the decree came under discussion, Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, stressed the importance of the Proclamation as a state paper. "People in aftertimes," he said, "might

---

119 Rice, Reminiscenses of Lincoln, p. 91.
read and wonder why the 13 parishes and the city of New Orleans in Louisiana, and counties in Virginia about Norfolk, were excepted from the Proclamation, since," as he said, "they are in the very heart and back of slavery." Blair also felt that unless there was some good reason he hoped they would not be excepted. The President explained to the Cabinet the circumstances of a promise and the possible return of these areas to the Union. Seward agreed together with Blair that the President should keep his promise and not change the emancipation paper.\textsuperscript{120}

On the afternoon of December 31, with the cabinet meeting over, Lincoln carefully re-wrote the Proclamation, embodying in it the accepted suggestions which had been made. He adhered to his own draft in keeping the exceptions as to fractional parts of several states and the forty-eight western counties of Virginia, which were soon to form a new State in the Union.\textsuperscript{121}

The Confiscation Act of July 17, 1862, empowered the President to organize and use Negroes as he deemed was

\textsuperscript{120}Ibid., p. 92.

\textsuperscript{121}On this day, Lincoln also signed the bill admitting West Virginia into the Union, but the effective date of admission was not until June 20, 1863. Welles's Diary, I, p. 191.
necessary to suppress the Rebellion. Accordingly, and partly because of the constant urging from his Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, Lincoln declared all qualified emancipated Negroes would be received into the Union armed forces. Nothing had been said in the preliminary Proclamation about the use of Negroes as soldiers. Absent from the final draft was the mention of the President's much cherished plan for colonization and compensation. Thursday, January 1, 1863, after the definitive document was prepared in all the necessary details, and the formalities of the traditional New Year's Day reception at the White House had been attended to, President Abraham Lincoln signed and put into effect his Proclamation of Emancipation.

The contemporary writers of the time told of a Grand Emancipation Jubilee which the free Negroes of the North and their abolitionist friends staged to herald the occasion. In Boston such literary figures as John Greenleaf Whittier, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Ralph Waldo Emerson had gathered at the Music Hall to

122 U.S., Statutes at Large, XII, 592.
123 Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, pp. 229-250.
124 U.S., Statutes at Large, XII, appendix, 1268-1269.
hear the Philharmonic Orchestra and a chorus which sang Mendelsohn's "Hymn of Praise" and Holmes' army song. Emerson had written the "Boston Hymn" which he read to the audience for the occasion. The Union Progressive Association had rented the Tremont Temple in Boston where a large crowd gathered to hear speeches and await the news that the President had signed the Proclamation. Frederick Douglass wrote of the despondency and gloom of the audience there as the crowd waited for several hours and heard no word. "Suddenly," wrote Douglass, "a messenger burst into the hall shouting, 'It's coming! It's on the wires!' The cheers shook the Hall." Demonstrations took place in many part of the country to herald the Emancipation Proclamation.

With a few notable exceptions, the Northern press releases on the final Proclamation closely paralleled the reports which were written during the one-hundred day period of grace which followed the Preliminary Proclamation.

William L. Garrison who had written his objections to the

125 Franklin, Emancipation Proclamation, p. 110.


preliminary edict in his newspaper, the Liberator, now maintained that the final Proclamation had cleared "their course from all doubts, and their process from all uncertainty." Wendell Phillips, the "Prophet of Liberty," said he was especially pleased that the final Proclamation did not mention colonization. He stated also, that he was pleased to note that the Negroes would be conscripted to serve in the armed forces against the rebels. He interpreted the President's decree to say to the Negro: "Let me colonize you in the Forts of the Union, and put rifles in your hands. Give us your hand to defend the perpetuity of the Union." The New York Tribune, which reported the proclamation of September as the greatest act since "all the ages" became critical of the exceptions of Tennessee and Louisiana in the final decree. Greeley, the editor of the Tribune, argued against the exceptions on the basis that these two states had "more than one-hundred-thousand of their citizens in arms to destroy the Union." Mr. Greeley, however, said he did not want to

128 Liberator, Jan. 9, 1863.
129 Ibid.
"cavil," and he predicted that the Proclamation would do much to lower the South's pride and diminish its power.\textsuperscript{130}

The \textit{National Intelligencer} held to their initial interpretation that the Proclamation was of no use. The \textit{Intelligencer} declared that the proponents of slavery have nothing to complain of, as the final edict is powerless to destroy slavery outside the range of the Union Armies. The editor considered the Proclamation as expressly designed to shelter slavery in the state of Tennessee, which was still in the theatre of military operations.\textsuperscript{131}

The Democratic press, as previously, denounced the Proclamation. The Democrats called it the "last card of the Jacobins."\textsuperscript{132} They further labeled the edict as unwise, ill-timed, unnecessary, impractical, stupendous folly, outside of the Constitution, and full of mischief.\textsuperscript{133}

From Ashland, Ohio, a Copperhead journal, the \textit{Union}, remarked: "We publish in another column the Emancipation

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{National Intelligencer}, Jan. 3, 1863.
\textsuperscript{132} 'Jacobins' was the name given to the extreme abolitionists in Congress by their Democratic opponents.
\end{flushright}
Proclamation issued January 1, 1863, by the tyrant and usurper, Lincoln.\textsuperscript{134}

In Congress, before a packed house, Clement L. Vallandigham, the Ohio 'Peace Democrat', spoke for an hour and a half against the supporters of the war. The Ohioan accused the Republican administration and Republican controlled Congress of having promoted a war which was, according to him, a bloody and costly failure. "The President confessed it on 22 of September, solemnly, officially, and under the broad seal of the United States," said Vallandigham. And he declared that "War for the Union was abandoned, war for the Negro openly begun."\textsuperscript{135}

The views of Vallandigham and the anti-war editors were underwritten by scores of local mass meetings and county conventions of the Democratic party.\textsuperscript{136} At one of the mass meetings which was held at Springfield, Illinois, the Democrats resolved that the Emancipation Proclamation was as unwarranted in military as in civil law; and that it


\textsuperscript{135}\textit{Congressional Globe}, 37 Cong., 3 Sess., 314, Appendix 52-60.

was a gigantic usurpation, converting the war, properly begun for the vindication of the authority of the Constitution, into a crusade for the liberation of three million Negro slaves. Such a result, they said, would overthrow the Union and revolutionize the social organization of the Southern states.\footnote{Quoted in \textit{New York Tribune}, Jan. 10, 1863.}

The primary purpose of the Emancipation Proclamation was to serve as a military measure for the more effective prosecution of the war. That it was a military measure can be seen by the wording of the decree itself, by the repeated insistence of its author, and mainly, by the effect the decree had within the Union armies.

Before emancipation was publicly declared as a policy of the administration, it was understood, by the War Department that slaves (or contrabands) of rebels could not be returned to their masters; that, in common humanity, the fugitive slaves must not be permitted to suffer for want of food, shelter, or other necessities of life; that to a limited extent, the contrabands should be provided for by the quartermaster and the commissary departments; and that those capable should be provided employment for wages. In doing
this much for the fugitive slaves, it was not meant to settle any general rule in respect to slaves or slavery, but simply to provide for the particular care under the circumstances in which it was presented. Still without a general policy, there were no congressional appropriations, and quartermaster and commissary provisions were seldom in sufficient amounts to meet the existing needs.\textsuperscript{138} It was noted in General Grant's command, that the military leaders had to devise their own means to handle the matter.\textsuperscript{139} This was changed to a large extent by the final Proclamation, which authoritatively announced that persons of suitable condition, whom the edict declared free, would be received into the armed service of the United States.

During the next few months, after the final Proclamation was issued, the President wrote personal letters to the commanders in the field urging that they make a special effort to promote the new policy and use Negro troops wherever possible. More to the purpose, General Lorenzo Thomas, Army Adjutant General, was personally sent to the Union camps along the Mississippi River to speak

\textsuperscript{138}Thomas and Hyman, \textit{Stanton}, pp. 232, 235.

\textsuperscript{139}John Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln and the Freedman} (New York: Longmans and Green Co., 1907), pp. 5-6, 8.
in behalf of the President's policy on fugitive slaves entering the Union lines. The men were told that the President wished the White soldiers to receive the Negroes kindly and cordially. General Thomas also had charge of raising colored regiments, and of selecting Whites for commissions to lead these regiments. In addition, the Department of War created a Bureau of Colored Troops to take special charge of the welfare of the colored soldiers and their families. The co-operation of General Grant and other Union commanders in the Mississippi theatre, gave the program, in Lincoln's estimation, encouraging and gratifying success.

The problems incident to consumating the emancipation policy are noted by the response of the different commanders. General Dix, commanding at Fortress Monroe and York Town, considered the tranquility of Maryland essential to the strength of his command. The General believed that Fortress Monroe was the key position to the Chesapeake Bay area and he explained in a letter to the President, that, from a political point of view, the residents of Maryland might

140 Ibid.

141 Lincoln: Collected Works, VI, 408.
have become disturbed if he used colored troops to garrison the fortress. However, General Dix was eager to use Negro soldiers at York Town where, he believed, the army's operations were not too noticeable to the general public of Maryland. General Grant, in a dispatch to the General-in-Chief of the Union armies, Henry W. Halleck, gave the subject of arming the Negroes his hearty support. "This along with the emancipation," said Grant, "is the heaviest blow yet given the Confederacy." His only complaint was a positive one—that there was difficulty in securing enough able-bodied Negroes. 142

The recruitment of Negroes as armed participants in the war was staunchly opposed by the citizens of Kentucky who sent a deputation to Washington to discuss the matter with President Lincoln. The deputation, consisting of Albert G. Hodes, editor of the Frankfurt, Common Salter, Governor Branlett, and Archibald Dixon, former Senator of Kentucky, questioned the President on the paradox of his Proclamation and the revocation of General Frémont and General Hunter's proclamation. The President replied that Frémont and Hunter's orders were not indispensable and

142 Ibid., p. 375.
stressed the fact that in March, May, and July of 1862, he had made appeals to the border states to adopt a plan of compensated emancipation which was turned down. Lincoln explained that the only alternatives left to him were surrender or turning to the "black element." He further explained that his decision to declare a policy on emancipation had proved suitable to meet the exigency.

President Lincoln then emphasized this point:

And now let any Union man who complains of the measure test himself by writing down in one line that he is for subduing the rebellion by force of arms; and in the next, that he is for taking 130,000 men from the Union side, and placing them where they would be but for the measure he condemns. If he cannot face his case so stated, it is because he cannot face the truth.143

There is some evidence that military favor was awarded to those who had the "right" attitude toward emancipation. In some instances, a few were penalized for not endorsing the Proclamation. General Benjamin F. Butler, who was relieved of his command at New Orleans in December, 1862, found difficulty in obtaining the reasons for his release. But after Senator Sumner defended the General's position in regard to unqualified support for emancipation and the recruiting of colored troops, Butler

was reinstated as commander of the Department of the Gulf. Secretary of War, Stanton, said of the incident, that had he known, he would rather have cut off his right arm than to deny a commander who was so favorably inclined toward the new administration policy. In another instance, General Hunter, commanding in the Department of the South, caused some embarrassment for President Lincoln by his over zealous support of the Emancipation Proclamation. The General had a captain removed from the army because he refused to endorse the Proclamation. Lincoln wrote to General Hunter. He expressed his appreciation for the General's support for the Proclamation, but told Hunter he wished to have the captain restored to his former position.

In order that he might be able to discern for himself which Generals were more properly disposed to facilitate Negro recruiting and in general uphold the emancipation program, Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, kept a close vigilance on the military dispatches from the commanders in the field to the general-in-chief at Washington. It was by

144 Thomas and Hyman, Stanton, p. 257.

this practice that Stanton had come to the decision that General Grant should be kept in mind for further recommendations.\textsuperscript{146}

As the months after the issuance of the final Proclamation passed and the Union armies gained control over the Mississippi River, Tennessee, and Arkansas, Lincoln became convinced that his Proclamation was an influencing factor. He became steadfast in his insistence that the newly occupied territories endorse emancipation as a condition to re-entering the Union as states with representation in Congress.

Lincoln received intelligence (July 20, 1863) that the former Senator from Arkansas, William K. Sebastian contemplated reclaiming his seat in Congress and was supported by leading citizens in that state to do so. The President sent word through General McClernand, who was instrumental in bringing Union control over Arkansas, that he would support the Senator if he could get the state to adopt the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln asserted, in the communique to McClernand, that he believed the edict

\textsuperscript{146}Thomas and Hymen, \textit{Stanton}, p. 269.
would hold up in court, and that he did not think he would retract or repudiate it.\textsuperscript{147}

In a letter to Andrew Johnson, Military Governor of Tennessee, Lincoln reminded the Governor that the armed insurrectionists had been cleared out of Tennessee just in time for Johnson to set up a new state legislature which the President believed should adopt a plan for gradual emancipation.\textsuperscript{148} Johnson, who had spent considerable time on a speaking tour in the North, made his position clear on the question of slavery. At a large gathering in Indianapolis, the largest and most enthusiastic meeting ever held in Indiana, according to a \textit{New York Tribune} report,\textsuperscript{149} Johnson exclaimed: "The time has come to teach the North and the South that institutions are not to exist here more powerful than the Government itself."\textsuperscript{150} To the President, the Military Governor wrote that he was for getting it over with and suggested a plan for immediate emancipation as the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{147}Lincoln: \textit{Collected Works}, VI, 48.
\item \textsuperscript{148}Ibid., 440.
\item \textsuperscript{149}\textit{New York Tribune}, March 3, 1863.
\item \textsuperscript{150}Lloyd Paul Stryker, \textit{Andrew Johnson: A Study in Courage} (New York: Macmillan Co., 1929), p. 104.
\end{itemize}
answer. The Constitution of Tennessee was amended to include immediate emancipation in February, 1865.\footnote{Ibid., p. 164.}

To some of the abolitionists who had devoted their lives to the eradication of slavery in the United States, the work that was accomplished under the auspices of the Emancipation Proclamation was, in their eyes, the fulfillment of their labor and hopes. One life-long antislavery crusader, Henry C. Wright, asked the President to grant him (Wright) one favor. Mr. Wright requested President Lincoln to write and subscribe his name in his own hand to the following sentence: "I shall not attempt to retract or modify the emancipation proclamation; nor shall I return to slavery any person, who is free by the terms of the proclamation, or by any of the acts of Congress." Mr. Wright told the President that he had campaigned against slavery for thirty years. The President complied with Wright's request.\footnote{Lincoln: Collected Works, VII, p. 81.}

President Lincoln in his Annual Message to Congress (Dec. 1863) declared that sufficient time had elapsed since the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation to prove its
worth as a military measure. Reflecting on the incidents of the year past, the President stated that the Proclamation had been a significant contribution toward the Union success which he believed had been achieved. The rebels had been pushed back, the entire Mississippi River was in Union hands, and the confederate strength had been "divided into distinct parts with no practical communications between them."
The states of Tennessee and Arkansas had been substantially cleared of insurgent control, and Lincoln was pleased to note that "influential citizens in each state, owners of slaves, and advocates of slavery at the beginning of the rebellion, now declare openly for emancipation in their respective states." To the President, it was a matter of great satisfaction that Maryland and Missouri, states not included in the Emancipation Proclamation, were working toward the removal of slavery within their limits. As for the Negroes brought into the ranks of the Union armed services, the President maintained that it would be difficult to say they were not as good soldiers as any. Lincoln proudly pointed to the record that no servile insurrection, or tendency toward violence or cruelty on the part of the
Negro had marred the measure of emancipation and the recruiting of Negroes. 153

The declaration of intent of September 22, 1862 had served to stir the Northerner's mind to consider the consequences of emancipation as a war measure. The intended policy of emancipation faced serious objection as the moral opposition to slavery had not abated the strong determination still in the North to preserve White supremacy.

All the old and pet stereotyped arguments had to be heard and answers found during the first hundred days. Thus the period of grace served to prepare the American public for a new phase in the war, while the final and definitive decree of January 1 served to remove all doubts and give notice to the nation that the Lincoln administration had set its course against slavery. During the year which followed, the Union army sustained the edict with the sword, but the final and irrevocable emancipation by Constitutional amendment was still in the future. The complexity of the circumstances surrounding emancipation are ably expressed by Carl Sandburg in the following sentences:

153Ibid., pp. 49-50.
The living issues which coiled and tangled about Lincoln's feet were not, however, to be set smooth and straight by any one gesture, or a series of them, in behalf of freedom. His authority, worn often as garments of thongs, was tied and knotted with responsibilities. Nailed with facts of inevitable fate was his leadership. The gestures of stretching forth his hand and bestowing freedom on chattel slaves while attempting to enforce his will by the violence of Armies subjugating the masters of slaves on their home soil, the act of trying to hold a just balance between the opposed currents of freedom and authority, raised a riddle that gnawed in his thoughts many nights.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{154}Sandburg, \textit{Prairie Years and War Years}, p. 347.
CHAPTER III

SOUTHERN REACTIONS

The secessionist leaders regarded the election of a Republican President in 1860 as a victory of a sectional party whose aim was the destruction of the Southern way of life. They took at face value the arguments of such anti-slavery men as Charles Sumner, Salmon P. Chase, and William H. Seward. Avid secessionists declared that the Republican idea of "higher law" doomed the institution of slavery and presaged the uprooting of Southern society. The more extreme Southern politicians implied that the election of a Republican President would mean that the government would be controlled by the Republicans, and that the Union would be transformed into a centralized despotism, operating for the benefit of the Northern States. They proclaimed that
the election of a "Black Republican" to the presidency would be sufficient cause for secession.¹

Lincoln's election was characterized by Southern extremists as an open declaration of war to support an abolitionist political theory. This theory was explained as a design to destroy the property of the South, and inaugurate all the horrors of a Santo Domingo style servile insurrection. One Southerner, with a flare for the dramatic, declared the theory would consign the Southern "citizen to assassination and their wives and daughters to pollution and violation to gratify the lust of half-civilized Africans."² Though it is unlikely that thoughtful men of the South would have agreed with this extreme point of view, it was incumbent upon them to be cognizant of the dangers inherent in maintaining a slavocracy. It was impressed upon the Southern mind from early history that slaves were capable of being organized and taught to systematically revolt and overthrow their

¹For a discussion of this issue, see Arthur C. Cole, "Lincoln's Election an Immediate Menace to Slavery in the States?" American Historical Review, XXXVI, 740-767, (July, 1931); and J. G. de Routhac Hamilton, Ibid., XXXVII, 700-711, (July, 1932).

masters. In the slave-trade debates at the turn of the nineteenth century, the South was warned of the dangers of over-populating their region with Africans. The Santo Domingo revolt was used then, as later, by the Southern propagandists as a horrible example of what could happen should the slaves be given the opportunity and encouragement by agitators from outside the South. The Negroes were viewed as persons, who by "their circumstances, their barbarism, their reflections, their hopes, and fears render them an enemy of the whites of the worst description."^3

The slave states had early acknowledged the possible threat of servile insurrection, and had enacted slave-codes designed to render the slave absolutely dependent upon his master for his safety and well being. The free Negroes existing in Southern society were always suspect. They


[^5]Denmark Vesey who led the Charleston revolt in 1822 was a freedman, as was Nat Turner, the Negro preacher who led the 1831 revolution in Southampton, Virginia. See Dwight L. Dumond, Antislavery: The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1961), pp. 114, 116-117. See also pages 10 and 11 above.
were recognized as free from bondage, but because of the possible danger they posed to the control of slaves, they were under constant surveillance and regulated to the point where their freedom was not a point of envy to the slave.\textsuperscript{6} The South realized the problem constituted by the great number of Negroes in that region. Unwilling to compromise his superior station, the Southerner believed that the Negro had to be controlled by the methods established under slavery. The antislavery attacks from the North were regarded as fanatic attempts to submerge the White man, and as an additional burden to the problem of Negro control in the South.\textsuperscript{7}

The Southern propagandists warned that no reliance could be placed upon the pledges of the Republican party. The North under the influence of this party, they argued, had already violated the spirit and destroyed the vitality of the Constitution. The triumph of the Republican party meant free Negroes and social equality. That unwelcome prospect impressed even the nonslaveholder. Though perhaps

\textsuperscript{6}Stampp, \textit{The Peculiar Institution}, pp. 215-126.

\textsuperscript{7}Rembert Wallace Patrick, \textit{Jefferson Davis and His Cabinet} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944), p. 6.
he would not give his life to uphold property in slaves, he was determined to maintain the supremacy and social control over the Negro exercised by the brotherhood of white men.  

Once secession had been effected and the Confederate States of America had been formed and put into operation, the Confederate State Department had to deal with the question of slavery in a new light. It was the task of the Confederate foreign service to impart the idea that secession had taken place for Constitutional reasons and not because of any fear that the slaves would be liberated. The Southern commissioners to Europe, William L. Yancy, Ambrose D. Mann, and Pierre A. Rost carefully avoided a dogmatic defense of slavery but were quick to explain that the party in power in the United States would guarantee to sustain slavery if the South would but remain in the Union.

After the battle of the first Bull Run, the Southern Commissioners, in a letter communicated to the British Foreign Secretary, Lord John Russell, described what they believed were the North's objectives in the conflict. Their communication reminded Lord Russell that Lincoln had stated in his first inaugural address that he had no intention

of interfering with the institution of slavery as it existed within the states. The Commissioners also noted that the Federal Congress, in concert with President Lincoln, had resolved that the Union forces would not be used for the purpose of destroying slavery. With these notations, the commissioners went on to explain that the North's object in the war, therefore, was not to free the slave but to subjugate the slave owner. The commissioners then submitted their belief that as far as the antislavery sentiment of England was concerned, it could have no sympathy with the North. They asserted even further that antislavery sentiment in England "will probably become disgusted with the canting hypocrisy which would enlist those sympathies on false pretenses."^9

In its efforts to gain foreign recognition the South undertook to recruit influential citizens of foreign countries to work in Confederate organizations. These organizations were designed to sell Confederate bonds to help the South finance the war, and also to broadcast Southern propaganda to win friends to the cause. In one notable instance this practice backfired. The circumstances involved in this

backlash, as briefly described in the following paragraph, give some indication of the South's sensitivity on the slavery question, especially when broached outside of the Confederacy.

James Spence, an influential Liverpool merchant, wrote a book entitled The American Union, a defense of the Confederacy that experienced a considerable amount of success. It had gone through four large editions in less than a year. The basic theme of Spence's book was that nothing was more essential to the welfare of the American people than a termination of the American Union. The author-merchant also organized two London associations to help the South. As a reward for his able assistance, the Confederation appointed Spence as financial agent in England. But to the embarrassment of the Confederate Secretary of State, Judah P. Benjamin and his close associates, Spence not only held forbidden views on the explosive subject of slavery but he did not hesitate to air them. Henry Hotze, the South's propaganda agent in England, regretfully reported to Benjamin that Spence had given the British public the idea that the South would ultimately emancipate the

---

Negro slaves. Hotze felt that the public mind in England had ceased to expect any promises of emancipation from the South, and that they understood self-respect prevented the agents from the South from making any. Spence however was impressed with the belief that his influence would overcome the reticence of the South toward emancipation. Though the Englishman was sincere in his philanthropic convictions and devotion to the Confederacy, his Confederate associates tended to shy away from him.\(^\text{11}\) Within a few months, Spence and his views became a subject of scandal in the South. The Richmond *Enquirer* published a scorching editorial (May 7, 1863) criticizing the State Department for employing Spence and exclaimed: "Here we are paying a man for abusing us as a nation of criminals steeped in moral evil."\(^\text{12}\)

As the war progressed, it has been noted,\(^\text{13}\) slaves captured by the Union forces were in some instances returned


\(^\text{12}\)Richmond *Enquirer*, May 7, 1863.

to their masters. For the South, especially the Negro, here was sufficient evidence in the concrete, that slavery was not the avowed cause of the conflict. Some Confederate leaders believed that to the Negro, as to all the South, the invading armies seemed to be attacking independent states, invading the homeland, and posing a great threat to the very existence of the Negro. This idea is perhaps best portrayed by the Confederate Secretary of War, James A. Seddon, who in a letter to Jefferson Davis (Nov. 3, 1864) explained that with the Whites, the result of the war was a question of nationality, of honor, and property. With the Negroes, the outcome of the war raised the question, he said, of their existence as a race. "The friendship of a people so selfish, cruel, and remorseless as our foes," Seddon continued, "would be to the unhappy Negro more fatal than to us their enmity."\(^{14}\)

That the South was concerned about the conduct of the Negro in the face of a war might be illustrated by the care the Southern press took to inform its public of the

\(^{14}\text{O.R., Series 4, Vol. III, pp. 761-762. This notion is challenged by the Negro historian W. E. B. Dubois, who claimed that as long as the Union stood still and talked, the Negro kept quiet and worked. The moment the Union army moved into slave territory, the Negro joined it. See W. E. Burghardt Dubois, }\text{Black Reconstruction in America}\text{ (New York: S. A. Russell Co., 1935), p. 62.}
behavior of the slaves and free Negroes. Southern newspapers did not deny the ever present risk of a slave revolt, but publicly, those newspapers examined for this study, reflected the thought that the slaves even wanted to be rescued. While preparation was under way for an armed conflict, the Charleston Mercury called particular attention to the services of 150 free Negroes "gratuitously offered" to work on the fortifications of that city. The Mercury noted "the thousand Negroes who, so far from inclining to insurrection, were grinning from ear to ear at the prospect of shooting the Yankees."  

In Tennessee, a newspaper reported a procession of several hundred colored men marching through the streets of Memphis carrying shovels, axes, and blankets, patriotically singing war songs and shouting for Jefferson Davis. The Charleston Courier printed a story of two Negro boys who allegedly had fled from Fayette County to obtain their freedom. But, according to the story, the boys did not find the paradise they had sought, and before long desired to return to their masters. The result was, so the story ran, the Yankees cut off the ears of the colored youths

15Charleston Mercury, January, 1861.
16Memphis Avalanche, September 3, 1861.
who did finally make an escape back to their master's plantation. "They are violent haters of Yankees and their adventures and experiences," said the Courier, "are a terror to Negroes of the region, who learned a lesson from the brethren whose ears are left in Lincolndom!" In February of 1862, the New Orleans Daily Picayune wrote elatedly about a regiment of 1400 colored troops "all well-dressed, well-drilled, and comfortably uniformed." It was explained that most of the companies in this regiment provided themselves with arms unaided by the administration.

These and similar statements from the press were designed to serve the two fold purpose of allaying the white's fear of servile insurrections and at the same time keep the loyalty of the South's indispensable labor force. It is difficult to believe that any Southerner who was aware of Lincoln's steadfast refusal to allow military commanders to proclaim a general emancipation within their commands, plus his disclaimers and those of Congress of having any intent to destroy slavery, could have avoided being stunned when the Emancipation Proclamation was made known to him.

---

17 Charleston Courier, February 18, 1863.

18 New Orleans Daily Picayune, February 9, 1862.
The news of Lincoln's Proclamation produced a reaction of indignant hostility in the South. From Richmond, the capital of the Confederate Government, the Richmond Dispatch, Whig, Enquirer, and Examiner published a series of vigorous attacks against the decree. Of the four newspapers in Richmond, the Enquirer leveled the bitterest denunciation against the Lincoln administration. This journal explained the Proclamation as the "last extremity of wickedness" on the part of the North. The whole course of the Northerners, said the Enquirer, was of a nature to remove all the pleasant recollections the South had of the period of their association with the North. The editor stated, "Lincoln has crowned the pyramid of his infamies with an atrocity abhorred of men, and at which even demons should shudder." The editorial explained further that Lincoln had pretended that he was working for the restoration of the Union, but the Proclamation showed him to be "as black of soul as the vilest of the train whose behest he is obeying. So far as he can do he has devoted himself to the direst destruction that can befall a people." The next day (October 1, 1862) the Enquirer recalled the horrors of Nat Turner's

19 Richmond Enquirer, Sept. 30, 1862.
insurrection of 1831 and said that it was the kind of work Lincoln desired. Contrasting General Butler with his Commander-in-Chief, President Lincoln, the *Enquirer* suggested that if Butler is to be called the "Beast," a more descriptive epithet would be needed to describe his "Master." "What shall we call him?" the journal asked, "coward, assassin, savage, murderer of women and babies: Or shall we consider them all as embodied in the word fiend, and call him Lincoln, The Fiend?"\(^{20}\)

The reporters of the *Whig*, *Dispatch*, and *Examiner* expressed a general agreement that the proclamation would not have any practical consequences in the South and that Lincoln had fallen into the hands of the abolitionists. The *Richmond Examiner*, a famous spokesman for the South, often quoted in other newspapers in both the North and the South. The editor, John M. Daniel, was sometimes described as the head of a school of journalism as he frequently called for contributions to his paper from some of the more forceful young writers in Virginia. Among them, Edward A. Pollard is perhaps the best known for his later contribution to history. Pollard was forever critical of the Confederate

\(^{20}\)Ibid., Oct. 1, 1862.
President, Jefferson Davis. The young writer ascribed Lincoln's courage in venturing upon a "supreme act of outrage, one that fairly crowned his unparalleled boldness and atrocity in the war," to Mr. Davis's "extreme moral timidity." 21 The Examiner carried the full text of the Proclamation in the front page and introduced it with the statement that it was "the most important feature of the news from the North." The editor declared that the United States Government had "shot its bolt." The only serious importance of the Proclamation was the indication that the North would "stop at nothing in prosecuting the War." The Examiner saw in the edict a "call for the insurrection of four million slaves, and the inauguration of a reign of hell upon earth." 22

The Richmond Whig adjudged the Proclamation an important landmark in the history of the war; and said it served to show the stage at which Northern opinion had arrived. The Whig agreed with the other journals that the


22 Richmond Examiner, Sept. 29, 1862.
Proclamation was the "last resort of a defeated, perplexed, and desperate government." This, according to the Whig, was a good sign for the South. The Richmond Dispatch described the emancipation policy as nothing new because as they saw the war, it was an abolition contest from the beginning. "Yankees have stolen and set free all the Negroes who were willing to go where ever their soldiers had possession of the country." 

The Charleston Mercury was known for its extreme position in favor of secession. During the war years, it was owned and edited by Robert Barnwell Rhett, Jr., son of the former United States Senator and fire-brand secessionist of that name. Rhett, though intensely loyal to the Confederate cause, fulminated against the "imbecility" of Davis and the Confederate Government in general. On September 30, the Mercury published the text of the Proclamation without comment. On the following day it published an editorial on the measure explaining the edict as a "stroke of desperate

---

23 *Richmond Whig*, Sept. 29, 1862.


26 *Charleston Mercury*, Sept. 30, 1862.
statesmanship" and argued that it would have no effect on the Negro population. By further discussion of the behavior of the colored population, however, the Mercury revealed its apprehension that the Proclamation might have had some effect on the general conduct of the Negro.27

The Southern press, which operated under greater limitations both in terms of war intelligence and fewer funds than the newspapers of the North, devoted much space to reprinting Northern editorials critical of the Proclamation.28 The Richmond Examiner published the critical comments of the New York papers, the Herald, the World, and the Journal of Commerce.29 The Richmond Whig carried an editorial by the New York Albion which denounced Lincoln's decree as an "atrocious proclamation."30 The New Orleans Daily Picayune did not favor the idea of emancipation; but only five months earlier (April 29, 1862) the resistance of New Orleans had been overwhelmed by the Union forces; consequently the Picayune reprinted critical Northern measures which were

27Charleston Mercury, Oct. 1, 1862.
28Mott, American Journalism, pp. 364-365.
29Richmond Examiner, Sept. 29 and Oct. 16, 1862.
30Richmond Whig, Oct. 3, 1862.
employed by General Butler and the Union army. The Picayune explained that the Emancipation Proclamation was not a general measure that would liberate the slaves, but was another expression of the Confiscation policy. With this explanation, they reprinted the Boston Post's statement that the Proclamation indicated that Lincoln had fallen into the hands of the "radical revolutionary party." In a later edition, the Picayune announced that an inquest had been held upon the bodies of twenty-one contrabands found dead in one house alone in that city. These poor Negroes had been stolen or enticed away from the comfortable homes of their masters, and left to starve and rot by these philanthropic (?) advocates of liberty for the slave.

Aside from the campaign to portray the Proclamation as an attempt by Northern abolitionists to delude the slaves, and the reassurance that the proclamation would be inoperative in the South, two fears were prevalent in Southern editorial comment. One was the fear of servile insurrection that would be inspired by Lincoln's act. The Examiner declared that

---

31 Thomas Ewing Dabney, One-Hundred Great Years; The Story of the Times Picayune (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1944), pp. 160-161.


33 Ibid., cited in Charleston Courier, Feb. 16, 1863.
the Proclamation "ordained" a slave revolt and that "it was not for a moment misunderstood in the North or in the South." The other fear was that it would interfere with foreign recognition of the Confederacy. Some editorials intimated that the South suspected the European powers would not recognize the Confederacy because they (the European powers) believed, and even hoped, the North was going to win the war. The *Arkansas State Gazette* exclaimed: "No harm will be done in Europe because of the Emancipation Proclamation, for recognition will come when the last hope is gone of the Confederacy being crushed by the abolitionists."  

It was said in the North, that the South intended to affect European opinion by describing horrors as contemplated in their press releases. Still, because of the closeness

---

34 *Richmond Examiner*, Oct. 1, 1862.

35 *Arkansas State Gazette*, Oct. 11, 1862.
of a possible servile insurrection, it is easy to believe that these expressed fears were real.\footnote{36}

The \textit{Times} of London, which, at the outset of the American Civil War, insisted on the folly of secession rather than its impossibility,\footnote{37} was among the leading journals attacking the Emancipation Proclamation. The \textit{Times}, probably the most influential news organ in the world, at least according to Lincoln,\footnote{38} refused to accept the Proclamation as evidence of any high moral purpose. Charles MacKay, The \textit{Times} correspondent at Richmond, wrote that the Proclamation was "promulgated as a sop to keep England and France quiet." MacKay also contributed a leading article in The \textit{Times} which closely paralleled the concept the

\footnote{36}{Some Northern journals described the South's claim that the Proclamation invited slaughter and raping as "bugaboo" stories and "mere moonshine" designed to affect opinion in Europe. These Northern analysts claimed that the only thing the "Rebels" feared was the loss of "Four hundred millions of property." "This is the awful prospect that unmans them," they said, and "it is this which convulses the rebel newspapers and has thrown their Congress into paroxysms of anguish." See \textit{Harper's Weekly}, Oct. 18, 1862.}

\footnote{37}{\textit{History of The Times}, p. 381.}

\footnote{38}{Lincoln reportedly told William Russell, The \textit{Times} correspondent of London in the United States, that "The London \textit{Times} is one of the greatest powers in the world, in fact, I don't know anything which has more power,—except perhaps the Mississippi". William Howard Russell, \textit{My Diary North and South} (New York: Harper, 1864), p. 39.}
Confederate State Department wished to convey to the British Foreign Minister, Lord John Russell. MacKay's article attacked Lincoln as "a sort of moral American Pope" whose decree was "to go into remote States where his temporal powers cannot be made manifest."^{39} Two weeks later The Times prophesied that the new policy would earn for the President the title of "Lincoln the Last."^{40} Though The Times criticized the Proclamation, it never advocated British recognition of Southern independence. Yet, as the voice of the British commoner became more pronounced in favor of the North, The Times appeared to be struggling to turn the tide. After the final Proclamation was issued, The Times argued that the Bible justified slavery, and that it might be the duty of the Negroes to refuse the liberty promised. In any case, the London newspaper assured its readers that the Negro was "being only used as a means to forward the ends of the North."^{41} A few days later The Times, in a leading article, insisted that the Northern Government was the oppressor, and that the South was fighting

^{39}The Times (London), Oct. 6, 1862.

^{40}Ibid., Oct. 21, 1862.

^{41}Ibid., Jan. 15, 1863.
for the cause of freedom "against a cruel and desolating" invader.\footnote{Ibid., Jan. 19, 1863.}

In view of the close approximation to "total commitment" to the cause of separation, and the actual--if not admitted connection--between the institution of slavery and the "War for Southern Independence," it probably would have meant political suicide for any Southern statesman to have suggested that the slaves should be freed. Accordingly it appeared that public sentiment in the South piped the tune while the politicians danced. Governor Zebulon B. Vance of North Carolina, faced with the loss of several districts to Union forces and opposed by many citizens who were considered disloyal to the Confederate cause, attempted to use the Emancipation Proclamation as a rallying feature. Speaking to his State's legislature, the Governor reminded the Congressmen that their labors were for the salvation of their people, and that they had to swallow the bitter pill of captured cities and districts. Governor Vance declared that the lost regions suffered a "bitter" fate, which served to show the mercy North Carolina could expect from their abolition foes if they should be overtaken.

\footnote{Ibid., Jan. 19, 1863.}
"In the bitterness of their baffled rage," said Vance, "they have shown a determination to re-enact the horrors of Santo Domingo, and to let loose the hellish passions of servile insurrection to revel in the desolation of our homes."\textsuperscript{43} Vance did succeed in convincing the North Carolina legislature of the need to call for 10,000 troops, but they were in need of supplies and equipment to outfit the men. The Governor sent a request to Jefferson Davis to provide the necessities.\textsuperscript{44}

From Georgia, Governor Joseph E. Brown forwarded a joint Resolution of the Georgia legislature which requested the return of 25,000 pounds of the 160,000 pounds of powder it had loaned the Confederacy. Brown explained that trouble was anticipated with the slaves during the approaching holidays (presumably Christmas and New Year holidays of 1862).\textsuperscript{45} President Jefferson Davis sent a general letter to the Confederate Governors in which he explained the impending circumstances. Although, according to Davis, the Federal forces had been thwarted in their "nefarious

\textsuperscript{45}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 208.
design to subjugate" the Confederate States, he called attention to the buildup of the Union forces in preparation for a new invasion. The Confederate President explained that the North now had a manifest distaste of failure in warfare conducted according to the rules of civilized nations. In view of this, President Davis declared that the United States, in addition to the enormous land and naval forces accumulated, planned to add "such African slaves of the South as they may be able to wrest from their powers to inflict the horrors of a servile war." He then called for a concerted effort on the part of state governments to assist the Confederation in repelling the coming attacks. Davis thus refused the requests for powder and other necessities by the various states. Apparently he thought it was more important to deal with the invading armies than to worry about slave uprisings.

The Emancipation Proclamation was also used as a reason for suspending the writ of habeas corpus in some vicinities. John A. Campbell, former Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and now (Oct. 2, 1862) Acting Secretary of War under the Confederacy, attempted to relieve the doubts of the

---

46 Ibid., p. 211.
provost-marshall at Atlanta, Georgia about the legality of performing his duties, which included the issuance of orders declaring martial law and suspending the writ of habeas corpus in that vicinity. Campbell explained that the "entire military population of the Confederacy had been appropriated by law for the public defense." He believed that the enemy was seeking "to find an ally among those of our own household and to add a servile insurrection to the horrors of a civil war." This justified the course taken at Atlanta according to Secretary Campbell, but he cautioned that "no advantage should be taken of the exigencies of the time to inflict any injustices."47

As the preliminary Proclamation was an announcement to declare free, at a future date, the slaves of the South, the Confederate Congress hoped to secure its withdrawal, or at least arrest its execution. The Confederate Government, therefore, moved to condemn it in a formal resolution. The resolution pronounced the Proclamation a violation of the usages of civilized warfare, an attack on private property, and an invitation to servile insurrection. The resolution further declared that the edict "should be held up to the

execration of mankind, and counteracted by such retaliatory measures" as the President might in his discretion use to discourage any attempts to enforce the measure. The wording of this resolution may be considered mild when compared to the speeches and propositions that were brought before the Confederate Congress to initiate this official response. Confederate Senator, John B. Clark of Missouri, was in favor of declaring every citizen of the Southern Confederacy a soldier authorized to put to death every man caught on Southern soil in arms against the government. Gustavus A. Henry, Senator from Tennessee, said that the resolution did not go far enough. He favored the passage of a law providing that upon any attempt being made to execute the Proclamation of Lincoln, the Confederates should immediately hoist the "black flag" and proclaim a war of extermination upon all invaders of their soil.

In the Confederate House of Representatives the members gave the appearance of trying to outdo each other in contributing the severest denunciatory language and

---


suggesting retaliatory measures. James Lyons, Representative from Virginia, offered a resolution with a preamble describing the Proclamation as the "most inhuman and atrocious" ever issued by "men or power professing to be civilized." The resolution offered by Mr. Lyons exhorted the people of the Confederacy to kill and destroy, by all means available, every officer, soldier, and sailor of the Union forces who was not a "regular prisoner of war." The Representative further resolved that, after the intended decree of January first was issued, no officers of the Union forces should be captured alive, and if they were so captured they should be hanged immediately. But Representative Lyons felt these measures in themselves were not enough and sought to encourage the slaves and free Negroes of the South to slay men of the "Lincolnite Army and Navy" by offering a bounty of twenty dollars for each sailor or soldier killed by them plus an annuity of twenty dollars for life. 50

Ten days later (Oct. 11, 1862), a bill was introduced into the Confederate House designed to sustain President Davis in whatever measures of retaliation he deemed necessary in face of the "lawless and barbarous conduct and designs

of the enemy." The bill was the result of a series of propositions each outlining a number of atrocities which the Representatives felt required the Government of the Confederate States to endeavor to punish and repress "by inflicting severe retribution." Of all the atrocities listed, the most prevalent was President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation which was described as a diabolical measure designed to involve slaves, owners, women, and children in "one common ruin," for maintaining power "by catering to the fanatical spirit of abolitionism." General P. G. T. Beauregard, the first Confederate hero, telegraphed W. Porcher Miles, the South Carolina Representative with whom Beauregard communicated frequently. The General asked if the bill had passed authorizing the execution of abolition prisoners after January, 1863. He then urged: "Do it and England will be stirred into action. It is high time to proclaim the black flag. Let the execution be with the garrots." In discussing the probable measures for retaliation, and always with an eye to possible British recognition, the House did allude to the rights of the Confederacy as belligerents. It was suggested that captives

---

who supported the Proclamation, be executed. The Confederate Congress, however, disregarded Beauregard's request and committed the question of retaliation to the discretion of the Executive.\(^52\)

Aside from expressions of fear as to the results of the Proclamation, attempts to affect foreign opinion, and the construction of retaliatory measures, some newspapers and officials saw merit in Lincoln's decree. On October 18, 1862, the *Richmond Examiner* published an article mentioning the value the "Yankees" had found in the use of the "stolen tens of thousands of Negroes as teamsters, laborers in camp., etc." and suggested that the slaveholders should be more generous in hiring out Negroes for the Confederate army. The *Examiner* attacked the slaveholder for being averse to such use of his property and stated that the war had originated and was being carried on in great part for the defense of the slaveholder in his property, rights, and the perpetuation of the institution of slavery. The journal asserted that it was only reasonable to expect the slaveholder to be "first and foremost in aiding and assisting, by every means in his power, the triumph and success of our

\(^{52}\) *Journal of the Confederate Congress*, V, pp. 543-547.
arms." The Examiner also pointed out that the Negro would receive good care and good wages, and that the "slaveholder ought to remember that for every Negro he furnishes, he puts a soldier in the ranks." Despite its good intentions, the Examiner felt a backlash when in November the Raleigh Standard of North Carolina denounced the Confederate war effort as a struggle in the interests of wealthy slaveholders. "It is a rich man's war and poor man's fight" cried the Standard's editor, W. W. Holden. The Standard's editor was also head of the "Order of Heroes of America," which was the counterpart of the Copperhead's "Order of the Golden Circle" in the North. Holden experienced some success in getting citizens of North Carolina organized to resist the Confederate conscription. Although some Unionists felt that the Proclamation prostrated their efforts in resisting Confederate authorities, editor Holden continued to insist that North Carolina had done more than her share and that her people ought to contribute no further. The results of Holden's efforts proved to be an

53 Richmond Examiner, Oct. 18, 1862.

54 Mott, American Journalism, p. 367.

ominous threat not only to the enrolling officers, but also to the maintenance of North Carolina in the Confederacy.\textsuperscript{56}

Another attempt by the Confederates to use the Emancipation Proclamation was in the effort to separate the border states from their allegiance to the Union. While the \textit{Arkansas State Gazette} expressed the hope that the Proclamation would cause unwavering support of the border states for the South against a government bent on abolitionism,\textsuperscript{57} Confederate General S. S. Buckner had already urged the "freemen" of Kentucky to join the Confederate army. The General addressed "The Freeman of Kentucky" and proceeded to explain the means by which all the principles cherished by Kentuckians had been subverted by the Northerners. "No sooner had they been placed in power than, in violation of their repeated pledges," said General Buckner, "they joined in the abolition crusade against the South." He declared that if any doubts had existed before as to the designs of the Northern Government, they should have been dispelled by Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. "Will you light the servile torch which is to involve our own homes in the general conflagration, and draw upon ourselves


\textsuperscript{57}\textit{Arkansas State Gazette}, Oct. 11, 1862.
the contempt and derision of the abolition despots, who view us only as the tame instruments to carry out their will?" the General asked. Buckner then informed the Kentuckians that the Generals, Braxton Bragg and Kirby-Smith, were in the vicinity and that they came to relieve the Bluegrass State from the tyranny of the North. He promised that no peaceable citizen would be molested. "We make war only against armed men," he said, "not as our enemies do, against peaceable citizens and defenseless women and children." General Bragg, not long after Buckner's recruiting speech, withdrew his troops from Kentucky. He blamed the Kentuckians' lack of co-operation as the major explanation for his action. It seemed that although the citizen of Kentucky harbored animosity against the abolitionists, they were even more resolved to resist secession.

The Confederates, however, did not lose hope that the sister slave states of the border would join them in their cause. After the final Proclamation confirmed Lincoln's intent to carry out the Emancipation policy, the Southern press again scoffed at the value of the Proclamation

and denounced the intended "wickedness" of such an edict.
The Charleston Courier jeered, "The Pope's bull against the comet has been issued, and I suppose Mr. Lincoln now breathes more freely. The wonderful man by a dash of the pen has set free (on paper) all the slaves of the South, and henceforth this is to be in all its length and breadth the land of liberty!" The Richmond Whig merely reprinted the text of the Proclamation under the caption, "The Latest 'Bull' from Lincoln," and explained that it was a part of the history of the war. The Augusta, (Georgia) Chronicle and Sentinel announced that Lincoln had issued the promised edict and noted that they saw "no portentous signs of calamity, either in the heavens or on earth." The sun was observed as "not darkened" and the moon had not "turned into blood." The editor observed that Northern people would not succeed in destroying the institution of slavery; and in attempting to do so would only bring ruin on themselves. The Augusta paper described it as madness and offered the explanation that "whom God wishes to destroy he first deprives of reason." The Nashville Dispatch expressed the same

---

60 Charleston Daily Courier, Feb. 16, 1863

61 Richmond Whig, Jan. 7, 1863.
sentiments. The Richmond Dispatch took into account the recent Confederate victories and argued that the South need not answer Lincoln's Proclamation by words, as the North had been answered at Fredericksburg and Murfreesboro. The Savannah Republican believed that as far as the border States were concerned, the Proclamation would have the opposite effect of that for which it was intended. The Republican asserted that those slave States which remained loyal to the Union in the belief that their Southern sisters were hasty and wrong about the abolitionist intent of the Union Government, "will now see that they were right and that all their worst apprehensions have been justified by the acts of that government." The Richmond Examiner found it hard to decide whether wickedness or folly predominated. The journal described the Proclamation as the "most startling political crime, the most stupid political blunder yet known in American History," and they predicted it would receive "universal condemnation and contempt in Europe." The Examiner then concluded that the

62 Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, Jan. 9, 1863; Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 6, 1863.
63 Richmond Dispatch, Jan. 6, 1863.
64 Savannah Republican, Mar. 6, 1863.
Proclamation would have a salutary effect on the people of the South. The paper declared that the Proclamation "shuts the door of retreat and repentance on the weak and the timid."\(^\text{65}\) Probably the "weak and the timid" to which the Examiner referred were not only those who were disloyal while under Confederate jurisdiction, but also those who had fallen to Union forces, and acted on the issuance of the preliminary edict to gain readmittance to the Union before the end of the one-hundred day grace period.\(^\text{66}\)

\(^{65}\) *Richmond Examiner*, Jan. 7, 1863.

\(^{66}\) After Lincoln had issued the Proclamation of September 22, John F. Bouligny, who was then in Washington, asked President Lincoln if the thirteen parishes of Louisiana and New Orleans which were in the hands of Union forces could be excepted from the final edict. Bouligny explained that loyal Unionists would be elected to take their seats in the Federal Congress if the exceptions could be made. The President assured Bouligny this could be done and directed George F. Shepley, the Military Governor of Louisiana, to get an election under way so that the results would be in before January 1, 1863. The election took place on December 3, 1862 and resulted in the election of Benjamin F. Flanders and Michael Hahn. Mr. Hahn became the first governor of the re-established state of Louisiana in February of 1864. See Allen Thorndike Rice, *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: The North American Review, 1885), p. 92; and Roy P. Basler (ed.), *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1953), V, pp. 487-488, 505; *Ibid.*, VII, p. 243.

Similar action took place in the parts of Virginia that were excluded from the operation of the Proclamation. General Dix in command of the Union forces in the excepted counties of Virginia explained that the citizens there were
Virginia's Confederate Governor, John Letcher, declared to the Senate and House of Delegates of Virginia that Lincoln's Proclamation violated all principles of humanity, and disregarded all social, moral and political obligations. Letcher cited the paragraph of the Proclamation which declared that "within any state or designated part of a state, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States," slaves "thenceforward and forever" would be free. The Governor termed this provision an exhibition of depravity. He contended that the country had never witnessed such a display of atrociousness as he found manifested in the emancipatory decree.  

From the time of the issuance of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation through the issuance of the final

"desirous of an opportunity" to show their "fidelity to the Government and of securing their exemption from the penalties of disloyalty, by electing a member of Congress" who would represent them by the first of January, 1863. The returns from the election (Dec. 31, 1862) showed Mr. John B. McCLOUD the successful candidate. Although this portion of Virginia initially escaped the penalties of the Proclamation, the Federal House of Representatives refused to receive their Representative. See Lincoln: Collected Works, VI, p. 26. 

Proclamation, the Southern newspapers had launched their attacks, the Governors, Representatives and other officials of the separate Confederate States had made known their opposition to the decree. On January 12, 1863 the Confederate President, Jefferson Davis, gave the official Executive reaction to the Proclamation. President Davis announced to the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Confederate States that the "enemy" had been thwarted in its past two attempts to force the Confederate States back into the Union and to conquer and rule these States as dependent provinces. Now, he declared, the "enemies have evidently entered upon another, which can have no other purpose than revenge and thirst for blood and plunder of private property."

In the same address, Davis made specific reference to the Proclamation. He described it as a measure which doomed "an inferior race" to extermination and at the same time encouraged servile insurrection by the insidious recommendation "to abstain from violence unless in necessary self-defense." Defining the decree as "the most execrable measure recorded in the history of guilty man" the Confederate Chief Executive explained that the South's detestation was tempered by the contempt it had for the impotency of such a measure. President Davis acknowledged
receipt of the retaliatory measures suggested by the Confederate Congress but he informed Congress that, unless he later saw reason for a different method, he would have all the Union officers that were captured by the Confederate forces turned over to the State authorities. The States would deal with the captives in accordance with the laws provided for the punishment of criminals engaged in exciting a servile insurrection. The captured enlisted men should be returned to their homes on the proper and usual parole.

The Confederacy's President Davis viewed the political aspects of the Proclamation as significant in that the whole South was afforded "the complete and crowning proof" of the true nature of the Republican party. He recalled the earlier pledge of the Union President in his first inaugural not to interfere with the institution of slavery, and the pledges of both the President and the Congress of the Union not to destroy the domestic institutions of the individual states. According to Davis, this proved the sagacity of the South in perceiving the intention of the Republican party from the beginning. President Davis declared that the people of the South were thankful they had got out of the Union in time to escape the "consequences now apparent to the most skeptical." The Confederate President
further explained that the Proclamation rendered the restoration of the Union impossible. It had created circumstances which could "lead to but one of three possible consequences--the extermination of the slaves, the exile of the whole white population from the Confederacy, or absolute and total separation of these States from the United States." In conclusion, Davis maintained that the Proclamation was evidence that the North could not subjugate the South by force of arms and as such "must be accepted by neutral nations, which can no longer find any justification in withholding" the South's claims to formal recognition.68

The Confederate Congress considered President Davis' message and responded with a resolution stating that commissioned officers of the enemy ought not to be delivered to the authorities of the respective States, but that all captives taken by the Confederate forces ought to be dealt with and disposed of by the Confederate Government. The Legislative body reiterated its previous suggestion as to possible modes of retaliation, and it reaffirmed its declaration that the Emancipation Proclamation was

"inconsistent with the spirit of those usages which in modern warfare prevail among civilized nations." In addition to this action, the Confederate Congress voted into law a measure defining what behavior constituted support of the Proclamation and provided in each instance, that the "criminal" would be put to death or be otherwise punished at the discretion of the court. Retaliation for the Emancipation Proclamation seemed no longer to be at the discretion of the Confederate Chief Executive; instead, there was a law which he was designated to execute.  

E. A. Pollard described the attitude between the Confederate Congress and President Davis on this issue. The author sarcastically noted that the law was never carried out in a single instance. He claimed that President Davis never paid any attention to the Congressional corrections except to stop writing "gloomy and vaporizing messages about taking vengeance upon the enemy."  

As the Union forces began to effect the emancipation measure with the enlistment of Negro troops, the Confederate Government was again confronted with the problem of how to  

---

69 *Journal of the Confederate Congress*, VI, pp. 486-487.  
deal with prisoners. Except in this case the difficulty was that the prisoners were in some instances Negroes who were captured in arms. One of the first impulses of the Confederate Congress was to establish a depot where the captured Negroes could be properly segregated. Those found to be fugitives from their masters were to be restored to their rightful owners. Those for whom no masters could be found were to be sold into perpetual bondage. It was suggested that the sale of this second group would provide funds to reimburse citizens of the Confederacy who had lost their slave property due to enemy efforts. Another suggestion, offered by Thomas D. McDowell of North Carolina, was to adopt a bill providing for the sale of all Negroes taken in arms against the Confederate States, the proceeds to be divided among the troops engaged in their capture. Some members felt that the practice of selling captured Negroes was not suited to the purpose of the armed forces and they argued that unless the Negroes were fugitive slaves, they should become the property of their captors to be held and considered thereafter as slaves.

72 Ibid., p. 103.
73 Ibid., p. 129.
While the plans for the disposition of captured Negroes were being discussed in Congress, the Confederate Army was attempting to find the answer to the problem of dealing with those already on hand. General Mercier had four Negroes who had been captured wearing the Federal Uniform. One of the Negroes came into the possession of two brokers who put him up for sale in Savannah, Georgia. Mercier requested that the Negro be returned to his authority and wrote to the assistant adjutant-general of the Department of South Carolina and Georgia for instructions on how to handle the matter. The assistant adjutant-general, General T. Jordan, brought the matter before the Department Commander, General Beaureguard, who brought it to the attention of the Secretary of War, James A. Seddon who in turn referred the matter to President Jefferson Davis. The Chief Executive then wrote General Beaureguard that the slaves were in flagrant rebellion and subject to death by the laws of every slaveholding state. He explained that too much time and inconvenience would be involved if the army attempted to handle the disposition of the Negro captives through civil tribunals, and, therefore, he declared that

\[\text{\footnotesize\textsuperscript{74}}\text{O.R., Series 2, Vol. IV, pp. 945-946.}\]
summary execution must be inflicted. To guard against abuse of this grave power under the immediate excitement of capture or through overzeal, Mr. Davis decreed that the discretion of deciding and giving the order of execution should be vested in the general commanding in the special locality of the capture. In this specific case, President Davis told General Beaureguard to instruct General Mercier to exercise this discretion in the case of the slaves referred to by him. General Mercier was of the opinion that his captives should be "made an example of," and that some "swift and terrible punishment should be inflicted" to deter other Negroes from following this example.

The Confederate Congress, evidently believed that the President was exercising too much authority over the matter, and adopted a joint resolution stating that all Negroes and Mulattoes who engaged in the war or were taken in arms against the Confederacy were to be turned over to the authorities of the states in which they were captured to be dealt with according to the existing laws of that state.

---

75 Ibid., p. 954.

76 Ibid., p. 946.

A strict adherence to the state laws meant that the Negroes would be put to death. The Confederate legislative body later resolved to consider the expediency of a law to establish the status of a Negro prisoner prior to his enlistment into the Union forces. Those discovered to have been slaves were to be returned to servitude. The free Negro enlistee was to be considered either a prisoner of war or an inciter of servile rebellion (May, 1863). The South, however, refused to treat the Negro as a prisoner of war until the last months of the rebellion.

The conflicting resolutions of the Confederate Congress plus the confusion engendered by the contrasting opinions of the authorities as to the disposition of captured Negroes frustrated the generals commanding in the field. One result of this friction between the Legislature and the Executive was the failure to establish a standard operating procedure for commanders in the field. This in turn created a latitude for anarchial behavior in the ranks.


80 Ibid., pp. 737, 828.
as far as treatment of Negro prisoners was concerned. General Kirby Smith displayed his irritation with the perplexity of the Negro prisoner problem in a letter to General Richard Taylor. Kirby Smith expressed the hope that Taylor's troops had not captured Negroes in arms, but that the officers in command of the capturing parties had "recognized the propriety of giving no quarter to armed Negroes and their officers." General Kirby Smith explained, "in this way we may be relieved of a disagreeable dilemma." Although there are recorded instances of indiscriminate slaughter of Negro troops, the Confederate army did take the colored soldiers as captives throughout the remainder of the war. Confederate President Davis later reflected on these perplexing problems and concluded that Abraham Lincoln's Proclamation was artfully designed to confuse the Confederates in the conduct of the war.

---

81 O.R., Series 2, VI, pp. 21-22.


Upon the Negroes of the South the Proclamation had varied effects. The reactions of the slaves such as those remembered by Booker T. Washington, celebrated the edict in silence. Washington was sure that the slaves were aware (at least in Virginia) of the fact that the Proclamation had been issued. Certainly there was no action to suppress the information in Southern newspapers. As Booker Washington explains the situation where he was a slave, the Negroes remained loyal to their masters and performed their duties as usual, but the desire for freedom was with them and they devoted their prayers to Lincoln and his success. In areas such as Louisiana where the Union forces made a vigorous effort to implement the Emancipation Proclamation, the Negro population began exhibiting increasing restiveness, became impudent to the masters, and in some cases engaged in the seizure and distribution of property. One diarist wrote of her frightening experience of witnessing armed Negroes ransacking her home. She described their manner as insolent, their speech as profuse, and their walk as swaggering. Though she and her companion were not abused, they took the first opportunity to leave the plantation.

She explained that other owners followed the same course. In other instances where Negroes were still under the supervision of their masters or mistresses, the desire to experience their newly proclaimed freedom encouraged outright desertions. Such was the case with the personal servant to President Davis' wife. This also seemed to be the case of the many Negroes who joined the already large number of fugitives within the Union lines.

John B. Jones, the subject of A Rebel War Clerk's Diary, recorded his impressions of the Negroes' conduct after the issuance of the Proclamation. On January 7, 1863, he noted a large body of slaves passing through the city of Richmond, Virginia. He explained that slaves had been working on the fortification north of the city and were headed toward the southern sector where they would commence working on fortifications. He asserted the slaves had "no

---


faith in the efficacy of Lincoln's Emancipation," but stated it was different in Norfolk. That city was excepted from the Proclamation but this did not seem to prevent nearly 4,000 slaves from demonstrating in an Emancipation jubilee. Jones remarked of the slaves, "They will bewail their error; and so will the abolitionists." He predicted that the Negroes would devour the enemy's food supply, and declared if they were armed, the Confederates would gain possession of their arms. The Negroes who found their way to the islands off the coast of South Carolina became free directly upon the issuance of the Proclamation. The islands, which were in the hands of the Union army and navy were not excepted from the Emancipation Proclamation as were other areas under Union control. The key position among these islands was Port Royal where a large number of Negroes resided. The colored inhabitants in Port Royal joined with the whites in a celebration of thanks and joy, while antislavery advocates

took special pride in the fact that at least in this one instance, Lincoln's decree was a direct instrument of freedom.\textsuperscript{90}

In recollections of the war, many Southerners remembered, with gratitude to the Negro, that the colored element of the South remained loyal to their masters throughout the war and did not engage in engineering servile insurrections.\textsuperscript{91} At the end of the war, the biggest problem the South faced was the readjustment to its new social and economic life with the presence of four million freed Negroes. One Confederate patriot summarized the passing event as follows:

The conflict, with all its death and destruction, its sorrows and its suffering, was but the necessary baptism of this nation, legitimating its disputed birth by a verdict in the high court of war, rendered in accordance with the laws of evolution, beyond which there is no appeal.\textsuperscript{92}


\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{91}Arney Robinson Childs (ed.), \textit{The Private Journal of Henry William Revenal, 1859-1887} (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1947), pp. 231-232.\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}\textsuperscript{92}Edward Porter Alexander, \textit{Military Memoirs of a Confederate} (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1962), p. XXX.\end{flushleft}
CONCLUSION

President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation stands forth as an important war measure. As has been shown, the Proclamation was not a mere paper bull; when implemented, the decree proved to be a formidable instrument that helped in the prosecution of the war effort on the part of the North and provided a source of confusion, at least of annoyance, to the South. Moreover, after the policy of freeing the slaves in the areas in rebellion had been set forth, the complete abolition of slavery in America probably became inevitable.

The Proclamation was received by the American public as an epoch-making document. The newspapers gave the edict wide circulation throughout both the North and the South. The members of the Union Government debated the best ways of capitalizing upon the Proclamation while the Confederacy discussed ways of nullifying its effects and sought to use the edict as a means of stimulating a greater commitment to the Southern cause. As an integral part of the war program, it was not surprising that the document was misinterpreted,
and that exaggerated notions of its meaning and of President Lincoln's intent should have arisen.

Most abolitionists hailed the Proclamation as a clarion call for an end to slavery. The Proclamation alienated many of the hesitant or doubtful members of the Republican party, and apparently forced the party into a more compact, homogeneous organization that, superficially at least, gave as its objectives the defeat of the secessionists and the destruction of the institution of slavery in the process. After the final Proclamation was issued, Congress more readily gave President Lincoln the support he needed to win the war.

The secessionists denounced the emancipation edicts as open invitations to servile insurrection. The border states were urged to join the Confederacy in its struggle against the Union government which, because of the Emancipation Proclamation, was described as an instrument of the abolitionists. The Confederate leaders marked the final Proclamation as the point in the war from which there could be no turning back. Confederate President Davis told his people that the document had created circumstances which required the "absolute and total separation" of the Confederate states from the United States. The South evinced
greater determination to secure its independence, and to preserve the institution of slavery.

Some Americans—from both sections—who may have viewed slavery as a wrong, still saw in the Proclamation what was even more distasteful to them—the possibility of racial equality. Their argument was not that the Negroes would be elevated but that the whites would be degraded. The "Peace Democrats" raised the racist argument against the Proclamation and succeeded in undermining the Lincoln administration's war efforts to a certain degree. But the attacks on the Proclamation from the Democrats also forced a more vigorous attention to the provisions of the edicts such as colonization and the recruiting of Negroes for service in the Union armed forces.

While the colonization scheme may have helped to allay some fears of a Negro inundation of the Northern states, it also evoked arguments which amplified the Negroes' claim to the United States as more their country than any other place in the world in which they might be colonized. The failure of colonization attempts and the use of Negroes in the military effort, lent greater support to these claims.

The use of Negroes as fighting men caused concern to those who wanted to keep the struggle in the realm of a
white man's war. The administration and military leaders, who advocated the use of Negroes, were obligated to argue that participation in the war gave the Negro a further vested interest in this country.

The Emancipation Proclamation seized the popular imagination and placed the Negro race in a new perspective. The edict was revolutionary in that it had no precedents and it was epoch-making in that it brought the end of slavery into view. It caused the question of slavery to be emphasized in connection with the preservation of the Union. It prompted abolition measures in some of the Union slave states, and paved the way for the eradication of slavery by a Constitutional amendment.

Looking at what might be considered as some of the negative aspects of the Proclamation, civil and military adjustments between the North and the South were complicated; that is, the interpretation popularly given to the edict allowed for no middle ground in problems requiring compromise such as in the exchange of prisoners. The South, which considered the edict as a capital grievance, launched a wave of angry resentment, and the way was open for retaliation or, from the Southern point of view, counter-retaliation. The important social problems of the South
were put into the hands of Northerners who lacked the experience and compassion needed in dealing with the Negro. The future freedom of the Negro, if not his equality with the white race, was assured.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Public Documents


Contemporary Letters, Speeches, Writings and Diaries

Basler, Roy P. (ed.). The Collected Works of Abraham
Lincoln. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers


Butler, Benjamin F. Butler's Book. Boston: Thayer
and Co., 1892.

Canby, Courtlandt (ed.). Lincoln and the Civil War.

Childs, Arney Robinson (ed.). The Private Journal of
Henry Williams Revenal, 1859-1887. Columbia,
South Carolina: University of South Carolina
Press, 1847.

Commager, Henry Steele (ed.). Documents of American

____________. The Blue and the Gray. New York: The

Davis, Jefferson. Rise and Fall of the Confederate

Dennett, Tyler (ed.). Lincoln and the Civil War in the
Diary and Letters of John Hay. New York: Dodd
& Mead Co., 1939.

Elliott, E. N. Cotton is King and Proslavery Arguments.
Augusta, Georgia: Pritchard, Abbott, and Loomis,
1860.

Foner, Phillip S. The Life and Writings of Frederick

Ford, Paul Leicaster (ed.). Writings of Thomas
& Sons, 1892.

Forten, Charlotte L. The Journal of Charlotte Forten.


Contemporary Newspapers and Periodicals

Arkansas State Gazette, Oct. 1862.


Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel, Sept. 1862.
Boston Evening Transcript, Sept. 1862.

Charleston Courier, Feb. 1863.

Charleston Mercury, Jan. 1861; Sept., Oct. 1862.


Columbus Crisis, Oct. 1863.

Columbus Ohio State Journal, Sept., Oct., 1862.


Dubuque Herald, Sept., Oct., 1862.

Evening Transcript, Sept. 1862.


London Times.

Liberator, Sept. 1862; Jan. 1863.


Memphis Avalanche, Sept. 1861.

Missouri Democrat, Nov. 1862.

Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 1863.


New York Express, Oct. 1862.


Richmond Dispatch, Oct. 1862.
Richmond Enquirer, Sept. 1862; May 1863.
Richmond Examiner, Sept., Oct., 1862.
Richmond Whig, Sept. 29. 1862.
Savannah Republican, Sept. 1862.
Terre Haute Express, Sept. 1862.

Secondary Sources

Biographies


Thomas, Benjamin P. and Hyman, Harold M. *Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War*.


Periodicals


Cole, Arthur C., "Lincoln's Election and Immediate Menace to Slavery in the States?" *American Historical Review*, XXXVI.


Monographs


General Works


