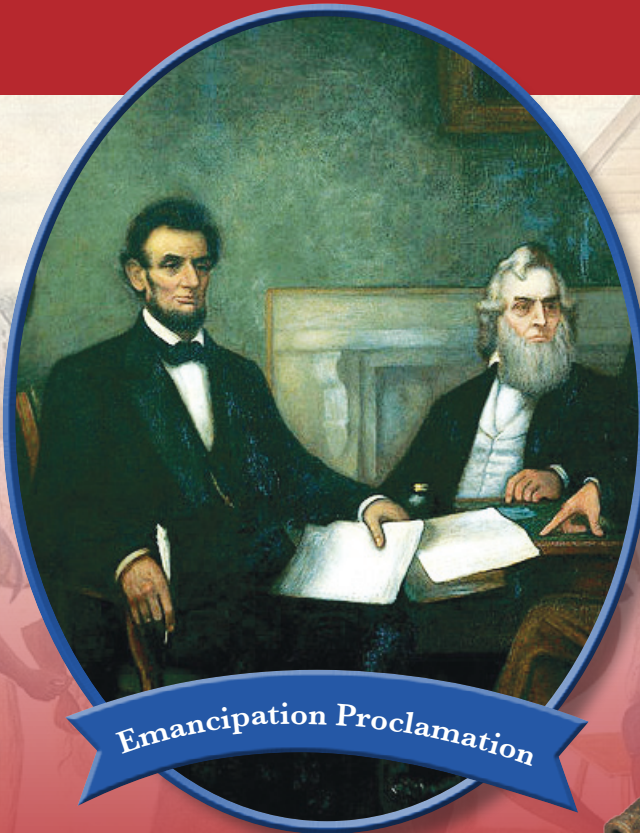


The Slaves Freed



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The Slaves Freed

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BY STEPHEN OATES

When the cold, fastidious Mississippian rose to speak, a hush fell over the crowded Senate chamber. It was January 21, 1861, and Jefferson Davis and four other senators from the Deep South were here this day to announce their resignations. Over the winter, five Southern states had seceded from the Union, contending that Abraham Lincoln's election as President doomed the white man's South, that Lincoln and his fellow Republicans were abolitionist fanatics out to eradicate slavery and plunge Dixie into racial chaos. Though the Republicans had pledged to leave the peculiar institution alone where it already existed, Deep Southerners refused to believe them and left the Union to save their slave-based society from Republican aggression.

For his part, Jefferson Davis regretted that Mississippi had been obliged to secede, and he had spent a sleepless night, distressed about the breakup of the Union and fearful of the future. To be sure, he loved the idea of a Southern confederacy; and he had warned Republicans that if the South could not depart in peace, a war would begin, the likes of which man had never seen before. But today, as he gave his valedictory in the Senate, Davis was sad and forlorn, his voice quavering. He bore his Republican adversaries no hostility, he said, and wished them and their people well. He apologized if in the heat of debate he had offended anybody—and he forgave those who had insulted him. “Mr. President and Senators,” he said with great difficulty, “having made the announcement which the occasion seemed to me to require, it only remains for me to bid you a final adieu.”

Several senators were visibly moved, and there were audible sobs in the galleries. As Davis made his exit, with Southern ladies waving handkerchiefs and crying out in

favor of secession, Republicans stared grimly after him, realizing perhaps for the first time that the South was in earnest, the Union was disintegrating.

As Lincoln's inauguration approached and more Southern congressmen resigned to join the Confederacy, Republicans gained control of both houses and voted to expel the secessionists as traitors. Senator Lyman Trumbull of Illinois pronounced them all mad, and Charles Sumner of Massachusetts exhorted the free states to stand firm in the crisis. Michigan's Zachariah Chandler vowed to whip the South back into the Union and preserve

Ben Wade of Ohio predicted that secession would bring about the destruction of slavery.

the integrity of the government. And Ben Wade of Ohio predicted that secession would bring about the destruction of slavery, the very thing Southerners dreaded most. “The first blast of civil war,” he had thundered at them, “is the death warrant of your institution.”

After the events at Fort Sumter, Wade, Chandler, and Sumner called repeatedly at the White House and spoke with Lincoln about slavery and the rebellion. Sumner was a tall, elegant bachelor, with rich brown hair, a massive forehead, blue eyes, and a rather sad smile. He had traveled widely in England, where his friends included some of the most eminent political and literary figures. A humorless, erudite Bostonian,

educated at Harvard, Sumner even looked English, with his tailored coats, checkered trousers, and English gaiters. He was so conscious of manners “that he never allowed himself, even in the privacy of his own chamber, to fall into a position which he would not take in his chair in the Senate. ‘Habit,’ he said, “is everything.’ ” Sumner spoke out with great courage against racial injustice and was one of the few Republicans who advocated complete Negro equality. Back in 1856 Representative Preston Brooks of South Carolina had beaten him almost to death in the Senate Chamber for his “Crime Against Kansas” speech, and Sumner still carried physical and psychological scars from that attack. The senator now served as Lincoln's chief foreign policy adviser, often accompanied him on his carriage rides, and became the President's warm personal friend.

Zachariah Chandler was a Detroit businessman who had amassed a fortune in real estate and dry goods. Profane, hard-drinking, and eternally grim, Chandler had been one of the founders of the national Republican party and had served on the Republican National Committee in 1856 and 1860. Elected to the Senate in 1857, he had plunged into the acrimonious debates over slavery in the West, exhorting his colleagues not to surrender another inch of territory to slaveholders. When Southerners threatened to murder Republicans, brandishing pistols and bowie knives in the Senate itself, Chandler took up calisthenics and improved his marksmanship in case he had to fight. Once civil war commenced, he demanded that the government suppress the “armed traitors” of the South with all-out warfare.

Now serving his second term in the Senate, Benjamin Franklin Wade was short and thick chested, with iron-gray hair, sunken black eyes, and a square and

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beardless face. He was blunt and irascible, known as “Bluff Ben” for his readiness to duel with slaveowners, and he told more ribald jokes than any other man in the Senate, but he also had a charitable side: once when he spotted a destitute neighbor robbing his corncrib, Wade moved out of sight in order not to humiliate the man. Once the war began, he was determined that Congress should have an equal voice with Lincoln in shaping Union war policies. According to diplomat Rudolf Schleiden, Wade was “perhaps the most energetic personality in the entire Congress.” “That queer, rough, but intelligent-looking man,” said one Washington observer, “is old Senator Wade of Ohio, who doesn’t care a pinch of snuff whether people like what he says or not.” Wade hated slavery as Sumner and Chandler did. But like most whites of his generation, he was prejudiced against blacks: he complained about their “odor,” growled about all the “Nigger” cooks in Washington, and insisted that he had eaten food “cooked by Niggers until I can smell and taste the Nigger...all over.” Like many Republicans, he thought the best solution to America’s race problem was to ship all Negroes back to Africa.

As far as the Republican party was concerned, the three senators belonged to a loose faction inaccurately categorized as “radicals,” a misnomer that has persisted through the years. These “more advanced Republicans,” as the *Detroit Post* and *Tribune* referred to them, were really progressive, nineteenth-century liberals who felt a powerful kinship with English liberals like John Bright and Richard Cobden. What advanced Republicans wanted was to reform the American system—to bring their nation into line with the Declaration’s premise—by ridding it of slavery and the South’s ruling planter class. But while the advanced Republicans supported other social reforms, spoke out forthrightly against the crime and anachronism of slavery, and refused to compromise with the “Slave Power,” they desired no radical

break from basic American ideals and liberal institutions. Moreover, they were often at odds with one another on such issues as currency, the tariff, and precisely what rights black people should exercise in American white society.

Before secession, the advanced Republicans had endorsed the party’s hands-off policy about slavery in the South: they all agreed that Congress had no constitutional authority to menace slavery as a state institution; all agreed, too, that the federal government could only abolish slavery in the national capital and outlaw it in the national territories, thus containing the institution in the South where they hoped it would ultimately perish. But civil war had removed their constitutional scruples about slavery in the Southern states, thereby bringing about the first significant difference between them and the more “moderate” and “conservative” members of the party. While the latter insisted that the Union must be restored with slavery intact, the advanced Republicans argued that the national government could now remove the peculiar institution by the war powers, and they wanted the President to do it in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief. This was what Sumner, Wade, and Chandler came to talk about with Lincoln. They respected the President, had applauded his nomination, campaigned indefatigably in his behalf, and cheered his firm stand at Fort Sumter. Now they urged him to destroy slavery as a war measure, pointing out that this would maim and cripple the Confederacy and hasten an end to the rebellion. Sumner flatly asserted that

slavery and the rebellion were “mated” and would stand or fall together.

WHY THE PRESIDENT HELD BACK

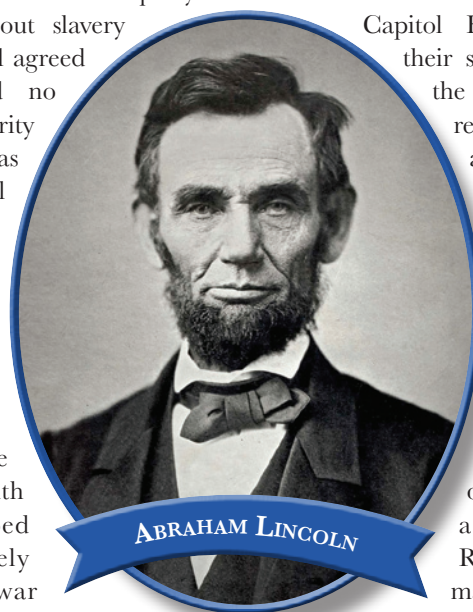
Lincoln seemed sympathetic. He detested human bondage as much as they did, and he wanted to stay on good terms with advanced Republicans on Capitol Hill, for he needed their support in prosecuting the war. Moreover, he respected the senators and referred to men like Sumner as the conscience of the party.

Yet to the senators’ dismay, he would not free the slaves, could not free them. For one thing, he had no intention of alienating moderate and conservative Republicans—the majority of the party—by issuing an emancipation

decree. For another, emancipation would almost surely send the loyal slave states—Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri—spiraling into the Confederacy, something that would be calamitous to the Union. Then, too, Lincoln was waging a bipartisan war with Northern Democrats and Republicans alike enlisting in his armies. An abolition policy, Lincoln feared, would splinter that coalition, perhaps even cause a new civil war behind Union lines.

Though deeply disappointed, the three senators at first acquiesced in Lincoln’s policy because they wanted to maintain Republican unity in combating the rebellion. Sumner told himself that at bottom Lincoln was “a deeply convinced and faithful anti-slavery man” and that the sheer pressure of war would force him to strike at Negro bondage eventually.

On July 4, 1861, the Thirty-seventh Congress convened with a rebel army



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

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entrenched less than thirty miles away. Republicans controlled both houses, and the advanced Republicans quickly gained positions of leadership out of proportion to their numbers. Many had been in Congress for years, and their uncompromising stand against slavery expansion and concessions to secessionists had won them accolades from all manner of Republicans. Like Chandler, several advanced Republicans had helped establish the national party; all were prominent in their state parties. Their prestige, skill, and energy—Chandler, for example, routinely put in eighteen-hour workdays—had helped bring them to positions of power on Capitol Hill.

In the Senate, advanced Republicans chaired nearly all the crucial committees. Sumner ran the committee on foreign relations, Chandler the committee on commerce, and Wade the committee on territories. In addition, Lyman Trumbull of Illinois, a dry, logical speaker with sandy hair and gold-rimmed spectacles, headed the judiciary committee. Henry Wilson, Sumner's Massachusetts colleague, a stout, beardless, red-faced businessman who had once been a shoemaker's apprentice, held Jefferson Davis's old job as chairman of the committee on military affairs. William Pitt Fessenden of Maine, impeccably dressed in his black jackets and black silk ties, famous for his forensic duels with Stephen A. Douglas before the war, chaired the finance committee and cooperated closely with Salmon Chase, Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury. Fessenden had been born out of wedlock—a terrible stigma in that time—and the awful, unspoken shame of his illegitimacy had made him proud and quick to take offense, intolerant of human failings in others as well as himself. He and Sumner had once been friends, had called one another "my dear Sumner" and "my dear Fessenden," and

often entered the Senate arm in arm. But Fessenden had taken umbrage at what he thought were Sumner's haughty airs, and their friendship had changed to bristling animosity. Fessenden remained "old friends" with Wade and Chandler, though, and also hobnobbed with Jacob Collamer of Vermont, a Republican conservative.

Advanced Republicans were equally prominent in the House. There was James Ashley of Ohio, an emotional, dramatic man with a curly brown mane, who chaired the committee on territories. There was George Washington Julian

In the Senate, advanced
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from Indiana, protégé of Joshua "Old War Horse" Giddings and a contentious, frowning individual who proved himself a formidable antislavery legislator. There was portly, unkempt Owen Lovejoy of Illinois, brother of Elijah, the abolitionist martyr; an eloquent antislavery orator, he headed the committee on agriculture. Like Sumner, Lovejoy was a close friend of Lincoln's—"the **best** friend I had in Congress," the President once remarked—and strove to sustain administration policies while simultaneously pushing the main cause of emancipation.

Finally there was sixty-nine-year-old Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, who controlled the nation's purse strings as chairman of the powerful committee on ways and means. Afflicted with a

clubfoot, Stevens was a grim, sardonic bachelor with a cutting wit ("I now yield to Mr. B.," he once said, "who will make a few feeble remarks") and a fondness for gambling that took him almost nightly to Washington's casinos. To the delight of his colleagues, he indulged in witticisms so off color that they had to be deleted from the **Congressional Globe**. A wealthy ironmaster with a Jekyll-and-Hyde personality, he had contributed generously to charities and causes, crusaded for public schools in Pennsylvania, and defended fugitive slaves there. Crippled, as Fawn Brodie has noted, Stevens spoke of bondage "in terms of shackled limbs and a longing for freedom to dance." He lived with his mulatto housekeeper, Lydia Smith, and there is strong evidence that they were lovers. Antimiscegenation laws made marriage impossible, and their liaison not only generated malicious gossip but probably kept Stevens from becoming what he most wanted to be—a United States senator. He liked to quote the Bible that "He hath made of one blood all nations of men," yet he never championed complete equality for blacks—"not equality

in all things," he once asserted, "simply before the laws, nothing else." Serving a fourth term as congressman, this bitter, intimidating, high-minded man was to rule the Civil War House and become "the master-spirit," said Alexander McClure, "of every aggressive movement in Congress to overthrow the rebellion and slavery."

As the session progressed that summer, congressional Republicans demonstrated remarkable harmony. They all wanted to preserve the Union and help the President fight the war through to a swift and successful conclusion. In agreement with Lincoln's slave policy, congressional Republicans also voted for the so-called Crittenden-Johnson resolutions, which declared that the sole purpose of the war was to restore the Union. For the sake of

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party unity, most advanced Republicans reluctantly supported the resolutions, too. But they agreed with Congressman Albert Riddle of Ohio that slavery ought to be destroyed. “You all believe that it is to go out, when it does, through convulsion, fire and blood,” Riddle stormed on the House floor. “That convulsion is upon us. The man is a delirious ass who does not see it and realize this. For me, I mean to make a conquest of it; to beat it to extinction under the iron hoofs of our war horses.”

For the advanced Republicans, the first chance to strike at slavery came late in July, after the Union rout at Bull Run. Observing that rebel forces used slaves to carry weapons and perform other military tasks, the advanced Republicans vigorously championed a confiscation bill, which authorized the seizure of any slave employed in the Confederate war effort, and they mustered almost unanimous Republican support in pushing the measure through Congress. Border-state Democrats like John J. Crittenden of Kentucky complained that the bill was unconstitutional, but most Republicans agreed with Henry Wilson that “if traitors use bondmen to destroy this country, my doctrine is that the Government shall at once convert those bondmen into men that cannot be used to destroy our country.” In war, Republicans contended, the government had every right to confiscate enemy property—including slave property—as legitimate contraband. Though the bill was hardly a general emancipation act, advanced Republicans hailed its passage as an important first step. They were glad indeed when Lincoln signed the bill into law and commanded his armies to enforce it. At last the President appeared to be coming around to their views.

But they had misunderstood him. When General John Charles Fremont, commander of the Western Department, ordered that the slaves of all rebels in Missouri be “declared freemen,”

Lincoln pronounced this a dangerous and unauthorized political act that would alienate the loyal border and commanded Fremont to modify his order so that it accorded strictly with the congressional confiscation act. Though border Unionists applauded Lincoln, advanced Republicans were dismayed that he had overruled Fremont’s emancipation decree. Sumner declared that Lincoln “is now a dictator.” Wade charged that Lincoln’s opinions on slavery “could only come of one, born of ‘poor white trash’ and educated in a slave State.” And Fessenden denounced the President for his “weak and unjustifiable concession to the Union men of the border States.”

**THE ADVANCED REPUBLICANS:
FREEDOM “A PRESSING
AND ABSOLUTE
NECESSITY”
THE PRESIDENT:
“THIS THUNDERBOLT
WILL KEEP”**

Still, the Frémont episode did not cause an irreparable split between Lincoln and the advanced Republicans, as some writers have claimed. In fact, when Lincoln subsequently removed the general from command, Trumbull, Chandler, and Lovejoy sustained the President, conceding that the celebrated Pathfinder and first standardbearer of their party was a maladroit administrator. But in the fall and winter of 1861, advanced Republicans did mount an all-out campaign to make the obliteration of slavery a Union war objective. One after another they came to

the White House—Wade, Chandler, and Trumbull, Sumner, Julian, and Lovejoy—and implored and badgered the President to issue an emancipation proclamation on military grounds. With the war dragging on, they insisted that slavery must be attacked in order to weaken the Confederate ability to fight.

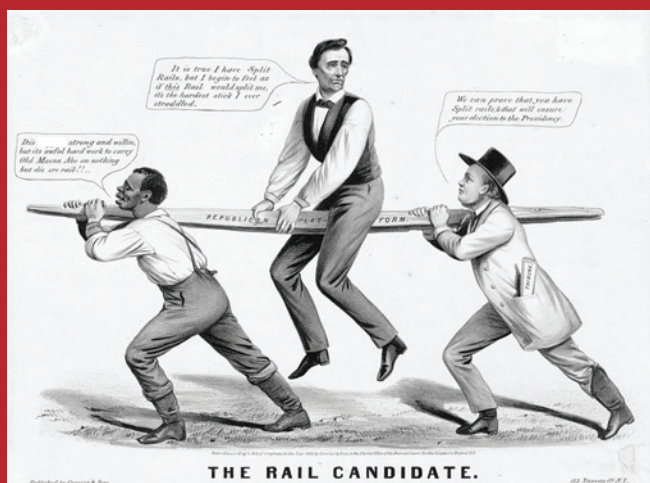
Moreover, they argued, slavery had caused the conflict and was now the cornerstone of the Confederacy. It was absurd to fight a war without removing the thing that had brought it about. Should Lincoln restore the Union with slavery preserved, Southerners would just start another war whenever they thought the institution threatened, so that the present struggle would have been in vain. If Lincoln really wanted to salvage the Union, he must hurl his armies at the heart of the rebellion. He must tear slavery



Abraham Lincoln and his Emancipation Proclamation
The Strobridge Lith. Co., Cincinnati.

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“The Rail Candidate”, anti-Republican political caricature published by Currier and Ives in September 1860

out root and branch and smash the South’s arrogant planters—those mischievous men the advanced Republicans believed had masterminded secession and fomented war. The annihilation of slavery, Julian asserted, was “not a debatable and distant alternative, but a pressing and absolute necessity.” So what if most of the country opposed emancipation lest it result in an exodus of Southern blacks into the North? “It was the duty of the President,” he said “to lead, not follow public opinion.”

Sumner, as Lincoln’s foreign policy adviser, also linked emancipation to opinion overseas. There was a strong possibility that Britain would recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation—potentially disastrous for the Union since the Confederacy could then form alliances and seek mediation, perhaps even armed intervention. But, Sumner argued, if Lincoln made the destruction of slavery a Union war aim, Britain would balk at recognition and intervention because of her own antislavery tradition. And whatever powerful Britain did, the rest of Europe was sure to follow.

Also, as Sumner kept saying, emancipation would break the chains of several million oppressed human beings and right America at last with her own

ideals. Lincoln and the Republican party could no longer wait to remove slavery. The President must do it by the war powers. The rebellion, monstrous and terrible though it was, had given him the opportunity.

But Lincoln still did not agree. “I think Sumner and the rest of you would upset our appercart altogether if you had your way,” he told some advanced Republicans one day.

“We didn’t go into the war to put down slavery, but to put the flag back; and to act differently at this moment would, I have no doubt, not only weaken our cause, but smack of bad faith.... This thunderbolt will keep.” And in his message to Congress in December of 1861, the President declared that he did not want the war degenerating into “a violent and remorseless revolutionary struggle.” He was striving, he said, “to keep the integrity of the Union prominent as the primary object of the contest.”

Advanced Republicans were deeply aggrieved. Fessenden thought the President had lost all hold on Congress, and Wade complained that not even a galvanic battery could inspire Lincoln to “courage, decision and enterprise.” “He means well,” wrote Trumbull, “and in ordinary times would have made one of the best of Presidents, but he lacks confidence in himself and the will necessary in this great emergency.”

LINCOLN’S FIRST MOVE
IMMEDIATE EMANCIPATION STILL
“TOO BIG A LICK”

By year’s end, though, Lincoln’s mind had begun to change. He spoke with Sumner about emancipation and assured the senator that “the only difference between you and me on this subject is a difference

of a month or six weeks in time.” And he now felt, he said, that the war “was a great movement by God to end Slavery and that the man would be a fool who should stand in the way.” But out of deference to the loyal border states, Lincoln still shied away from a sweeping executive decree and searched about for an alternative. On March 6, 1862, he proposed a plan to Congress he thought would make federal emancipation unnecessary—a gradual, compensated abolition program to begin along the loyal border and then be extended into the rebel states as they were conquered. According to Lincoln’s plan, the border states would gradually remove slavery over the next thirty years, and the national government would compensate slaveholders for their loss. The whole program was to be voluntary; the states would adopt their own emancipation laws without federal coercion. At the same time (as he had earlier told Congress), Lincoln favored a voluntary colonization program, to be sponsored by the federal government, that would resettle liberated blacks outside the country.

On Capitol Hill Stevens derided Lincoln’s scheme as “diluted milk-and-water-gruel.” But other advanced Republicans, noting that Lincoln’s was the first emancipation proposal ever offered by an American President, acclaimed it as an excellent step. On April 10 the Republican-controlled Congress endorsed Lincoln’s emancipation plan. But the border-state representatives, for whom it was intended, rejected the scheme emphatically. “I utterly spit at it and despise it,” said one Kentucky congressman. “Emancipation in the cotton States is simply an absurdity.... There is not enough power in the world to compel it to be done.”

As Lincoln promoted his gradual, compensated scheme, advanced Republicans on Capitol Hill launched a furious antislavery attack of their own. They sponsored a tough new confiscation bill, championed legislation that weakened

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the fugitive-slave law and assailed human bondage in the national capital as well as the territories. What was more, they won over many Republican moderates to forge a new congressional majority so far as slavery was concerned. As the war ground into its second year, moderate Republicans came to agree with their advanced colleagues that it was senseless to pretend the Union could be restored without removing the cause of the rebellion.

So, over strong Democratic opposition, the Republican Congress approved a bill that forbade the return of fugitive slaves to the rebels, and on March 13, 1862, Lincoln signed it into law. Congress also adopted legislation which abolished slavery in Washington, D.C., compensated owners for their loss, and set aside funds for the voluntary colonization of blacks in Haiti and Liberia, and Lincoln signed this as well. Democrats howled. One castigated the bill as an entering wedge for wholesale abolition, another predicted that liberated Negroes would crowd white ladies out of congressional galleries. Washingtonians accused the “abolitionists” in Congress of converting the capital into “a hell on earth for the white man.” Republicans brushed aside all such criticism, “if there be a place upon the face of the earth,” asserted a Minnesota Republican, “where human slavery should be prohibited, and where every man should be protected in the rights which God and Nature have given him, that place is the capital of this great Republic.”

In June the Republican Congress lashed at slavery again: it passed a bill that outlawed human bondage in all federal territories, thus overriding the Dred Scott decision, and Lincoln signed the measure into law. Congress and the President also joined together in recognizing the black republics of Haiti and Liberia, a move that would facilitate colonization efforts in those lands. Meanwhile, a fierce debate raged

over the second confiscation bill, which authorized the seizure and liberation of all slaves held by those in rebellion. Advanced Republicans not only pushed the bill with uninhibited zeal but also advocated that emancipated blacks be enlisted in the army. But even some Republicans thought full-scale confiscation too drastic, and “conservatives” like Jacob Collamer of Vermont, Orville Browning of Illinois, and Edgar Cowan of Pennsylvania sided with the Democrats in denouncing the bill as uncivilized and unconstitutional. “Pass these acts,” cried one opponent, “confiscate under the bills the property of these men, emancipate their negroes, place arms in the

Sumner urged
“the reconsecration
of the day by a
decree of
emancipation.”

hands of these human gorillas to murder their masters and violate their wives and daughters, and you will have a war such as was never witnessed in the worst days of the French Revolution, and horrors never exceeded in San Domingo.”

On July 4, in the midst of the debate, Sumner hurried back to the White House and admonished Lincoln to attack slavery himself. Sumner was extremely disappointed in the President, for he did not seem a month or six weeks behind the senator at all. In fact, Lincoln recently had overruled another general, David Hunter, who liberated the slaves inside his lines, and again the advanced Republicans had groaned in despair. Now, on July 4, Sumner

urged “the reconsecration of the day by a decree of emancipation.” The senator pointed out that the Union was suffering from troop shortages on every front and that the slaves were an untapped reservoir of manpower. “You need more men,” Sumner argued, “not only at the North, but at the South, in the rear of the Rebels; you need the slaves.” But Lincoln insisted that an emancipation edict was still “too big a lick.” And, in a White House interview, he warned border-state legislators that his gradual, state-guided plan was the only alternative to federal emancipation and that they must commend it to their people. Once again they refused.

On July 17, five days after Lincoln spoke with the border men, Congress finally passed the second confiscation bill. If the rebellion did not end in sixty days, the measure warned, the executive branch would seize the property of all those who supported, aided, or participated in the rebellion. Federal courts were to determine guilt. Those convicted would forfeit their estates and their slaves to the federal government, and their slaves would be set free. Section nine liberated other categories of slaves without court action: slaves of rebels who escaped

to Union lines, who were captured by federal forces or were abandoned by their owners, “shall be deemed captives of war, and shall be forever free.” On the other hand, the bill exempted loyal Unionists in the rebel South, allowing them to retain their slaves and other property. Another section empowered Lincoln to enlist Negroes in the military. Still another, aimed at easing Northern racial fears and keeping Republican unity, provided for the voluntary resettlement of confiscated blacks in “some tropical country.” A few days later Congress appropriated \$500,000 for colonization.

Controversial though it was, the second confiscation act still fell far short of genuine

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emancipation. Most slaves were to be freed only after protracted case-by-case litigation in the courts. And of course, the slaves of loyal masters were not affected. Yet the bill was about as far as Congress could go in attacking slavery, for most Republicans still acknowledged that Congress had no constitutional authority to eradicate bondage as a state institution. Only the President with his war powers—or a constitutional amendment—could do that. Nevertheless, the measure seemed a clear invitation for the President to exercise his constitutional powers and annihilate slavery in the rebellious states. And Stevens, Sumner, and Wilson repeatedly told him that most congressional Republicans now favored this. On the other hand, conservatives like Orville Browning beseeched Lincoln to veto the confiscation bill and restore the old Union as it was. “I said to him that he had reached the culminating point in his administration,” Browning recorded in his diary, “and his course upon this bill was to determine whether he was to control the abolitionists and radicals, or whether they were to control him.”

THE GREAT DAY DAWNS PROTEST EAST AND WEST BUT THE PRESIDENT STANDS FIRM

For several days, Lincoln gave few hints as to what he would do, and Congress awaited his response in a state of high tension. Finally, on July 17, he informed Capitol Hill that he agreed entirely with the spirit of the confiscation bill remarking that “the traitor against the general government” deserved to have his slaves and other property forfeited as just punishment for rebellion. While he thought some of the wording unfortunately vague, he nevertheless raised no objection to the sections on slave liberation. He did, however, disagree with other portions on technical grounds, especially those which permanently divested a rebel of the title to his land, and Lincoln hinted that he would veto the bill as a consequence. To avoid

that, congressional Republicans attached an explanatory resolution removing most of Lincoln’s complaints. Satisfied, the President signed the bill and commanded the army to start enforcing it after sixty days.

Even so, several advanced Republicans were angered by Lincoln’s threatened veto and peeved by what they perceived as his legalistic quibbling when the Union was struggling for its life against a mutinous aristocracy founded on slavery. Julian, for his part, thought Lincoln’s behavior “inexpressibly provoking,” and when Congress adjourned, he called at the White House to find out once and for all where the President stood on emancipation and all-out war against the rebels. Julian said he was going home to Indiana and wanted to assure his constituents that the President would “co-operate with Congress in vigorously carrying out the measures we had inaugurated for the purpose of crushing the rebellion, and that now the quickest and hardest blows were to be dealt.” Complaining that advanced Republicans had unfairly criticized him, Lincoln said he had no objection at all to what Julian wished to tell his constituents. In Indiana that summer, Julian announced that Lincoln had now decided on a radical change in his policy toward slavery.

In August Sumner learned that Lincoln had at last decided to issue an emancipation proclamation. Convinced that the peculiar institution could be destroyed only through executive action, Lincoln actually had drawn up a draft of the proclamation and read it to his Cabinet. But couldn’t Sumner have predicted it? Lincoln had let Secretary of State William H. Seward dissuade him from issuing the edict until after a Union military victory. At the White House, Sumner demanded that the decree “be put forth—the sooner the better—without any reference to our military condition.” But the President refused, and Sumner stalked out, dismayed again at what he once called Lincoln’s “immense vis inertiae.” The

senator feared that only the confiscation act would ever free any slaves.

But in September Lincoln came through. After the Confederate reversal at Antietam, he issued his preliminary emancipation proclamation, a clear warning that if the rebellion did not cease in one hundred days, the executive branch would use the military to free all the slaves in the rebel states—those belonging to secessionists and loyalists alike. Thus the President would go beyond the second confiscation act—he would handle emancipation himself, avoid tangled litigation over slavery in the courts, and vanquish it as an institution in the South. He believed he could do this by the war powers, and he deemed it “a fit and necessary military measure” to preserve the Union.

The advanced Republicans, of course, were delighted. “Hurrah for Old Abe and the proclamation,” Wade exulted. Stevens extolled Lincoln for his patriotism and said his proclamation “contained precisely the principles which I had advocated.” “Thank God that I live to enjoy this day!” Sumner exclaimed in Boston. “Freedom is practically secured to all who find shelter within our lines, and the glorious flag of the Union, wherever it floats, becomes the flag of Freedom.” A few days later, Sumner announced that “the Emancipation Proclamation...is now the corner-stone of our national policy.”

As it turned out, though, the preliminary proclamation helped lead to a Republican disaster in the fall by elections of 1862. Northern Democrats already were angered by Lincoln’s harsh war measures, especially his use of martial law and military arrests. Now, Negro emancipation was more than they could bear, and they stumped the Northern states beating the drums of Negrophobia and warning of massive influxes of Southern blacks into the North once emancipation came. Sullen, weary, and racially antagonistic, Northern voters dealt the Republicans a smashing blow as the North’s five most populous

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states—all of which had gone for Lincoln in 1860—now returned Democratic majorities to Capitol Hill. Republicans narrowly retained control of Congress, but they were steeped in gloom as it convened that December.

Though most Republicans stood resolutely behind emancipation, Browning and other conservatives now begged Lincoln to abandon his “reckless” abolition policy lest he shatter his party and wreck what remained of his country. At the same time, Sumner and Wade admonished Lincoln to stand firm, and he promised that he would. On January 1, 1863, the President officially signed the final proclamation in the White House. In it Lincoln temporarily exempted all of Tennessee and certain occupied places in Louisiana and Virginia (later, in reconstructing those states, he would withdraw the exemptions and make emancipation mandatory). He also excluded the loyal slave states because they were not in rebellion and he lacked the legal authority to uproot slavery there. With these exceptions, the final proclamation declared that all slaves in the rebellious states “from henceforth shall be free.” The document also asserted that black men—Southern and Northern alike—might now be enlisted in Union military forces.

All in all, the advanced Republicans were pleased. Perhaps the President should not have exempted Tennessee and southern Louisiana, Horace Greeley said, “but let us not cavil.” Lincoln had now “played his grand part” in the abolition of slavery, Julian declared, and “brought relief to multitudes of anxious people.” “On that day,” Sumner wrote of

January 1, 1863, “an angel appeared upon the earth.”

THE INFAMOUS INSTITUTION ATANEND

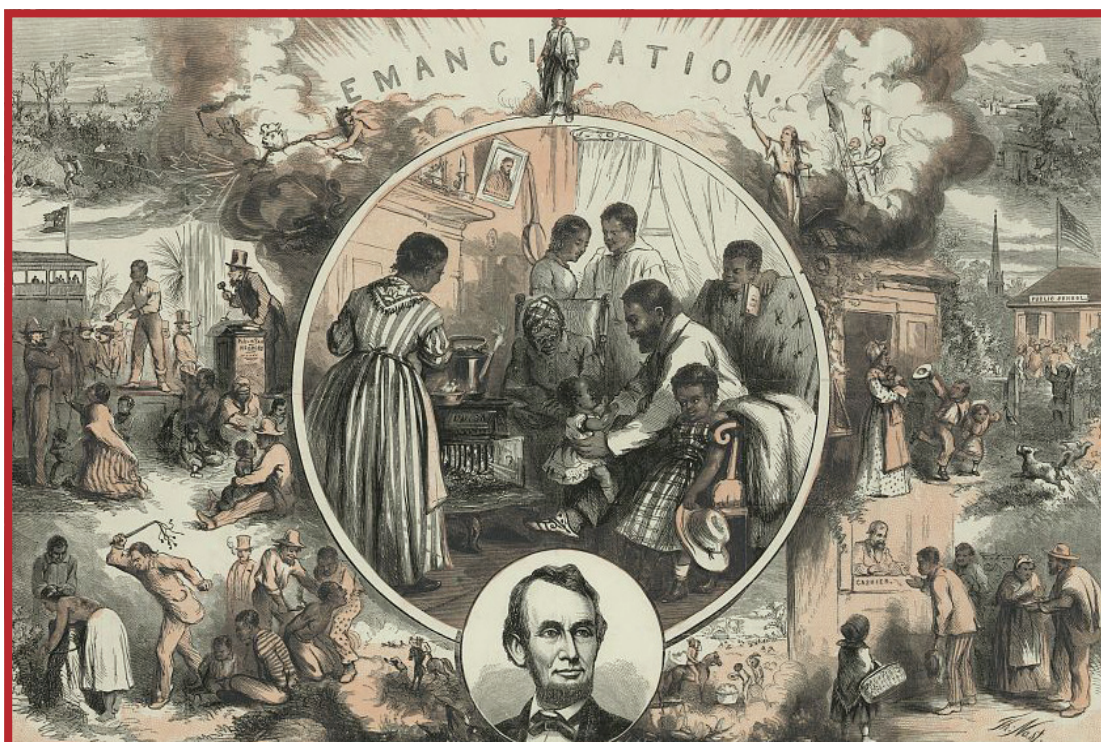
THE RESPONSIBILITY APPORTIONED

In truth, Lincoln’s proclamation was the most revolutionary measure ever to come from an American President up to that time, and the advanced Republicans took a lot of credit for goading him at last to act. Slavery would now die by degrees with every Union advance, every Northern victory.

Now that Lincoln had adopted emancipation, advanced Republicans watched him with a critical eye, making sure that he enforced his edict and exhorting him to place only those firmly opposed to slavery in command of Union armies. In February rumor had it that if Lincoln wavered even once in his promise

of freedom to the slaves, Wade would move for a vote of “no confidence” and try to cut off appropriations. But Lincoln did not waiver. Even though a storm of anti-Negro, anti-Lincoln protest broke over the land, the President refused to retract a single word of his decree. “He is stubborn as a mule when he gets his back up,” Chandler said, “& it is up now on the Proclamation.” “His mind acts slowly,” Lovejoy observed, “but when he moves, it is forward.”

In the last two years of the war, Lincoln and the advanced Republicans had their differences, but they were scarcely locked in the kind of blood feud depicted in Civil War histories and biographies of an earlier day. Several advanced Republicans did oppose Lincoln’s renomination in 1864 because the war was going badly and they thought him an inept administrator. In addition, Sumner, Stevens, and Wade clashed bitterly with Lincoln over whether Congress or the



Emancipation / Th. Nast ; King & Baird, printers, 607 Sansom Street, Philadelphia.

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President should oversee reconstruction. Sumner, Julian, Chandler, and a handful of other legislators also insisted that Southern black men be enfranchised. But Lincoln, sympathetic to Negro voting rights, hesitated to force them on the states he reconstructed. Nevertheless, in April, 1865, he publicly endorsed limited Negro suffrage and conceded that the black man deserved the right to vote.

In truth, despite their differences, Lincoln and the advanced Republicans worked together closely. And they stood together on several crucial issues: they all wanted to abolish slavery entirely in the South and to muzzle the rebellious white majority there so that it could not overwhelm Southern Unionists and return the old Southern ruling class to power. They also came to see that colonization was probably an unworkable solution to the problem of racial adjustment. All Lincoln's colonization schemes had foundered, and anyway most blacks adamantly refused to participate in the Republicans' voluntary program. In place of colonization, the Lincoln administration devised a refugee system for blacks in the South, a program that put them to work in military and civilian pursuits there and prepared them for life in a free society. And in 1864 the Republican Congress canceled all funds it had set aside for colonization efforts.

Most important of all, advanced Republicans cooperated closely with Lincoln in pushing a constitutional amendment through Congress that would guarantee the permanent freedom of all slaves, those in the loyal border as well as in the rebel South. Since he had issued the proclamation, Lincoln and his congressional associates had worried that it might be nullified in the courts or thrown out by a later Congress or a subsequent administration. As a consequence, they

wanted a constitutional amendment that would safeguard the proclamation and prevent emancipation from ever being overturned. Accordingly, in December, 1863, Iowa senator James F. Wilson introduced an emancipation amendment in the Senate, and the following February Trumbull reported it from the judiciary committee, reminding his colleagues that nobody could deny that all the death and destruction of the war stemmed from slavery and that it was their duty to support this amendment. In April the Senate adopted it by a vote of thirty-eight to six, but it failed to muster the required two-thirds majority in the House.

Most important of all,
advanced Republicans
cooperated closely
with Lincoln.

After Lincoln's re-election in 1864, advanced Republicans joined forces with the President to get the amendment passed. In his message that December, Lincoln conceded that this was the same House that earlier had failed to approve the amendment. But since then a national election had taken place which Lincoln insisted was a mandate for permanent emancipation. If the present House refused to pass the amendment, the next one "almost certainly" would. So "at all events," the President said, "may we not agree that the sooner the better?"

As December passed, Republicans who sponsored the amendment plotted

with Lincoln to pressure conservative Republicans and recalcitrant Democrats for their support. On January 6, 1865, a heated debate began over the amendment, with James Ashley quoting Lincoln himself that "if slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." A week later, Thaddeus Stevens, still tall and imposing at seventy-two, limped down the aisle of the House and closed the debate with a spare and eloquent address, declaring that he had never hesitated, even when threatened with violence, "to stand here and denounce this infamous institution." With the outcome much in doubt, Lincoln and congressional Republicans participated in secret negotiations never made public— negotiations that allegedly involved patronage, a New Jersey railroad monopoly, and the release of rebels kin to congressional Democrats—to bring wavering opponents into line. "The greatest measure of the nineteenth century," Stevens claimed, "was passed by corruption, aided and abetted by the purest man in America." When the amendment did pass, by just three votes, a storm of cheers broke over House Republicans, who danced, embraced one another, waved their hats and canes. "It seemed to me I had been born into a new life,"

Julian recalled, "and that the world was overflowing with beauty and joy." Lincoln, too, pronounced the amendment a "great moral victory" and "a King's cure" for the evils of slavery. When ratified by the states, the amendment would end human bondage in America.

See, Julian rejoiced, "the world does move." He could have added that he and his advanced Republican colleagues, in collaboration with their President, had made it move, had done all they could in the smoke and steel of civil war to right their troubled land with its own noblest ideals. ★

The Slaves Freed

ABRAHAM LINCOLN FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS

<http://www.vlib.us/amdocs/texts/19linc1.htm>

Description

By the time Lincoln took the oath of office in March of 1861, seven southern states had already seceded. However, Lincoln considered secession illegal and thus the Union still intact, and urging his fellow “countrymen” not to rush to any decisions, he added that “the momentous issue of civil war” was in their hands. He made very little mention of the Republican Party and avoided discussing plans to abolish slavery where it still existed, likely in order to prevent the divide from deepening. The final paragraph, in which he declared, “We must not be enemies” and “[passion] must not break our bonds of affection,” reflected Lincoln’s attempt at conciliation.

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES:

In compliance with a custom as old as the Government itself, I appear before you to address you briefly and to take in your presence the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States to be taken by the President “before he enters on the execution of this office.”

I do not consider it necessary at present for me to discuss those matters of administration about which there is no special anxiety or excitement.

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that by the accession of a Republican Administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that--

I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.

Those who nominated and elected me did so with full knowledge that I had made this and many similar declarations and had never recanted them; and more than this, they placed in the platform for my

acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read:

Resolved, That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend; and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.

I now reiterate these sentiments, and in doing so I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the now incoming Administration. I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given will be cheerfully given to all the States when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause--as cheerfully to one section as to another.

There is much controversy about the delivering up of fugitives from service or labor. The clause I now read is as plainly written in the Constitution as any other of its provisions:

No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up

on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves; and the intention of the lawgiver is the law. All members of Congress swear their support to the whole Constitution--to this provision as much as to any other. To the proposition, then, that slaves whose cases come within the terms of this clause “shall be delivered up” their oaths are unanimous. Now, if they would make the effort in good temper, could they not with nearly equal unanimity frame and pass a law by means of which to keep good that unanimous oath?

There is some difference of opinion whether this clause should be enforced by national or by State authority, but surely that difference is not a very material one. If the slave is to be surrendered, it can be of but little consequence to him or to others by which authority it is done. And should anyone in any case be content that his oath shall go unkept on a merely unsubstantial controversy as to how it shall be kept?

Again: In any law upon this subject ought not all the safeguards of liberty known in civilized and humane jurisprudence to be introduced, so that a free man be not in any case surrendered as a slave? And might it not be well at the same time to provide by law for the enforcement of that clause in the Constitution which guarantees that “the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States”?

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS

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I take the official oath to-day with no mental reservations and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules; and while I do not choose now to specify particular acts of Congress as proper to be enforced, I do suggest that it will be much safer for all, both in official and private stations, to conform to and abide by all those acts which stand unrepealed than to violate any of them trusting to find impunity in having them held to be unconstitutional.

It is seventy-two years since the first inauguration of a President under our National Constitution. During that period fifteen different and greatly distinguished citizens have in succession administered the executive branch of the Government. They have conducted it through many perils, and generally with great success. Yet, with all this scope of precedent, I now enter upon the same task for the brief constitutional term of four years under great and peculiar difficulty. A disruption of the Federal

Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted.

I hold that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution, and the Union will endure forever, it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.

Again: If the United States be not a government proper, but an association of States in the nature of contract merely, can it, as a contract, be peaceably unmade by less than all the parties who made it? One party to a contract may violate it--break it, so to speak--but does it not require all to lawfully rescind it?

Descending from these general principles, we find the proposition that in legal contemplation the Union is perpetual confirmed by the history of the Union itself. The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the Articles of Confederation in 1778. And finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing

the Constitution was "to form a more perfect Union."

But if destruction of the Union by one or by a part only of the States be lawfully possible, the Union is less perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity.

It follows from these views that no State upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void, and that acts of violence within any State or States against the authority of the United States are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.

I therefore consider that in view of the Constitution and the laws the Union is unbroken, and to the extent of my ability, I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part, and I shall perform it so far as practicable unless my rightful masters, the American people, shall withhold the requisite means or in some authoritative manner direct the contrary. I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself.

In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere. Where hostility to the United States in any interior locality shall be so great and universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding the Federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the



Lincoln swearing-in at the partly finished Capitol building.

The Slaves Freed

ABRAHAM LINCOLN FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS

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people for that object. While the strict legal right may exist in the Government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating and so nearly impracticable withal that I deem it better to forego for the time the uses of such offices.

The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union. So far as possible the people everywhere shall have that sense of perfect security which is most favorable to calm thought and reflection. The course here indicated will be followed unless current events and experience shall show a modification or change to be proper, and in every case and exigency my best discretion will be exercised, according to circumstances actually existing and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections.

That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events and are glad of any pretext to do it I will neither affirm nor deny; but if there be such, I need address no word to them. To those, however, who really love the Union may I not speak?

Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it? Will you hazard so desperate a step while there is any possibility that any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from, will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake?

All profess to be content in the Union if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right plainly written in the Constitution has been denied? I think not. Happily, the human mind is so constituted that no party can reach to the

audacity of doing this. Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the Constitution has ever been denied. If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might in a moral point of view justify revolution; certainly would if such right were a vital one. But such is not our case. All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guaranties and prohibitions, in the Constitution that controversies never arise concerning them.

Plainly the
central idea of
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anarchy.

But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision specifically applicable to every question which may occur in practical administration. No foresight can anticipate nor any document of reasonable length contain express provisions for all possible questions. Shall fugitives from labor be surrendered by national or by State authority? The Constitution does not expressly say. May Congress prohibit slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. Must Congress protect slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say.

From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities.

If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the Government must cease. There is no other alternative, for continuing the Government is acquiescence on one side or the other. If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them, for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such minority. For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy a year or two hence arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this.

Is there such perfect identity of interests among the States to compose a new union as to produce harmony only and prevent renewed secession?

Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does of necessity fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible. The rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissible; so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.

I do not forget the position assumed by some that constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court, nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding in any case upon the parties to a suit as to the object of that suit, while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all other departments of the Government. And while it is obviously possible that such decision may be erroneous in any given case, still the evil effect following it, being

The Slaves Freed

ABRAHAM LINCOLN FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS

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limited to that particular case, with the chance that it may be overruled and never become a precedent for other cases, can better be borne than could the evils of a different practice. At the same time, the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the Government upon vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions the people will have ceased to be their own rulers,

having to that extent practically resigned their Government into the hands of that eminent tribunal. Nor is there in this view any assault upon the court or the judges. It is a duty from which they may not shrink to decide cases properly brought before them, and it is no fault of theirs if others seek to turn their decisions to political purposes.

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. The fugitive-slave clause of the Constitution and the law for the suppression of the foreign slave trade are each as well enforced, perhaps, as any law can ever be in a community where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself. The great body of the people abide by the dry legal obligation in both cases, and a few break over in each. This, I think, can not be perfectly cured, and it would be worse in both cases after the separation of the sections than before. The foreign slave trade, now imperfectly



Title: The Peacemakers
by George Peter Alexander Healy (1818–1894)

suppressed, would be ultimately revived without restriction in one section, while fugitive slaves, now only partially surrendered, would not be surrendered at all by the other.

Physically speaking, we can not separate. We can not remove our respective sections from each other nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country can not do this. They can not but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you can not fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions, as to

terms of intercourse, are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing Government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. I can not be ignorant of the fact that many worthy and patriotic citizens are desirous of having the National Constitution amended. While I make no recommendation of amendments, I fully

recognize the rightful authority of the people over the whole subject, to be exercised in either of the modes prescribed in the instrument itself; and I should, under existing circumstances, favor rather than oppose a fair opportunity being afforded the people to act upon it. I will venture to add that to me the convention mode seems preferable, in that it allows amendments to originate with the people themselves, instead of only permitting them to take or reject propositions originated by others, not especially chosen for the purpose, and which might not be precisely such as they would wish to either accept or refuse. I understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution--which amendment, however, I have not seen--has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of what I have said, I depart from my purpose not to speak of particular amendments so far as to say that,

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ABRAHAM LINCOLN FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS

— CONTINUED —

holding such a provision to now be implied constitutional law, I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable.

The Chief Magistrate derives all his authority from the people, and they have referred none upon him to fix terms for the separation of the States. The people themselves can do this if also they choose, but the Executive as such has nothing to do with it. His duty is to administer the present Government as it came to his hands and to transmit it unimpaired by him to his successor.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences, is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great

tribunal of the American people.

By the frame of the Government under which we live this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief, and have with equal wisdom provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals.

While the people retain their virtue and vigilance no Administration by any extreme of wickedness or folly can very seriously injure the Government in the short space of four years.

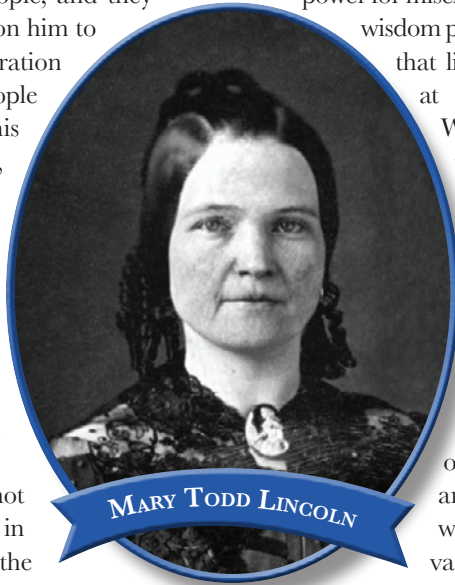
My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there

be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and, on the sensitive point,

the laws of your own framing under it; while the new Administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either. If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to “preserve, protect, and defend it.”

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature. ★



MARY TODD LINCOLN

The Slaves Freed

JEFFERSON DAVIS 'JEFFERSON DAVIS' FAREWELL ADDRESS

<http://jeffersondavis.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=87>

Description

After Mississippi adopted its Ordinance of Secession, Senator Jefferson Davis gave this farewell address to the Senate chamber. Saying that he felt “no hostility to” the Senators of the North and apologizing for any pain he might have inflicted “in heat of discussion,” Davis said that the people of Mississippi believed that their rights had been denied and bid the chamber farewell.

rise, Mr. President [John C. Breckinridge], for the purpose of announcing to the Senate that I have satisfactory evidence that the State of Mississippi, by a solemn ordinance of her people in convention assembled, has declared her separation from the United States. Under these circumstances, of course my functions are terminated here. It has seemed to me proper, however, that I should appear in the Senate to announce that fact to my associates, and I will say but very little more. The occasion does not invite me to go into argument; and my physical condition would not permit me to do so if it were otherwise; and yet it seems to become me to say something on the part of the State I here represent, on an occasion so solemn as this.

It is known to Senators who have served with me here, that I have for many years advocated, as an essential attribute of State sovereignty, the right of a State to secede from the Union. Therefore, if I had not believed there was justifiable cause; if I had thought that Mississippi was acting without

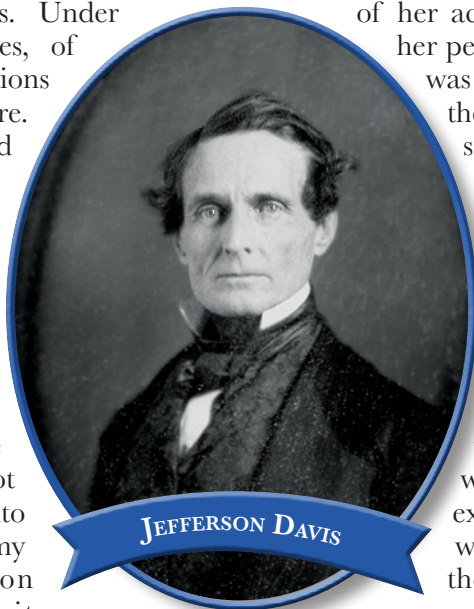
sufficient provocation, or without an existing necessity, I should still, under my theory of the Government, because of my allegiance to the State of which I am a citizen, have been bound by her action. I, however, may be permitted to say that I do think she has justifiable cause, and I approve of her act. I conferred with her people before that act was taken, counseled them then that if the state of things which they apprehended should exist when the convention met, they should take the action which they have now adopted.

I hope none who hear me will confound this expression of mine with the advocacy of the right of a State to remain in the Union, and to disregard its constitutional obligations by the nullification of the law. Such is not my theory. Nullification and secession, so often confounded, are indeed antagonistic principles. Nullification is a remedy which it is sought to apply within the Union, and against the agent of the States. It is only to be justified when the agent has violated his constitutional obligation, and a State, assuming to judge for itself, denies the right of the agent thus

to act, and appeals to the other States of the Union for a decision; but when the States themselves, and when the people of the States, have so acted as to convince us that they will not regard our constitutional rights, then, and then for the first time, arises the doctrine of secession in its practical application.

A great man who now reposes with his fathers, and who has been often arraigned for a want of fealty to the Union, advocated the doctrine of nullification, because it preserved the Union. It was because of his deep-seated attachment to the Union, his determination to find some remedy for existing ills short of a severance of the ties which bound South Carolina to the other States, that Mr. [John C.] Calhoun advocated the doctrine of nullification, which he proclaimed to be peaceful, to be within the limits of State power, not to disturb the Union, but only to be a means of bringing the agent before the tribunal of the States for their judgment.

Secession belongs to a different class of remedies. It is to be justified upon the basis that the States are sovereign. There was a time when none denied it. I hope the time may come again, when a better comprehension of the theory of our Government, and the inalienable rights of the people of the States, will prevent any one from denying that each State is a sovereign, and thus may reclaim the grants which it has made to any agent whomsoever.



The Slaves Freed

JEFFERSON DAVIS 'JEFFERSON DAVIS' FAREWELL ADDRESS

— CONTINUED —

I therefore say I concur in the action of the people of Mississippi, believing it to be necessary and proper, and should have been bound by their action if my belief had been otherwise; and this brings me to the important point which I wish on this last occasion to present to the Senate. It is by this confounding of nullification and secession that the name of a great man, whose ashes now mingle with his mother earth, has been invoked to justify coercion against a seceded State. The phrase "to execute the laws," was an expression which General Jackson applied to the case of a State refusing

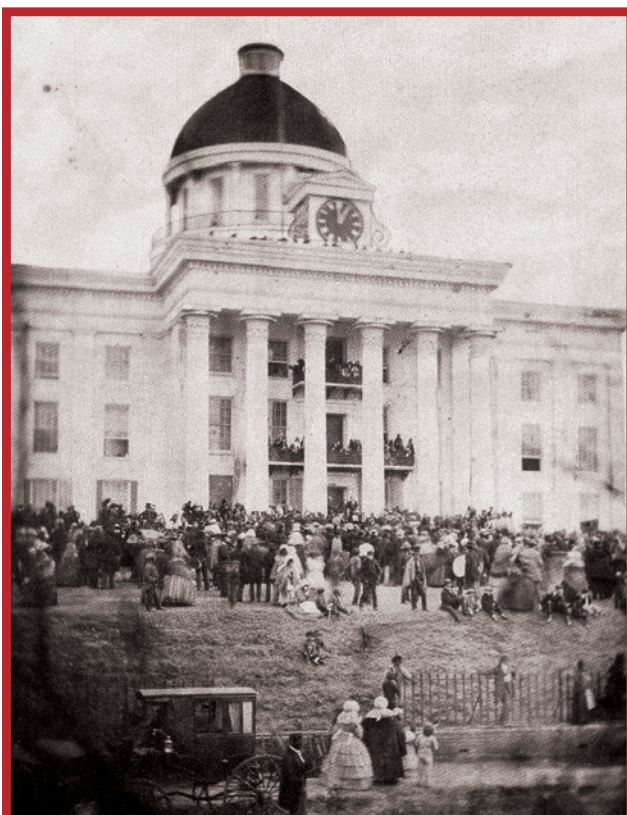
to obey the laws while yet a member of the Union. That is not the case which is now presented. The laws are to be executed over the United States, and upon the people of the United States. They have no relation to any foreign country. It is a perversion of terms, at least it is a great misapprehension of the case, which cites that expression for application to a State which has withdrawn from the Union. You may make war on a foreign State. If it be the purpose of gentlemen, they may make war against a State which has withdrawn from the Union; but there are no laws of the United States to be executed within the limits of a

seceded State. A State finding herself in the condition in which Mississippi has judged she is, in which her safety requires that she should provide for the maintenance of her rights out of the Union, surrenders all the benefits, (and they are known to be many,) deprives herself of the advantages, (they are known to be great,) severs all the ties of affection, (and they are close and enduring,) which have bound her to the Union; and thus divesting herself of every benefit, taking upon herself every burden, she claims to be exempt from any power to execute the laws of the United States within her limits.

I well remember an occasion when

Massachusetts was arraigned before the bar of the Senate, and when then the doctrine of coercion was rife and to be applied against her because of the rescue of a fugitive slave in Boston. My opinion then was the same that it is now. Not in a spirit of egotism, but to show that I am not influenced in my opinion because the case is my own, I refer to that time and that occasion as containing the opinion which I then entertained, and on which my present conduct is based. I then said, if Massachusetts, following her through a stated line of conduct, chooses to take the last step which separates her from the Union, it is her right to go, and I will neither vote one dollar nor one man to coerce her back; but will say to her, God speed, in memory of the kind associations which once existed between her and the other States.

It has been a conviction of pressing necessity, it has been a belief that we are to be deprived in the Union of the rights which our fathers bequeathed to us, which has brought Mississippi into her present decision. She has heard proclaimed the theory that all men are created free and equal, and this made the basis of an attack upon her social institutions; and the sacred Declaration of Independence has been invoked to maintain the position of the equality of the races. That Declaration of Independence is to be construed by the circumstances and purposes for which it was made. The communities were declaring their independence; the people of those communities were asserting that no man was born--to use the language of Mr. Jefferson--booted and spurred to ride over the rest of mankind; that men were created equal--meaning the men of the political community;



Jefferson Davis is sworn in as President of the Confederate States of America, on the steps of the Alabama State Capitol.

The Slaves Freed

JEFFERSON DAVIS 'JEFFERSON DAVIS' FAREWELL ADDRESS

— CONTINUED —

that there was no divine right to rule; that no man inherited the right to govern; that there were no classes by which power and place descended to families, but that all stations were equally within the grasp of each member of the body-politic. These were the great principles they announced; these were the purposes for which they made their declaration; these were the ends to which their enunciation was directed. They have no reference to the slave; else, how happened it that among the items of arraignment made against George III was that he endeavored to do just what the North has been endeavoring of late to do—to stir up insurrection among our slaves? Had the Declaration announced that the negroes were free and equal, how was the Prince to be arraigned for stirring up insurrection among them? And how was this to be enumerated among the high crimes which caused the colonies to sever their connection with the mother country? When our Constitution was formed, the same idea was rendered more palpable, for there we find provision made for that very class of persons as property; they were not put upon the footing of equality with white men—not even upon that of paupers and convicts; but, so far as representation was concerned, were discriminated against as a lower caste, only to be represented in the numerical proportion of three fifths.

Then, Senators, we recur to the compact which binds us together; we

recur to the principles upon which our Government was founded; and when you deny them, and when you deny to us the right to withdraw from a Government which thus perverted threatens to be destructive of our rights, we but tread in the path of our fathers when we proclaim our independence, and take the hazard. This is done not in hostility to others, not to injure any section of the country, not even for our own pecuniary benefit; but from the high

*I leave here; I carry
with me no hostile
remembrance.*

and solemn motive of defending and protecting the rights we inherited, and which it is our sacred duty to transmit unshorn to our children.

I find in myself, perhaps, a type of the general feeling of my constituents towards yours. I am sure I feel no hostility to you, Senators from the North. I am sure there is not one of you, whatever sharp discussion there may have been between us, to whom I cannot now say, in the presence of my God, I wish you well; and such, I am sure, is the feeling of the people whom I represent towards those whom you represent. I therefore feel

that I but express their desire when I say I hope, and they hope, for peaceful relations with you, though we must part. They may be mutually beneficial to us in the future, as they have been in the past, if you so will it. The reverse may bring disaster on every portion of the country; and if you will have it thus, we will invoke the God of our fathers, who delivered them from the power of the lion, to protect us from the ravages of the bear; and thus, putting our trust in God and in our own firm hearts and strong arms, we will vindicate the right as best we may.

In the course of my service here, associated at different times with a great variety of Senators, I see now around me some with whom I have served long; there have been points of collision; but whatever of offense there has been to me, I leave here; I carry with me no hostile remembrance.

Whatever offense I have given which has not been redressed, or for which satisfaction has not been demanded, I have, Senators, in this hour of our parting, to offer you my apology for any pain which, in heat of discussion, I have inflicted. I go hence unencumbered of the remembrance of any injury received, and having discharged the duty of making the only reparation in my power for any injury offered.

Mr. President, and Senators, having made the announcement which the occasion seemed to me to require, it only remains to me to bid you a final adieu. ★

The Slaves Freed

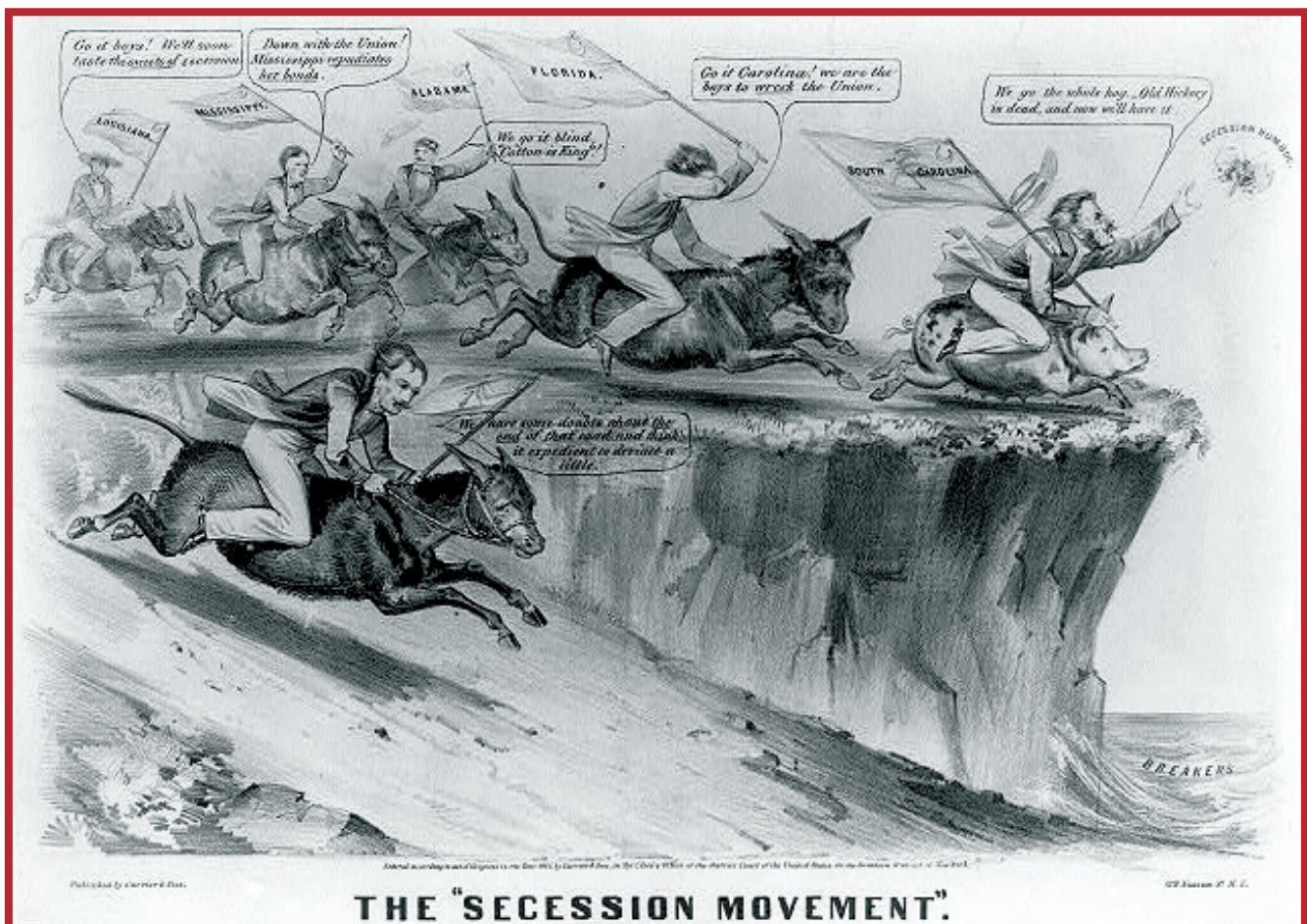
CURRIER AND IVES, THE SECESSION MOVEMENT

<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/cph.3a33510>

Description

The movement of several Southern states toward secession in early 1861 is portrayed as a doomed enterprise. The artist shows Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, all represented by men riding donkeys, following the lead of South Carolina toward a cliff. South Carolina, who rides a pig, pursues a butterfly “Secession Humbug.” A sixth man, Georgia, rides down an inclined path rather than follow the group, confessing, “We have some doubts about ‘the end’ of that road and think it expedient to deviate a little.” South Carolina, reaching for the butterfly, says, “We go the whole hog.--Old Hickory is dead, and now we’ll have it.” His reference to Andrew Jackson

(“Old Hickory”) is in keeping with the anti-Democratic line of the cartoon. The work is in fact based on an 1837 satire criticizing Jacksonian fiscal policy and its bullionist pursuit of the “Gold Humbug.” (See “Fifty Cents. Shin Plaster,” no. 1837-11.) Florida, immediately behind South Carolina, cries, “Go it Carolina! we are the boys to ‘wreck’ the Union.” Next follows Alabama, who declares, “We go it blind, Cotton is King!” Mississippi says, “Down with the Union! Missippi ‘repudiates her bonds.’” Last is Louisiana, who says, “Go it boys! We’ll soon taste the ‘sweets’ of secession,” alluding to the state’s domination of the sugar trade. ★



THE "SECESSION MOVEMENT".

Political Cartoon by Currier and Ives.

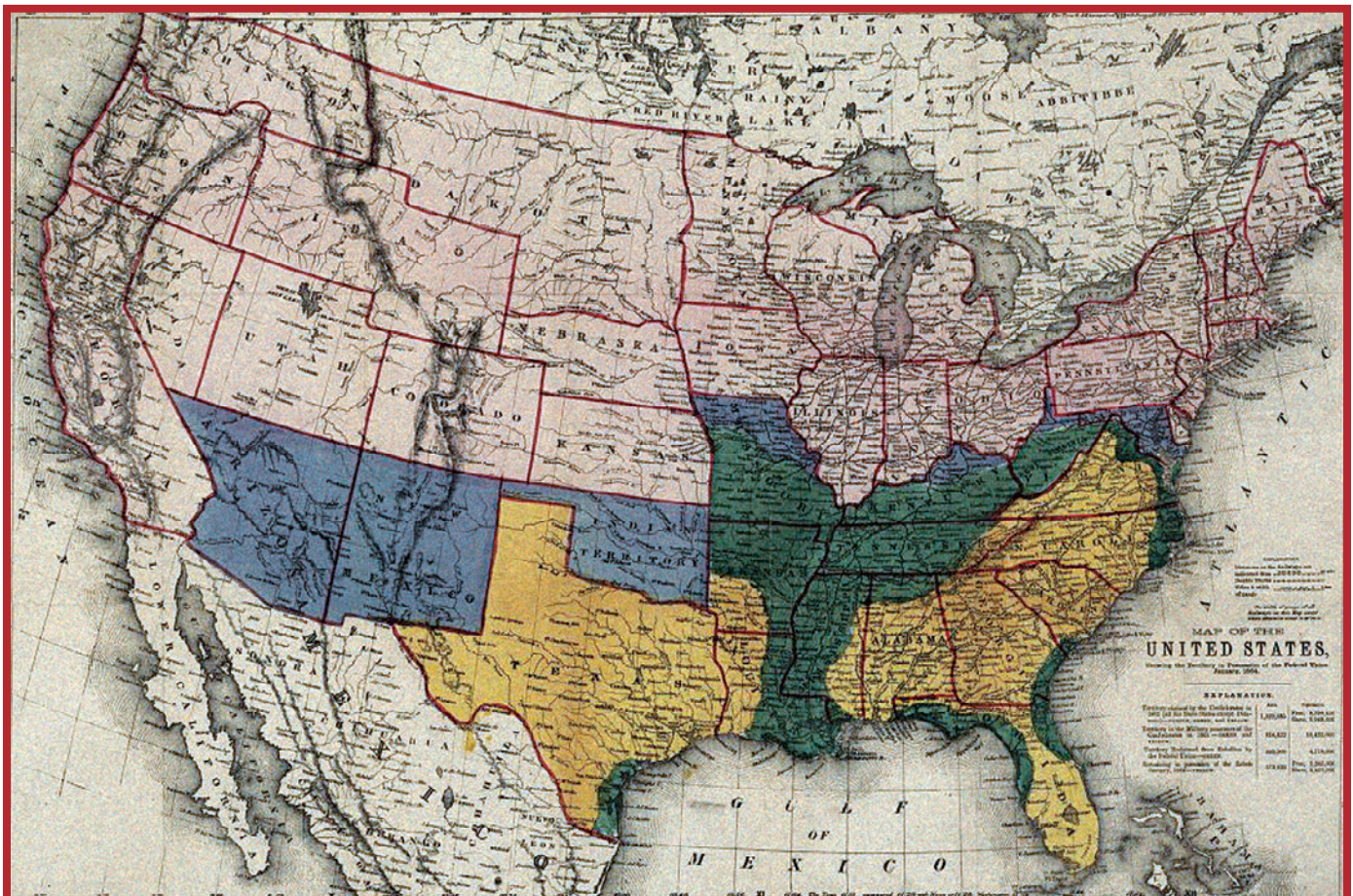
The Slaves Freed

BACON AND COMPANY, MAP OF THE UNITED STATES,
SHOWING THE TERRITORY IN POSSESSION OF THE
FEDERAL UNION, JANUARY, 1864

<http://www.loc.gov/item/99447141>

Description

Indicates by color the territories “claimed by the confederates in 1861,” “in the military possession of the Confederates in 1861,” “reclaimed from rebellion by the Federal Union,” and “remaining in possession of the Rebels January, 1864.” Map also includes rail lines and gauges, towns, forts, rivers, state boundaries, and distances by rail.



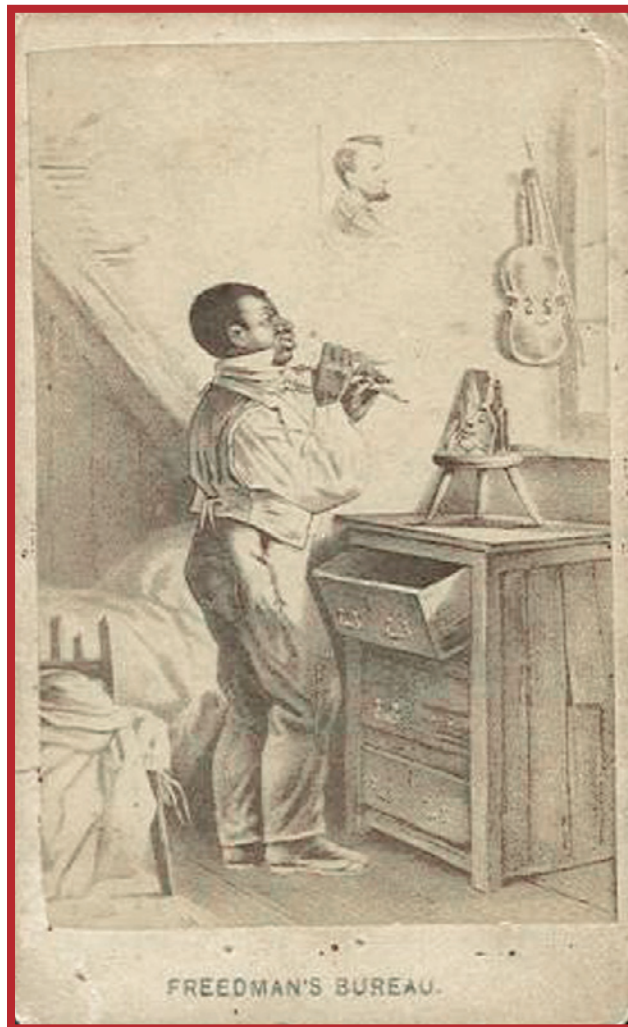
Bacon and Company's Map of the United States.

The Slaves Freed

CARTE-DE-VISITE

<http://www.americanheritage.com/content/carte-de-visite-1685>

<http://www.americanheritage.com/content/carte-de-visite-1010>



Cartoon, caption "Freedman's Bureau." Shows black man adjusting tie, in front of a "Bureau" with an open drawer. This freeman has a picture of Lincoln on his wall. This carte de visite is a Civil War Pun.



Political Cartoon image of Jefferson Davis being captured in drag. One of the most widely believed myths concerning the war. Davis actually captured wearing a shawl, near Macon Georgia.