

CIVIL WAR 150 • READER #4

From SLAVERY to FREEDOM

Introduction by Thavolia Glymph



CIVIL WAR 150: Exploring the War and Its
Meaning Through the Words of Those Who Lived It
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Introduction

FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM

Major General John C. Frémont had been in command of Union forces in Missouri barely a month in the summer of 1861 when he issued a proclamation freeing the slaves of Missourians who had taken up arms against the United States or were actively engaged in supporting the enemy. President Lincoln ordered it revoked. In a letter to Senator Orville H. Browning on September 22, Lincoln explained his reasoning. Frémont's proclamation, he wrote, fell outside "the range of *military* law, or necessity" and rather than being the means of "*saving* the government," constituted a "reckless" decision that endangered it. Yet exactly one year later, Lincoln would announce his decision to issue his own emancipation proclamation. On January 1, 1863, he signed the Emancipation Proclamation declaring slaves in rebel-controlled territory free. The final proclamation was unmarred by the prevaricating talk about colonization and gradual compensated emancipation that had been included in the preliminary proclamation of September 22, 1862, in the hopes of preventing the secession of the slaveholding border states. Further, having hereto, in the words of black abolitionist George E. Stephens, "spurned the loyalty of the negro," the President now authorized the enlistment of black soldiers.

The Emancipation Proclamation, along with the Confiscation Act of August 1861, the Confiscation Act of July 1862, an additional article of war adopted in 1862, and the Militia Act of July 1862, bore witness to the revolutionary transformation that had taken place in the national conversation about slavery, race, rights, and freedom by 1863. While evidence of the "blind, unreasoning prejudice and pusillanimity" decried by Frederick Douglass in 1861 remained, the Union's "self-preservation" was now bound to the slaves' emancipation, though neither at this point was guaranteed. The slaves had moved toward freedom from the moment South Carolina opened its

guns on Fort Sumter in April 1861. By the time Robert E. Lee surrendered his army four years later, hundreds of thousands of enslaved women, men, and children had fled the South's farms, plantations, and factories. Union commanders at first routinely turned them away, and many continued to do so even after Congress revised the articles of war in March 1862 to forbid the practice. But some generals, like Benjamin F. Butler at Fort Monroe, Virginia, and John W. Phelps in southern Louisiana, made their commands places of refuge. The openings through which black people might claim freedom widened but remained far more restricted than what the times demanded. The result was protracted struggle.

For the vast majority of slaves, the transition from slavery to freedom was not a singular moment, not even in the District of Columbia, where Congress abolished slavery in April 1862. The paths to freedom were multiple and its coming a fitful, piecemeal, and often deadly affair, as dependent on place and time, gender and age, and the movements, victories, and defeats of armies as on individual courage. Still, slaves took each step toward emancipation by congress, the president, and the military not as the "initiation" of emancipation but as the end thing. It was this understanding that sent men who had made it safely to Union lines back to plantations to bring out their wives and children, encouraged thousands of women whose husbands and fathers were soldiers or military laborers to risk flight without male support, and gave freed people the will to endure the hostility of Union commanders and soldiers, the wretchedness of refugee life, and at times the "mockery" of northern "benevolence without justice."

Regardless of how or when slavery was destroyed and the transition to freedom began, the enslaved played a critical role. Every one of them who made it to Union lines—whether they joined the ranks of Union military laborers as cooks, nurses, builders of roads and fortifications, or became field hands growing cash crops on federally-sponsored plantations—diminished the Confederacy's ability to supply its armies and feed and clothe its white civilian population. Every slaveholder who hid his slaves from Confederate impressment agents or from Union recruitment agents, or who acceded to slaves' demands to be paid for their labor hoping thereby to avoid losing

them to flight, became, wittingly and sometimes unwittingly, another wrench in the machinery of the Confederate rebellion, one less white man or woman free to focus on the task of winning independence. Each such act also further eroded in the eyes of the enslaved the vaunted power of slaveholders.

Slavery's unraveling proceeded unevenly, but by the end of the second year of the war the slaves' rebellion had become a major threat to the fledgling slaveholders' republic. A group of Georgia slaveholders acknowledged this fact in a memorial remarkable both for its clarity regarding the nature of slave rebellion and its hubris. Not only had some 20,000 slaves escaped from the Georgia coast, they did so, their masters acknowledged, knowing the penalty was death. The Georgia slaveholders deemed them "traitors." The slaves no doubt agreed.

Thavolia Glymph

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SLAVES SEEKING FREEDOM:
VIRGINIA, MAY 1861

Benjamin F. Butler to Winfield Scott

A successful lawyer and Democratic politician from Massachusetts, Benjamin F. Butler was appointed a brigadier general in the state militia at the start of the war. Commissioned as a major general of U.S. volunteers on May 16, he was given command of the Union forces at Fort Monroe in Virginia. (Located at the end of the peninsula between the York and James rivers, and commanding the entrance to Hampton Roads, the post remained in Union hands throughout the war.) Shortly after his arrival at the fort, Butler faced the question of how the Union army should treat runaway slaves.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA,
Fort Monroe, May 24, 1861.

Lieut. Gen. WINFIELD SCOTT:

* * * * *

Saturday, May 25.—I had written thus far when I was called away to meet Major Cary, of the active Virginia volunteers, upon questions which have arisen of very considerable importance both in a military and political aspect and which I beg leave to submit herewith.

On Thursday night three negroes, field hands belonging to Col. Charles K. Mallory now in command of the secession forces in this district, delivered themselves up to my picket guard and as I learned from the report of the officer of the guard in the morning had been detained by him. I immediately gave personal attention to the matter and found satisfactory evidence that these men were about to be taken to Carolina for the purpose of aiding the secession forces there; that two of them left wives and children (one a free woman) here; that the other had left his master from fear that he would be called upon to take part in the rebel armies. Satisfied of

these facts from cautious examination of each of the negroes apart from the others I determined for the present and until better advised as these men were very serviceable and I had great need of labor in my quartermaster's department to avail myself of their services, and that I would send a receipt to Colonel Mallory that I had so taken them as I would for any other property of a private citizen which the exigencies of the service seemed to require to be taken by me, and especially property that was designed, adapted and about to be used against the United States.

As this is but an individual instance in a course of policy which may be required to be pursued with regard to this species of property I have detailed to the lieutenant-general this case and ask his direction. I am credibly informed that the negroes in this neighborhood are now being employed in the erection of batteries and other works by the rebels which it would be nearly or quite impossible to construct without their labor. Shall they be allowed the use of this property against the United States and we not be allowed its use in aid of the United States?

* * * * *

Major Cary demanded to know with regard to the negroes what course I intended to pursue. I answered him substantially as I have written above when he desired to know if I did not feel myself bound by my constitutional obligations to deliver up fugitives under the fugitive-slave act. To this I replied that the fugitive-slave act did not affect a foreign country which Virginia claimed to be and that she must reckon it one of the infelicities of her position that in so far at least she was taken at her word; that in Maryland, a loyal State, fugitives from service had been returned, and that even now although so much pressed by my necessities for the use of these men of Colonel Mallory's yet if their master would come to the fort and take the oath of allegiance to the Constitution of the United States I would deliver the men up to him and endeavor to hire their services of him if he desired to part with them. To this Major Cary responded that Colonel Mallory was absent.

* * * * *

Trusting that these dispositions and movements will meet the approval of the lieutenant-general and begging pardon for the detailed length of this dispatch, I have the honor to be, most respectfully, your obedient servant,

BENJ. F. BUTLER,
Major-General, Commanding.

REVOKING FRÉMONT'S PROCLAMATION:
SEPTEMBER 1861

Abraham Lincoln to Orville H. Browning

Major General John C. Frémont, the Union commander in Missouri, issued a proclamation on August 30, 1861, declaring martial law throughout the state and emancipating the slaves of secessionists. President Lincoln ordered Frémont on September 11 to rescind the provisions of his proclamation concerning emancipation. He explained his decision to his friend Orville H. Browning, who had recently been appointed to fill the Senate seat from Illinois left vacant by the death of Stephen A. Douglas.

Private & confidential.

Hon. O. H. Browning
My dear Sir

Executive Mansion
Washington Sept 22d 1861.

Yours of the 17th is just received; and coming from you, I confess it astonishes me. That you should object to my adhering to a law, which you had assisted in making, and presenting to me, less than a month before, is odd enough. But this is a very small part. Genl. Fremont's proclamation, as to confiscation of property, and the liberation of slaves, is *purely political*, and not within the range of *military* law, or necessity. If a commanding General finds a necessity to seize the farm of a private owner, for a pasture, an encampment, or a fortification, he has the right to do so, and to so hold it, as long as the necessity lasts; and this is within military law, because within military necessity. But to say the farm shall no longer belong to the owner, or his heirs forever; and this as well when the farm is not needed for military purposes as when it is, is purely political, without the savor of military law about it. And the same is true of slaves. If the General needs them, he can seize them, and use them; but when the need is past, it is not for him to fix their permanent future condition. That must be settled

according to laws made by law-makers, and not by military proclamations. The proclamation in the point in question, is simply "dictatorship." It assumes that the general may do *anything* he pleases—confiscate the lands and free the slaves of *loyal* people, as well as of disloyal ones. And going the whole figure I have no doubt would be more popular with some thoughtless people, than that which has been done! But I cannot assume this reckless position; nor allow others to assume it on my responsibility. You speak of it as being the only means of *saving* the government. On the contrary it is itself the surrender of the government. Can it be pretended that it is any longer the government of the U.S.—any government of Constitution and laws,—wherein a General, or a President, may make permanent rules of property by proclamation?

I do not say Congress might not with propriety pass a law, on the point, just such as General Fremont proclaimed. I do not say I might not, as a member of Congress, vote for it. What I object to, is, that I as President, shall expressly or impliedly seize and exercise the permanent legislative functions of the government.

So much as to principle. Now as to policy. No doubt the thing was popular in some quarters, and would have been more so if it had been a general declaration of emancipation. The Kentucky Legislature would not budge till that proclamation was modified; and Gen. Anderson telegraphed me that on the news of Gen. Fremont having actually issued deeds of manumission, a whole company of our Volunteers threw down their arms and disbanded. I was so assured, as to think it probable, that the very arms we had furnished Kentucky would be turned against us. I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game. Kentucky gone, we can not hold Missouri, nor, as I think, Maryland. These all against us, and the job on our hands is too large for us. We would as well consent to separation at once, including the surrender of this capitol. On the contrary, if you will give up your restlessness for new positions, and back me manfully on the grounds upon which you and other kind friends gave me the election, and have approved in my public documents, we shall go through triumphantly.

You must not understand I took my course on the procla-

mation *because* of Kentucky. I took the same ground in a private letter to General Fremont before I heard from Kentucky.

You think I am inconsistent because I did not also forbid Gen. Fremont to shoot men under the proclamation. I understand that part to be within military law; but I also think, and so privately wrote Gen. Fremont, that it is impolitic in this, that our adversaries have the power, and will certainly exercise it, to shoot as many of our men as we shoot of theirs. I did not say this in the public letter, because it is a subject I prefer not to discuss in the hearing of our enemies.

There has been no thought of removing Gen. Fremont on any ground connected with his proclamation; and if there has been any wish for his removal on any ground, our mutual friend Sam. Glover can probably tell you what it was. I hope no real necessity for it exists on any ground.

Suppose you write to Hurlbut and get him to resign. Your friend as ever

A. LINCOLN

Let My People Go

The Reverend Lewis Lockwood was sent by the American Missionary Association to Fort Monroe, Virginia, in September 1861 to assist the former slaves living within the Union lines. While he was at the fort Lockwood recorded the words to the song from the dictation of Carl Hollosay and other “contrabands,” who told him that it had been sung in Virginia and Maryland for at least fifteen or twenty years. Lockwood sent his transcription to Harwood Vernon of the YMCA, who published it in the *New-York Daily Tribune* on December 2, 1861. The transcription also appeared in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard* on December 21.

Let My People Go

A Song of the “Contrabands”

When Israel was in Egypt’s land,
O let my people go!
Oppressed so hard they could not stand,
O let my people go!

*O go down, Moses
Away down to Egypt’s land,
And tell King Pharaoh,
To let my people go!*

Thus saith the Lord, bold Moses said,
O let my people go!
If not, I’ll smite your first born dead,
O let my people go!

No more shall they in bondage toil,
O let my people go!
Let them come out with Egypt’s spoil,

O let my people go!

Then Israel out of Egypt came,
O let my people go!
And left the proud oppressive land,
O let my people go!

O 'twas a dark and dismal night,
O let my people go!
When Moses led the Israelites,
O let my people go!

'Twas good old Moses, and Aaron, too,
O let my people go!
'Twas they that led the armies through,
O let my people go!

The Lord told Moses what to do,
O let my people go!
To lead the children of Israel through,
O let my people go!

O come along Moses, you'll not get lost,
O let my people go!
Stretch out your rod and come across,
O let my people go!

As Israel stood by the water side,
O let my people go!
At the command of God it did divide,
O let my people go!

When they had reached the other shore,
O let my people go!
They sang a song of triumph o'er,
O let my people go!

Pharaoh said he would go across,
O let my people go!

But Pharaoh and his host were lost,
O let my people go!

O Moses, the cloud shall cleave the way,
O let my people go!
A fire by night, a shade by day,
O let my people go!

You'll not get lost in the wilderness,
O let my people go!
With a lighted candle in your breast,
O let my people go!

Jordan shall stand up like a wall,
O let my people go!
And the walls of Jericho shall fall,
O let my people go!

Your foe shall not before you stand,
O let my people go!
And you'll possess fair Canaan's land,
O let my people go!

'Twas just about in harvest time,
O let my people go!
When Joshua led his host Divine,
O let my people go!

O let us all from bondage flee,
O let my people go!
And let us all in Christ be free,
O let my people go!

We need not always weep and mourn,
O let my people go!
And wear these Slavery chains forlorn,
O let my people go!

This world's a wilderness of woe,
O let my people go!
O let us on to Canaan go,
O let my people go!

What a beautiful morning that will be!
O let my people go!
When time breaks up in eternity,
O let my people go!

“DO NOTHING WITH THEM”: JANUARY 1862

*Frederick Douglass: What Shall Be
Done with the Slaves If Emancipated?*

January 1862

From the beginning of hostilities in April 1861, Frederick Douglass had advocated enlisting black soldiers and had criticized the Lincoln administration for not making the destruction of slavery an essential aim of the war. On January 14, 1862, Douglass warned a Philadelphia audience, “We have attempted to maintain our Union in utter defiance of the moral chemistry of the universe,” explaining, “We have sought to bind the chains of slavery on the limbs of the black man, without thinking that at last we should find the other end of that hateful chain about our own necks.” That same month, in his journal *Douglass’ Monthly*, the nation’s leading black abolitionist looked ahead to a time without chains.

IT IS curious to observe, at this juncture, when the existence of slavery is threatened by an aroused nation, when national necessity is combining with an enlightened sense of justice to put away the huge abomination forever, that the enemies of human liberty are resorting to all the old and ten thousand times refuted objections to emancipation with which they confronted the abolition movement twenty-five years ago. Like the one stated above, these pro-slavery objections have their power mainly in the slavery-engendered prejudice, which every where pervades the country. Like all other great transgressions of the law of eternal rectitude, slavery thus produces an element in the popular and depraved moral sentiment favorable to its own existence. These objections are often urged with a show of sincere solicitude for the welfare of the slaves themselves. It is said, what will you do with them? they can’t take care of themselves; they would all come to the North; they would not work; they would become a burden upon the State, and a blot upon society; they’d cut their masters’ throats; they would cheapen labor, and crowd out the

poor white laborer from employment; their former masters would not employ them, and they would necessarily become vagrants, paupers and criminals, overrunning all our alms houses, jails and prisons. The laboring classes among the whites would come in bitter conflict with them in all the avenues of labor, and regarding them as occupying places and filling positions which should be occupied and filled by white men; a fierce war of races would be the inevitable consequence, and the black race would, of course, (being the weaker,) be exterminated. In view of this frightful, though happily somewhat contradictory picture, the question is asked, and pressed with a great show of earnestness at this momentous crisis of our nation's history, What shall be done with the four million slaves if they are emancipated?

This question has been answered, and can be answered in many ways. Primarily, it is a question less for man than for God—less for human intellect than for the laws of nature to solve. It assumes that nature has erred; that the law of liberty is a mistake; that freedom, though a natural want of the human soul, can only be enjoyed at the expense of human welfare, and that men are better off in slavery than they would or could be in freedom; that slavery is the natural order of human relations, and that liberty is an experiment. What shall be done with them?

Our answer is, do nothing with them; mind your business, and let them mind theirs. Your *doing* with them is their greatest misfortune. They have been undone by your doings, and all they now ask, and really have need of at your hands, is just to let them alone. They suffer by every interference, and succeed best by being let alone. The Negro should have been let alone in Africa—let alone when the pirates and robbers offered him for sale in our Christian slave markets—(more cruel and inhuman than the Mohammedan slave markets)—let alone by courts, judges, politicians, legislators and slave-drivers—let alone altogether, and assured that they were thus to be let alone forever, and that they must now make their own way in the world, just the same as any and every other variety of the human family. As colored men, we only ask to be allowed to *do* with ourselves, subject only to the same great laws for the welfare of human society which apply to other men, Jews,

Gentiles, Barbarian, Sythian. Let us stand upon our own legs, work with our own hands, and eat bread in the sweat of our own brows. When you, our white fellow-countrymen, have attempted to do anything for us, it has generally been to deprive us of some right, power or privilege which you yourself would die before you would submit to have taken from you. When the planters of the West Indies used to attempt to puzzle the pure-minded Wilberforce with the question, How shall we get rid of slavery? his simple answer was, "quit stealing." In like manner, we answer those who are perpetually puzzling their brains with questions as to what shall be done with the Negro, "let him alone and mind your own business." If you see him plowing in the open field, leveling the forest, at work with a spade, a rake, a hoe, a pick-axe, or a bill—let him alone; he has a right to work. If you see him on his way to school, with spelling book, geography and arithmetic in his hands—let him alone. Don't shut the door in his face, nor bolt your gates against him; he has a right to learn—let him alone. Don't pass laws to degrade him. If he has a ballot in his hand, and is on his way to the ballot-box to deposit his vote for the man whom he thinks will most justly and wisely administer the Government which has the power of life and death over him, as well as others—let him *alone*; his right of choice as much deserves respect and protection as your own. If you see him on his way to the church, exercising religious liberty in accordance with this or that religious persuasion—let him alone.—Don't meddle with him, nor trouble yourselves with any questions as to what shall be done with him.

The great majority of human duties are of this negative character. If men were born in need of crutches, instead of having legs, the fact would be otherwise. We should then be in need of help, and would require outside aid; but according to the wiser and better arrangement of nature, our duty is done better by not hindering than by helping our fellow-men; or, in other words, the best way to help them is just to let them help themselves.

We would not for one moment check the outgrowth of any benevolent concern for the future welfare of the colored race in America or elsewhere; but in the name of reason and religion, we earnestly plead for justice before all else. Benevolence

with justice is harmonious and beautiful; but benevolence without justice is a mockery. Let the American people, who have thus far only kept the colored race staggering between partial philanthropy and cruel force, be induced to try what virtue there is in justice. First pure, then peaceable—first just, then generous.—The sum of the black man's misfortunes and calamities are just here: He is everywhere treated as an exception to all the general rules which should operate in the relations of other men. He is literally scourged beyond the beneficent range of truth and justice.—With all the purifying and liberalizing power of the Christian religion, teaching, as it does, meekness, gentleness, brotherly kindness, those who profess it have not yet even approached the position of treating the black man as an equal man and a brother. The few who have thus far risen to this requirement, both of reason and religion, are stigmatized as fanatics and enthusiasts.

What shall be done with the Negro if emancipated? Deal justly with him. He is a human being, capable of judging between good and evil, right and wrong, liberty and slavery, and is as much a subject of law as any other man; therefore, deal justly with him. He is, like other men, sensible of the motives of reward and punishment. Give him wages for his work, and let hunger pinch him if he don't work. He knows the difference between fullness and famine, plenty and scarcity. "But will he work?" Why should he not? He is used to it. His hands are already hardened by toil, and he has no dreams of ever getting a living by any other means than by hard work. But would you turn them all loose? Certainly! We are no better than our Creator. He has turned them loose, and why should not we?

But would you let them all stay here?—Why not? What better is *here* than *there*? Will they occupy more room as freemen than as slaves? Is the presence of a black freeman less agreeable than that of a black slave? Is an object of our injustice and cruelty a more ungrateful sight than one of your justice and benevolence? You have borne the one more than two hundred years—can't you bear the other long enough to try the experiment? "But would it be safe?" No good reason can be given why it would not be. There is much more reason for apprehension from slavery than from freedom. Slavery

provokes and justifies incendiarism, murder, robbery, assassination, and all manner of violence.—But why not let them go off by themselves? That is a matter we would leave exclusively to themselves. Besides, when you, the American people, shall once do justice to the enslaved colored people, you will not want to get rid of them. Take away the motive which slavery supplies for getting rid of the free black people of the South, and there is not a single State, from Maryland to Texas, which would desire to be rid of its black people. Even with the obvious disadvantage to slavery, which such contact is, there is scarcely a slave State which could be carried for the unqualified expulsion of the free colored people. Efforts at such expulsion have been made in Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina, and all have failed, just because the black man as a freeman is a useful member of society. To drive him away, and thus deprive the South of his labor, would be as absurd and monstrous as for a man to cut off his right arm, the better to enable himself to work.

There is one cheering aspect of this revival of the old and threadbare objections to emancipation—it implies at least the presence of danger to the slave system. When slavery was assailed twenty-five years ago, the whole land took the alarm, and every species of argument and subterfuge was resorted to by the defenders of slavery. The mental activity was amazing; all sorts of excuses, political, economical, social, theological and ethnological, were coined into barricades against the advancing march of anti-slavery sentiment. The same activity now shows itself, but has added nothing new to the argument for slavery or against emancipation.—When the accursed slave system shall once be abolished, and the Negro, long cast out from the human family, and governed like a beast of burden, shall be gathered under the divine government of justice, liberty and humanity, men will be ashamed to remember that they were ever deluded by the flimsy nonsense which they have allowed themselves to urge against the freedom of the long enslaved millions of our land. That day is not far off.

“O hasten it in mercy, gracious Heaven!”

John Boston to Elizabeth Boston

John Boston wrote to his wife in Owensville, Maryland, from Upton's Hill in Arlington, Virginia. It is not known if Elizabeth Boston ever received his letter, which soon came into the possession of a committee of the Maryland House of Delegates that was attempting to have fugitive slaves excluded from Union army camps. When the committee wrote to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton in March 1862 asking that fugitive slaves be expelled from army camps, it received a reply from Assistant Secretary Peter H. Watson stating that "the alleged harboring" of slaves would receive Stanton's attention "as soon as he is relieved from more important and pressing duties."

Upton Hill January the 12 1862

My Dear Wife it is with grate joy I take this time to let you know Where I am i am now in Safety in the 14th Regiment of Brooklyn this Day i can Adress you thank god as a free man I had a little truble in giting away But as the lord led the Children of Isrel to the land of Canon So he led me to a land Where fredom Will rain in spite Of earth and hell Dear you must make your Self content i am free from al the Slavers Lash and as you have chose the Wise plan Of Serving the lord i hope you Will pray Much and i Will try by the help of god To Serv him With all my hart I am With a very nice man and have All that hart Can Wish But My Dear I Cant express my grate desire that i Have to See you i trust the time Will Come When We Shal meet again And if We dont met on earth We Will Meet in heven Where Jesus ranes Dear Elizabeth tell Mrs Ownees That i trust that She Will Continue Her kindness to you and that god Will Bless her on earth and Save her In grate eternity My Acompliments To Mrs Owens and her Children may They Prosper through life I never Shall forgit her kindness to me Dear Wife i must Close rest your-self Contented i am free i Want you to rite To me Soon as you Can Without Delay Direct your letter to the 14th Reigment New york State malitia Uptons Hill Virginea In Care of

Mr Cranford Comary Write my Dear Soon As you C Your
Affectionate Husban Kiss Daniel For me

John Boston

Give my love to Father and Mother

“THE BOLDEST FEAT”: MARYLAND, MARCH 1862

*George E. Stephens to the
Weekly Anglo-African*

The son of free blacks who fled to Philadelphia from Virginia after the Nat Turner slave rebellion, George E. Stephens was an abolitionist who worked before the war as a cabinetmaker, upholsterer, and sailor. In October 1861 he became a correspondent for the New York *Weekly Anglo-African*, an influential black newspaper, while serving as a cook and personal servant to Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Tilghman of the 26th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment. Stephens spent the winter of 1861–62 along the lower Potomac in Charles County, Maryland, reporting on army camp life and the interactions among soldiers, slaves, and slaveholders. His letter of March 2 appeared in the *Anglo-African* on March 15, 1862.

Head Quarters, Hooker's Division,
Near Budd's Ferry, Md.,
March 2d, 1862.

Mr. Editor.—We have had high winds for the last two or three days, interspersed of course with rain, but if the rain would cease these driving March winds would soon dry up the roads, and the grand army of the Potomac would be able to walk dry shod over into the unhappy land of Canaan, (Dixie's land.)

The rumor has reached us that Gen. Banks has been defeated, and his forces completely routed on the upper Potomac.

Professor Lowe has been unable to make his usual daily balloon reconnaissance on account of the high wind. The wind blew so violently on Tuesday last that he was compelled to disinflate his balloon, but will reinflate it as soon as the winds subside.

We are reliably informed that the rebels immediately in front of us have received large reinforcements; they evidently anticipate an attack.

Brigadier General Naglee, of Pennsylvania, arrived in camp on the 17th ult., and took command of 1st Brigade, in place of Col. Cowdin, of the 1st Massachusetts regiment, who returns to his command.

Captain Page who has commanded at Liverpool Point, where the contrabands are employed unloading vessels, etc., and where the army supplies are stored, relates that two of these contrabands undertook and accomplished the boldest feat of the war, thus furnishing us with another irrefutable evidence of the courage, daring and skill of the negro, when brought face to face with danger; the strength and permanence of his affections, which is the noblest evidence, too, of a pure, perfect and elevated nature. These men belong to the party Col. Graham brought off when he made his inroad into Virginia. The captain says that one of them came to him and asked permission to recross the river to rescue his wife, declaring that he was almost certain that he could bring her off safely. The captain thought the fellow mad, but he plead so earnestly that he gave him permission, and gave notice of the fact to the commander of the flotilla, to prevent his being fired upon by the gun boats. He left Liverpool Point on a dark night, in a small skiff with muffled oars. His wife lived some six or seven miles up the Occoquan Bay. He reached her, brought her off safe, gathered much valuable information of the strength and position of the enemy, and returned the following night to Liverpool Point with his companion, safe and unharmed. This man is a true type of the negro; jet black, erect and athletic. The other man, a type of the mixed blood, seeing the triumph of his comrade, asked and received permission to secure his wife, and not having as far to go, brought her off triumphantly and returned the same evening that he went upon his errand. When it is remembered that the rebels are very vigilant on account of the expected attack of our forces, and that the beach is lined with sentinels from Martha's Point to Occoquan Bay, whose bivouac fires can be seen every night with common glasses, and also that if they had been detected nothing but instant death would have been meted out to them, we must accord these two of the most daring ventures and successful exploits of the war. If these men and their brethren were allowed to become active instead of passive co-operators with

the Union forces, how long would treason be able to so impudently defy the federal powers?

Here is an item I give you for the special benefit of your fair readers. The more susceptible of the sterner sex may also gather whatever satisfaction this little story of love, struggle and triumph, may give. One of the most painful of the revolting sights one sees when sojourning in this land of slavery, is the universal prostitution by their masters of beautiful slave women. There are scarcely any farms or plantations in the south that can boast of no pretty women. They are prized, petted, bartered and sold according to the nature and extent of their charms. Beauties rivaling those of the Caucasian are sold in the slave marts of the U.S. No matter how loathsome to her the purchaser of her charms may be, the hard remorseless necessities of her position compel her to yield. Mary Thomas, a beautiful negress, the slave of a man by the name of Henry Eglon, living near Newport, belonged to this class. Her master had already engaged her to an old lecherous scoundrel. She fell violently in love with an Anglo-African in one of the companies. Longing to be free, and to escape that living martyrdom, the life which her master had marked out for her, and also unite her destiny with that of her lover, she made a bold stroke for life, love and liberty. She did not clothe herself in male apparel, like many of the paler heroines and amazons have done, but maintained a distinction of sex. She had not gone far before Ferrel, a slave master near Port Tobacco, arrested her and locked her up in the jail at that place. Her lover broke the jail open and released her. She had not been released five minutes before Johnny Shackelford, a noted slave hunter, re-arrested her; but the girl fought him bravely. Her lover and the soldiers could not quietly look on such a contest as this; they came to the rescue, and just barely left life in the hunter. And why should she not triumph? Did not she turn her back on slavery and ruin, while the path which she proposed to tread was illuminated with the bright hope of salvation, liberty and love? I rejoice to say that Mary Thomas to-day is free!

There is nothing more galling to a black man than the iteration and reiteration of the foul misrepresentations which the advocate of man-stealing, man-torturing, and man-slaughtering slavery urge against him. There never has been a time in

the history of this country, when there was such a scarcity of material to build these heartless lies on. They may oppose us and deny us rights, but our friends and ourselves will soon settle the contest of ideas; but when our enemies add "insult to injury" it incites in us the desire to cut their throats or give them a taste of the horrors of the system they so much love. Although the Government has spurned the loyalty of the negro more pointedly and peremptorily than it has the treason of these slaveholding dogs and their Northern tools and accomplices, they have, as by some unseen power, become active and prominent in this great civil contest, and have impressed the indelible truth upon the minds of the thinking portion of this nation that he is a dreadful power for evil or a grand and noble one for good.

Rum Point and Liverpool Point, as I have often before remarked, are the points where the supplies are landed. Before the contrabands were brought here, details from the various regiments were made to unload the vessels and to store the provisions; these details generally numbered about a hundred men—a whole company. The soldiers were not allowed for this special duty any extra compensation; so the result was, that they skulked out of as much work as they could, upon the principle that it is far more agreeable and much more reasonable to play for nothing than to work for nothing. They were certain to get their \$13 per month, and this poor pay and poorer fare formed no incentive to hard manual labor. Since the 30 or 40 muscular blacks have arrived at Liverpool Point it is made the principle depot for stores and Rum Point is made the passenger depot; and these 30 or 40 men do more in the same space of time than a hundred white men—thus reversing the order of things. The black man under the incentives of Free labor, pay, and freedom, goes blithely and gaily to his task; while the white man under the repulsiveness of forced labor and no pay, lounges about and skulks sulkily away. They are also temperate and cleanly; are comfortably housed, clothed and fed by the Government, wives, children, and all; and are to receive ten cents a day pay, which is small—but when the housing, clothing and feeding of a man and his family are considered, his pay is nearly as good as the enlisted

soldier; it can all be saved up by them, and will make a small start for them when they shall be released by the authorities.

G.E.S.

“A BLACK REGIMENT”: CANADA, MAY 1862

Garland H. White to Edwin M. Stanton

A minister and personal servant of Senator Robert Toombs of Georgia, Garland H. White escaped from slavery before the Civil War and fled to Canada. Although White received no answer to this letter to the secretary of war, he would later canvass “the intire north & west urging my people to inlist” and in 1864 became the chaplain of the 28th U.S. Colored Infantry, a regiment White helped recruit in Indiana.

London Canada West May 7th 1862

dear sir. please indulg me the liberty of writing you afew lines upon a subject of grave importance to your & my country It is true I am now stoping in canada for awhile but it is not my home—& before I proceen further I must inform you of your humble correspondent. My name is G. H. White formerly the Servant of Robert Toombs of Georgia. Mr Wm H Seward knows something about me I am now a minister, & am called upon By my peopel to tender to your *Hon* thir willingness to serve as soldiers in the southern parts during the summer season or longer if required. our offer is not for speculation or self interest but for our love for the north & the government at large, & at the same time we pray god that the triumph of the north & restoration of peace if I may call it will prove an eternal overthrow of the institution of slavery which is the cause of all our trouble if you desire to see me let me hear at an early day. I am certain of raising a good no. in the west & in the north. I am aquainted all thro the south for I traveled with Senator Toombs all over it nearly. I am quite willing to spend my life in preaching against sin & fighting against the same. Mr Seward & many other of both white & colored know me in Washington please let me hear from your Hon soon your most humble servant

Garland H. White

please excuse my bad writing as I never went to School a day in my left. I learnd what little I know by the hardest. yet I feel

that the simplest instrument used in the right direction sometimes accomplishes much good. I pray you in gods name to consider the condition of your humble speaker in the distant. A man who are free from all the calumities of your land. yet when he thinks of his suffering countrymen he can but feel that good might make him instrumental in your hands to the accomplishments of some humble good. as simple as this request may seeme to you yet it might prove one of the greatest acts of your life. an act which might redound to your honor to the remotest generation— I want to see my friends at port royal & other places in the South. I now close by saying I hope to hear from you as soon as possible. I shall not be happy till I hear from you on this very important subject & not then if I am denied— So now my chance to do good as I think rest altogether with you. now may the good lord help you to make a favorable desition heaven bless you & your dear family is the prayer & your most obedient servant G. H. White minister of the gospel London Canada West

A Black regiment headed by the Revd Garland. H. White offers their services in protection of the southern forts during the sickly season

FLEEING SLAVES: GEORGIA, AUGUST 1862

*Memorial of a Committee of Citizens
of Liberty County, Georgia*

Brigadier General Hugh W. Mercer, Confederate commander at Savannah, received no response from Richmond to his forwarding of this citizens' plea. The memorial suggests the dimensions of the problem of runaway slaves in just this one area of coastal Georgia. In April 1862, Union forces had captured Fort Pulaski and occupied the coastal islands off Savannah, which became a haven for the fleeing slaves.

HEADQUARTERS THIRD DIVISION, DISTRICT OF GEORGIA,
Savannah, August 5, 1862.

HON. GEORGE W. RANDOLPH,
Secretary of War:

SIR: I have the honor to inclose a memorial presented by a committee of the citizens of Liberty County, in this State, a community noted for their respectability and worth. The subject presented, I would respectfully submit, is one that demands the early notice of the Congress when it shall reassemble, and the instructions of the War Department (in accordance with such legislation as may be adopted) for the government of military commanders. The evil and danger alluded to may grow into frightful proportions unless checked, but the responsibility of life and death, so liable to be abused, is obviously too great to be intrusted to the hand of every officer whose duties may bring him face to face with this question. It is likely to become one of portentous magnitude if the war continues, and I do not see how it can be properly dealt with except by the supreme legislature of the country. I deem the action of Congress in this regard as needful for the protection of military commanders as for their guidance.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. W. MERCER,
Brigadier-General, Commanding.

[Inclosure.]

Brigadier-General MERCER,

Commanding Military District of Georgia, Savannah:

GENERAL: The undersigned, citizens of Liberty County, of the Fifteenth District, would respectfully present for your consideration a subject of grave moment, not to themselves only, but to their fellow-citizens of the Confederate States who occupy not only our territory immediately bordering on that of the old United States, but the whole line of our sea-coast from Virginia to Texas. We allude to the escape of our slaves across the border lines landward, and out to the vessels of the enemy seaward, and to their being also enticed off by those who, having made their escape, return for that purpose, and not infrequently attended by the enemy. The injury inflicted upon the interests of the citizens of the Confederate States by this now constant drain is immense. Independent of the forcible seizure of slaves by the enemy whenever it lies in his power, and to which we now make no allusion, as the indemnity for this loss will in due time occupy the attention of our Government. From ascertained losses on certain parts of our coast, we may set down as a low estimate the number of slaves absconded and enticed off from our sea-board at 20,000, and their value at from \$12,000,000 to \$15,000,000, to which loss may be added the insecurity of the property along our borders and the demoralization of the negroes that remain, which increases with the continuance of the evil, and may finally result in perfect disorganization and rebellion. The absconding negroes hold the position of traitors, since they go over to the enemy and afford him aid and comfort by revealing the condition of the districts and cities from which they come, and aiding him in creating fortifications and raising provisions for his support, and now that the United States have allowed their introduction into their Army and Navy, aiding the enemy by enlisting under his banners, and increasing his resources in men for our annoyance and destruction. Negroes occupy the position of spies also, since they are employed in secret expeditions for obtaining information by transmission of newspapers and by other modes, and act as guides to expeditions on the land and as pilots to their vessels on the waters of our inlets and rivers. They have proved of

great value thus far to the coast operations of the enemy, and without their assistance he could not have accomplished as much for our injury and annoyance as he has done; and unless some measures shall be adopted to prevent the escape of the negroes to the enemy, the threat of an army of trained Africans for the coming fall and winter campaigns may become a reality.

Meanwhile the counties along the seaboard will become exhausted of the slave population, which should be retained as far as possible for the raising of provisions and supplies for our forces on the coast. In the absence of penalties of such a nature as to insure respect and dread, the temptations which are spread before the negroes are very strong, and when we consider their condition, their ignorance and credulity, and love of change, must prove in too many cases decidedly successful. No effectual check being interposed to their escape, the desire increases among them in proportion to the extent of its successful gratification, and will spread inland until it will draw negroes from counties far in the interior of the State, and negroes will congregate from every quarter in the counties immediately bordering on the sea and become a lawless set of runaways, corrupting the negroes that remain faithful, depredating on property of all kinds, and resorting, it may be, to deeds of violence, which demonstrates that the whole State is interested in the effort to stop this evil; and already have negroes from Middle Georgia made their escape to the seaboard counties, and through Savannah itself to the enemy.

After consulting the laws of the State we can discover none that meet the case and allow of that prompt execution of a befitting penalty which its urgency demands. The infliction of capital punishment is now confined to the superior court, and any indictment before that court would involve incarceration of the negroes for months, with the prospect of postponement of trial, long litigation, large expense, and doubtful conviction; and, moreover, should the negroes be caught escaping in any numbers, there would not be room in all our jails to receive them. The civil law, therefore, as it now stands cannot come to our protection.

Can we find protection under military law? This is the question we submit to the general in command. Under military

law the severest penalties are prescribed for furnishing the enemy with aid and comfort and for acting as spies and traitors, all which the negroes can do as effectually as white men, as facts prove, and as we have already suggested. There can be but little doubt that if negroes are detected in the act of exciting their fellow-slaves to escape or of taking them off, or of returning after having gone to the enemy to induce and aid others to escape, they may in each of these cases be summarily punished under military authority. But may not the case of negroes taken in the act of absconding singly or in parties, without being directly incited so to do by one or more others, be also summarily dealt with by military authority? Were our white population to act in the same way, would it not be necessary to make a summary example of them, in order to cure the evil or put it under some salutary control? If it be argued that in case of the negroes it would be hard to mete out a similar punishment under similar circumstances, because of their ignorance, pliability, credulity, desire of change, the absence of the political ties of allegiance, and the peculiar status of the race, it may be replied that the negroes constitute a part of the body politic in fact, and should be made to know their duty; that they are perfectly aware that the act which they commit is one of rebellion against the power and authority of their owners and the Government under which they live. They are perfectly aware that they go over to the protection and aid of the enemy who are on the coast for the purpose of killing their owners and of destroying their property; and they know, further, that if they themselves are found with the enemy that they will be treated as the enemy, namely, shot and destroyed.

To apprehend such transgressors, to confine and punish them privately by owners, or publicly by the citizens of the county by confinement and whipping, and then return them to the plantations, will not abate the evil, for the disaffected will not thereby be reformed, but will remain a leaven of corruption in the mass and stand ready to make any other attempts that may promise success. It is, indeed, a monstrous evil that we suffer. Our negroes are property, the agricultural class of the Confederacy, upon whose order and continuance so much depends—may go off (inflicting a great pecuniary

loss, both private and public) to the enemy, convey any amount of valuable information, and aid him by building his fortifications, by raising supplies for his armies, by enlisting as soldiers, by acting as spies and as guides and pilots to his expeditions on land and water, and bringing in the foe upon us to kill and devastate; and yet, if we catch them in the act of going to the enemy we are powerless for the infliction of any punishment adequate to their crime and adequate to fill them with salutary fear of its commission. Surely some remedy should be applied, and that speedily, for the protection of the country aside from all other considerations. A few executions of leading transgressors among them by hanging or shooting would dissipate the ignorance which may be supposed to possess their minds, and which may be pleaded in arrest of judgment.

We do not pray the general in command to issue any order for the government of the citizens in the matter, which, of course, is no part of his duty, but the promulgation of an order to the military for the execution of ringleaders who are detected in stirring up the people to escape, for the execution of all who return, having once escaped, and for the execution of all who are caught in the act of escaping, will speedily be known and understood by the entire slave population, and will do away with all excuses of ignorance, and go very far toward an entire arrest of the evil, while it will enable the citizens to act efficiently in their own sphere whenever circumstances require them to act at all. In an adjoining county, which has lost some 200, since the shooting of two detected in the act of escaping not another attempt has been made, and it has been several weeks since the two were shot.

As law-abiding men we do not desire committees of vigilance clothed with plenary powers, nor meetings of the body of our citizens to take the law into their own hands, however justifiable it may be under the peculiar circumstances, and therefore, in the failure of the civil courts to meet the emergency, we refer the subject to the general in command, believing that he has the power to issue the necessary order to the forces under him covering the whole ground, and knowing that by so doing he will receive the commendation and cordial support of the intelligent and law-abiding citizens inhabiting the military department over which he presides.

All which is respectfully submitted by your friends and fellow-citizens.

R. Q. MALLARD,
T. W. FLEMING,
E. STACY,

Committee of Citizens of the 15th Dist., Liberty County, Ga.

AIDING CONTRABANDS:
WASHINGTON, D.C., SUMMER 1862

Harriet Jacobs to William Lloyd Garrison

In the summer of 1862 Harriet Jacobs, the author of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, went to the District of Columbia and began relief work among the contrabands who had fled there. She wrote about their situation in a letter to the abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison that appeared in his newspaper *The Liberator* on September 5, 1862. (The letter was signed "Linda," after "Linda Brent," the pseudonym under which she had published her autobiography in 1861.) Jacobs would continue her relief efforts in Washington and Alexandria, Virginia, until the end of the war.

Dear Mr. Garrison:

I thank you for the request of a line on the condition of the contrabands, and what I have seen while among them. When we parted at that pleasant gathering of the Progressive Friends at Longwood, you to return to the Old Bay State, to battle for freedom and justice to the slave, I to go to the District of Columbia, where the shackles had just fallen, I hoped that the glorious echo from the blow had aroused the spirit of freedom, if a spark slumbered in its bosom. Having purchased my ticket through to Washington at the Philadelphia station, I reached the capital without molestation. Next morning, I went to Duff Green's Row, Government head-quarters for the contrabands here. I found men, women and children all huddled together, without any distinction or regard to age or sex. Some of them were in the most pitiable condition. Many were sick with measles, diphtheria, scarlet and typhoid fever. Some had a few filthy rags to lie on; others had nothing but the bare floor for a couch. There seemed to be no established rules among them; they were coming in at all hours, often through the night, in large numbers, and the Superintendent had enough to occupy his time in taking the names of those who came in, and of those who were sent out. His office was thronged through the day by persons who came to hire these poor creatures, who

they say will not work and take care of themselves. Single women hire at four dollars a month; a woman with one child, two and a half or three dollars a month. Men's wages are ten dollars per month. Many of them, accustomed as they have been to field labor, and to living almost entirely out of doors, suffer much from the confinement in this crowded building. The little children pine like prison birds for their native element. It is almost impossible to keep the building in a healthy condition. Each day brings its fresh additions of the hungry, naked and sick. In the early part of June, there were, some days, as many as ten deaths reported at this place in twenty-four hours. At this time, there was no matron in the house, and nothing at hand to administer to the comfort of the sick and dying. I felt that their sufferings must be unknown to the people. I did not meet kindly, sympathizing people, trying to soothe the last agonies of death. Those tearful eyes often looked up to me with the language, "Is this freedom?"

A new Superintendent was engaged, Mr. Nichol, who seemed to understand what these people most needed. He laid down rules, went to work in earnest pulling down partitions to enlarge the rooms, that he might establish two hospitals, one for the men and another for the women. This accomplished, cots and mattresses were needed. There is a small society in Washington—the Freedman's Association—who are doing all they can; but remember, Washington is not New England. I often met Rev. W. H. Channing, whose hands and heart are earnestly in the cause of the enslaved of his country. This gentleman was always ready to act in their behalf. Through these friends, an order was obtained from Gen. Wadsworth for cots for the contraband hospitals.

At this time, I met in Duff Green Row, Miss Hannah Stevenson, of Boston, and Miss Kendall. The names of these ladies need no comment. They were the first white females whom I had seen among these poor creatures, except those who had come in to hire them. These noble ladies had come to work, and their names will be lisped in prayer by many a dying slave. Hoping to help a little in the good work they had begun, I wrote to a lady in New York, a true and tried friend of the slave, who from the first moment had responded to every call of humanity. This letter was to ask for such articles as would

make comfortable the sick and dying in the hospital. On the Saturday following, the cots were put up. A few hours after, an immense box was received from New York. Before the sun went down, those ladies who have labored so hard for the comfort of these people had the satisfaction of seeing every man, woman and child with clean garments, lying in a clean bed. What a contrast! They seemed different beings. Every countenance beamed with gratitude and satisfied rest. To me, it was a picture of holy peace within. The next day was the first Christian Sabbath they had ever known. One mother passed away as the setting sun threw its last rays across her dying bed, and as I looked upon her, I could but say—"One day of freedom, and gone to her God." Before the dawn, others were laid beside her. It was a comfort to know that some effort had been made to soothe their dying pillows. Still, there were other places in which I felt, if possible, more interest, where the poor creatures seemed so far removed from the immediate sympathy of those who would help them. These were the contrabands in Alexandria. This place is strongly secesh; the inhabitants are kept quiet only at the point of Northern bayonets. In this place, the contrabands are distributed more over the city. In visiting those places, I had the assistance of two kind friends, women. True at heart, they felt the wrongs and degradation of their race. These ladies were always ready to aid me, as far as lay in their power. To Mrs. Brown, of 3d street, Washington, and Mrs. Dagens, of Alexandria, the contrabands owe much gratitude for the kindly aid they gave me in serving them. In this place, the men live in an old foundry, which does not afford protection from the weather. The sick lay on boards on the ground floor; some, through the kindness of the soldiers, have an old blanket. I did not hear a complaint among them. They said it was much better than it had been. All expressed a willingness to work, and were anxious to know what was to be done with them after the work was done. All of them said they had not received pay for their work, and some wanted to know if I thought it would be paid to their masters. One old man said, "I don't kere if dey don't pay, so dey give me freedom. I bin working for ole maas all de time; he nebber gib me five cent. I like de Unions fuss rate. If de Yankee Unions didn't come long, I'd be working tu de ole place now."

All said they had plenty to eat, but no clothing, and no money to buy any.

Another place, the old school-house in Alexandria, is the Government head-quarters for the women. This I thought the most wretched of all the places. Any one who can find an apology for slavery should visit this place, and learn its curse. Here you see them from infancy up to a hundred years old. What but the love of freedom could bring these old people hither? One old man, who told me he was a hundred, said he had come to be free with his children. The journey proved too much for him. Each visit, I found him sitting in the same spot, under a shady tree, suffering from rheumatism. Unpacking a barrel, I found a large coat, which I thought would be so nice for the old man, that I carried it to him. I found him sitting in the same spot, with his head on his bosom. I stooped down to speak to him. Raising his head, I found him dying. I called his wife. The old woman, who seems in her second childhood, looked on as quietly as though we were placing him for a night's rest. In this house are scores of women and children, with nothing to do, and nothing to do with. Their husbands are at work for the Government. Here they have food and shelter, but they cannot get work. The slaves who come into Washington from Maryland are sent here to protect them from the Fugitive Slave Law. These people are indebted to Mr. Rufus Leighton, formerly of Boston, for many comforts. But for their Northern friends, God pity them in their wretched and destitute condition! The Superintendent, Mr. Clarke, a Pennsylvanian, seems to feel much interest in them, and is certainly very kind. They told me they had confidence in him as a friend. That is much for a slave to say.

From this place, I went to Birch's slave-pen in Alexandria. This place forms a singular contrast with what it was two years ago. The habitable part of the building is filled with contrabands, the old jail is filled with secesh prisoners—all within speaking distance of each other. Many a compliment is passed between them on the change in their positions. There is another house on Cameron street, which is filled with very destitute people. To these places I distributed large supplies of clothing, given me by the ladies of New York, New Bedford, and Boston. They have made many a desolate heart glad. They

have clothed the naked, fed the hungry. To them, God's promise is sufficient.

Let me tell you of another place, to which I always planned my last visit for the day. There was something about this house to make you forget that you came to it with a heavy heart. The little children you meet at this door bring up pleasant memories when you leave it; from the older ones you carry pleasant recollections. These were what the people call the more favored slaves, and would boast of having lived in the first families in Virginia. They certainly had reaped some advantage from the contact. It seemed by a miracle that they had all fallen together. They were intelligent, and some of the young women and children beautiful. One young girl, whose beauty I cannot describe, although its magnetism often drew me to her side, I loved to talk with, and look upon her sweet face, covered with blushes; besides, I wanted to learn her true position, but her gentle shyness I had to respect. One day, while trying to draw her out, a fine-looking woman, with all the pride of a mother, stepped forward, and said—"Madam, this young woman is my son's wife." It was a relief. I thanked God that this young creature had an arm to lean upon for protection. Here I looked upon slavery, and felt the curse of their heritage was what is considered the best blood of Virginia. On one of my visits here, I met a mother who had just arrived from Virginia, bringing with her four daughters. Of course, they belonged to one of the first families. This man's strong attachment to this woman and her children caused her, with her children, to be locked up one month. She made her escape one day while her master had gone to learn the news from the Union army. She fled to the Northern army for freedom and protection. These people had earned for themselves many little comforts. Their houses had an inviting aspect. The clean floors, the clean white spreads on their cots, and the general tidiness throughout the building, convinced me they had done as well as any other race could have done, under the same circumstances.

Let me tell you of another place—Arlington Heights. Every lady has heard of Gen. Lee's beautiful residence, which has been so faithfully guarded by our Northern army. It looks as though the master had given his orders every morning. Not a tree around that house has fallen. About the forts and camps

they have been compelled to use the axe. At the quarters, there are many contrabands. The men are employed, and most of the women. Here they have plenty of exercise in the open air, and seem very happy. Many of the regiments are stationed here. It is a delightful place for both the soldier and the contraband. Looking around this place, and remembering what I had heard of the character of the man who owned it before it passed into the hands of its present owner, I was much inclined to say, Although the wicked prosper for a season, the way of the transgressor is hard.

When in Washington for the day, my morning visit would be up at Duff Green's Row. My first business would be to look into a small room on the ground floor. This room was covered with lime. Here I would learn how many deaths had occurred in the last twenty-four hours. Men, women and children lie here together, without a shadow of those rites which we give to our poorest dead. There they lie, in the filthy rags they wore from the plantation. Nobody seems to give it a thought. It is an every-day occurrence, and the scenes have become familiar. One morning, as I looked in, I saw lying there five children. By the side of them lay a young man. He escaped, was taken back to Virginia, whipped nearly to death, escaped again the next night, dragged his body to Washington, and died, literally cut to pieces. Around his feet I saw a rope; I could not see that put into the grave with him. Other cases similar to this came to my knowledge, but this I saw.

Amid all this sadness, we sometimes would hear a shout of joy. Some mother had come in, and found her long-lost child; some husband his wife. Brothers and sisters meet. Some, without knowing it, had lived years within twenty miles of each other.

A word about the schools. It is pleasant to see that eager group of old and young, striving to learn their A, B, C, and Scripture sentences. Their great desire is to learn to read. While in the school-room, I could not but feel how much these young women and children needed female teachers who could do something more than teach them their A, B, C. They need to be taught the right habits of living and the true principles of life.

My last visit intended for Alexandria was on Saturday. I

spent the day with them, and received showers of thanks for myself and the good ladies who had sent me; for I had been careful to impress upon them that these kind friends sent me, and that all that was given by me was from them. Just as I was on the point of leaving, I found a young woman, with an infant, who had just been brought in. She lay in a dying condition, with nothing but a piece of an old soldier coat under her head. Must I leave her in this condition? I could not beg in Alexandria. It was time for the last boat to leave for Washington, and I promised to return in the morning. The Superintendent said he would meet me at the landing. Early the next morning, Mrs. Brown and myself went on a begging expedition, and some old quilts were given us. Mr. Clarke met us, and offered the use of his large Government wagon, with the horses and driver, for the day, and said he would accompany us, if agreeable. I was delighted, and felt I should spend a happy Sabbath in exploring Dixie, while the large bundles that I carried with me would help make others happy. After attending to the sick mother and child, we started for Fairfax Seminary. They send many of the convalescent soldiers to this place. The houses are large, and the location is healthy. Many of the contrabands are here. Their condition is much better than that of those kept in the city. They soon gathered around Mr. Clarke, and begged him to come back and be their boss. He said, "Boys, I want you all to go to Hayti." They said, "You gwine wid us, Mr. Clarke?" "No, I must stay here, and take care of the rest of the boys." "Den, if you aint gwine, de Lord knows I aint a gwine." Some of them will tell Uncle Abe the same thing. Mr. Clarke said they would do anything for him—seldom gave him any trouble. They spoke kindly of Mr. Thomas, who is constantly employed in supplying their wants, as far as he can. To the very old people at this place, I gave some clothing, returned to Alexandria, and bade all good bye. Begging me to come back, they promised to do all they could to help themselves. One old woman said—"Honey tink, when all get still, I kin go an fine de old place? Tink de Union 'stroy it? You can't get nothin on dis place. Down on de ole place, you can raise ebery ting. I ain't seen bacca since I bin here. Neber git a libin here, where de peoples eben buy pasly." This poor old woman thought it was nice to live where tobacco

grew, but it was dreadful to be compelled to buy a bunch of parsley. Here they have preaching once every Sabbath. They must have a season to sing and pray, and we need true faith in Christ to go among them and do our duty. How beautiful it is to find it among themselves! Do not say the slaves take no interest in each other. Like other people, some of them are designedly selfish, some are ignorantly selfish. With the light and instruction you give them, you will see this selfishness disappear. Trust them, make them free, and give them the responsibility of caring for themselves, and they will soon learn to help each other. Some of them have been so degraded by slavery that they do not know the usages of civilized life; they know little else than the handle of the hoe, the plough, the cotton pad, and the overseer's lash. Have patience with them. You have helped to make them what they are; teach them civilization. You owe it to them, and you will find them as apt to learn as any other people that come to you stupid from oppression. The negroes' strong attachment no one doubts; the only difficulty is, they have cherished it too strongly. Let me tell you of an instance among the contrabands. One day, while in the hospital, a woman came in to ask that she might take a little orphan child. The mother had just died, leaving two children, the eldest three years old. This woman had five children in the house with her. In a few days, the number would be six. I said to this mother, "What can you do with this child, shut up here with your own? They are as many as you can attend to." She looked up with tears in her eyes, and said—"The child's mother was a stranger; none of her friends cum wid her from de ole place. I took one boy down on de plantation; he is a big boy now, working mong de Unions. De Lord help me to bring up dat boy, and he will help me to take care dis child. My husband work for de Unions when dey pay him. I can make home for all. Dis child shall hab part ob de crust." How few white mothers, living in luxury, with six children, could find room in her heart for a seventh, and that child a stranger!

In this house there are scores of children, too young to help themselves, from eight years old down to the little one-day freeman, born at railroad speed, while the young mother was flying from Virginia to save her babe from breathing its tainted air.

I left the contrabands, feeling that the people were becoming more interested in their behalf, and much had been done to make their condition more comfortable. On my way home, I stopped a few days in Philadelphia. I called on a lady who had sent a large supply to the hospital, and told her of the many little orphans who needed a home. This lady advised me to call and see the Lady Managers of an institution for orphan children supported by those ladies. I did so, and they agreed to take the little orphans. They employed a gentleman to investigate the matter, and it was found impossible to bring them through Baltimore. This gentleman went to the captains of the propellers in Philadelphia, and asked if those orphan children could have a passage on their boats. Oh no, it could not be; it would make an unpleasant feeling among the people! Some of those orphans have died since I left, but the number is constantly increasing. Many mothers, on leaving the plantations, pick up the little orphans, and bring them with their own children; but they cannot provide for them; they come very destitute themselves.

To the ladies who have so nobly interested themselves in behalf of my much oppressed race, I feel the deepest debt of gratitude. Let me beg the reader's attention to these orphans. They are the innocent and helpless of God's poor. If you cannot take one, you can do much by contributing your mite to the institution that will open its doors to receive them.

LINDA.

September 5, 1862

WASHINGTON, D.C., SEPTEMBER 1862

*Abraham Lincoln: Preliminary
Emancipation Proclamation*

Lincoln had read a draft of the preliminary emancipation proclamation to the cabinet on July 22, 1862, but postponed issuing it, apparently agreeing with Secretary of State William H. Seward that it should follow a Union military victory to avoid being seen as an act of desperation. On September 22, five days after the battle of Antietam ended the Confederate invasion of Maryland, Lincoln told the cabinet he had decided to issue the proclamation.

September 22, 1862

By the President of the
United States of America
A Proclamation.

I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America, and Commander-in-chief of the Army and Navy thereof, do hereby proclaim and declare that hereafter, as heretofore, the war will be prosecuted for the object of practically restoring the constitutional relation between the United States, and each of the states, and the people thereof, in which states that relation is, or may be suspended, or disturbed.

That it is my purpose, upon the next meeting of Congress to again recommend the adoption of a practical measure tendering pecuniary aid to the free acceptance or rejection of all slave-states, so called, the people whereof may not then be in rebellion against the United States, and which states, may then have voluntarily adopted, or thereafter may voluntarily adopt, immediate, or gradual abolishment of slavery within their respective limits; and that the effort to colonize persons of African descent, with their consent, upon this continent, or elsewhere, with the previously obtained consent of the Governments existing there, will be continued.

That on the first day of January in the year of our Lord, one

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

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

That attention is hereby called to an act of Congress entitled "An act to make an additional Article of War" approved March 13, 1862, and which act is in the words and figure following:

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That hereafter the following shall be promulgated as an additional article of war for the government of the army of the United States, and shall be obeyed and observed as such:

Article—. All officers or persons in the military or naval service of the United States are prohibited from employing any of the forces under their respective commands for the purpose of returning fugitives from service or labor, who may have escaped from any persons to whom such service or labor is claimed to be due, and any officer who shall be found guilty by a court-martial of violating this article shall be dismissed from the service.

SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* That this act shall take effect from and after its passage.

Also to the ninth and tenth sections of an act entitled "An Act to suppress Insurrection, to punish Treason and Rebel-

lion, to seize and confiscate property of rebels, and for other purposes," approved July 17, 1862, and which sections are in the words and figures following:

SEC. 9. *And be it further enacted*, That all slaves of persons who shall hereafter be engaged in rebellion against the government of the United States, or who shall in any way give aid or comfort thereto, escaping from such persons and taking refuge within the lines of the army; and all slaves captured from such persons or deserted by them and coming under the control of the government of the United States; and all slaves of such persons found *on* (or) being within any place occupied by rebel forces and afterwards occupied by the forces of the United States, shall be deemed captives of war, and shall be forever free of their servitude and not again held as slaves.

SEC. 10. *And be it further enacted*, That no slave escaping into any State, Territory, or the District of Columbia, from any other State, shall be delivered up, or in any way impeded or hindered of his liberty, except for crime, or some offence against the laws, unless the person claiming said fugitive shall first make oath that the person to whom the labor or service of such fugitive is alleged to be due is his lawful owner, and has not borne arms against the United States in the present rebellion, nor in any way given aid and comfort thereto; and no person engaged in the military or naval service of the United States shall, under any pretence whatever, assume to decide on the validity of the claim of any person to the service or labor of any other person, or surrender up any such person to the claimant, on pain of being dismissed from the service.

And I do hereby enjoin upon and order all persons engaged in the military and naval service of the United States to observe, obey, and enforce, within their respective spheres of service, the act, and sections above recited.

And 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 the 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.

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

Done at the City of Washington, this twenty second day of

September, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty two, and of the Independence of the United States, the eighty seventh.

By the President:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, SEPTEMBER—OCTOBER 1862

*Debate in the Confederate
Senate on Retaliation for the
Emancipation Proclamation*

Following this debate, the Confederate Senate adjourned on October 13 after adopting a resolution declaring support for whatever retaliatory measures Jefferson Davis chose to adopt. In a proclamation of December 23, 1862, outlawing Union general Benjamin F. Butler, Davis denounced the Emancipation Proclamation as an “effort to excite servile war” and ordered Union officers captured while leading freed slaves to be turned over to state authorities for trial.

SEVERAL propositions under the form of bills, were introduced into the Senate respecting retaliatory measures. These propositions were brought forward in consequence of the proclamation of President Lincoln, issued on the 22d of September, declaring that on the 1st of January ensuing an emancipation proclamation would be issued. The subject came up for the first time on the 29th of Sept., when Mr. Semmes, of Louisiana, offered the following resolution:

Resolved by the Congress of the Confederate States, That the proclamation of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of America, issued in the city of Washington, in the year 1862, wherein he declares “that on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated parts of a State, whereof the people shall be in rebellion against the United States shall be henceforth and forever free,” is levelled against the citizens of the Confederate States, and as such is a gross violation of the usages of civilized warfare, an outrage on the rights of private property, and an invitation to an atrocious servile war, and therefore should be held up to the execration of mankind, and counteracted by such retaliatory measures as in the judgment of the President may be best calculated to secure its withdrawal or arrest its execution.

Mr. Clark, of Missouri, moved that the resolution be referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. He was in favor

of declaring every citizen of the Southern Confederacy a soldier, authorized to put to death every man caught on our soil in arms against the Government.

Mr. Semmes, of Louisiana, said that the resolution had not been drawn without reflection. The question of retaliation was exclusively an Executive one, to be regulated by circumstances. But it was proper that the legislative department of the Government should express its approval of the retaliation contemplated by the resolution.

Mr. Henry, of 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 Abraham Lincoln, we immediately hoist the "black flag," and proclaim a war of extermination against all invaders of our soil.

Mr. Phelan, of Mississippi, said that he had always been in favor of conducting the war under the "black flag." If that flag had been raised a year ago the war would be ended now.

Mr. Burnett, of Kentucky, moved that all of said resolutions be referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. This was agreed to.

Subsequently, on the 1st of October, a majority of the Judiciary Committee made a report recommending the passage of the following bill:

Whereas, these States, exercising a right consecrated by the blood of our Revolutionary forefathers, and recognized as fundamental in the American system of government, which is based on the consent of the governed, dissolved the compact which united them to the Northern States, and withdrew from the Union created by the Federal Constitution; and whereas, the Government of the United States, repudiating the principles on which its founders, in their solemn appeal to the civilized world, justified the American Revolution, commenced the present war to subjugate and enslave these States under the pretext of repressing rebellion and restoring the Union; and whereas, in the prosecution of the war for the past seventeen months, the rights accorded to belligerents by the usages of civilized nations have been studiously denied to the citizens of these States, except in cases where the same have been extorted by the apprehension of retaliation, or by the adverse fortune of the war; and whereas, from the commencement of this unholy invasion to the present moment, the invaders have inflicted inhuman miseries on the people of these States, exacting of them treasonable oaths, subjecting unarmed citizens,

women, and children to confiscation, banishment and imprisonment; burning their dwelling houses, ravaging the land, plundering private property; murdering men for pretended offences; organizing the abduction of slaves by government officials and at government expense; promoting servile insurrection, by tampering with slaves, and protecting them in resisting their masters; stealing works of art and destroying public libraries; encouraging and inviting a brutal soldiery to commit outrages on women by the unrebuked orders of military commanders, and attempting to ruin cities by filling up the entrances to their harbors with stone: And, whereas, in the same spirit of barbarous ferocity the Government of the United States enacted a law, entitled "An act to suppress insurrection, to prevent treason and rebellion, to seize and confiscate the property of rebels, and for other purposes," and has announced by a proclamation, issued by Abraham Lincoln, the President thereof, that in pursuance of said law, "on the 1st of January, 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall be in rebellion against the United States, shall be thenceforward and forever free," and has, thereby, made manifest that this conflict has ceased to be a war as recognized among civilized nations, but on the part of the enemy has become an invasion of an organized horde of murderers and plunderers, breathing hatred and revenge for the numerous defeats sustained on legitimate battle fields, and determined, if possible, to exterminate the loyal population of these States, to transfer their property to their enemies, and to emancipate their slaves, with the atrocious design of adding servile insurrection and the massacre of families to the calamities of war; and, whereas, justice and humanity require this Government to endeavor to repress the lawless practices and designs of the enemy by inflicting severe retribution: Therefore, the Confederate States of America do enact,

1. That on and after the 1st of January, 1863, all commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the enemy, except as hereinafter mentioned, when captured, shall be imprisoned at hard labor, or otherwise put at hard labor, until the termination of the war, or until the repeal of the act of the Congress of the United States, herein before recited, or until otherwise determined by the President.

2. Every white person who shall act as a commissioned or non-commissioned officer, commanding negroes or mulattoes against the Confederate States, or who shall arm, organize, train, or prepare negroes or mulattoes for military service, or aid them in any military enterprise against the Confederate States, shall, if captured, suffer death.

3. Every commissioned or non-commissioned officer of the enemy who shall incite slaves to rebellion, or pretend to give them freedom,

under the aforementioned act of Congress and proclamation, by abducting, or causing them to be abducted, or inducing them to abscond, shall, if captured, suffer death.

4. That every person charged with an offence under this act shall be tried by such military courts as the President shall direct; and after conviction, the President may commute the punishment, or pardon unconditionally, or on such terms as he may see fit.

5. That the President is hereby authorized to resort to such other retaliatory measures as in his judgment may be best calculated to repress the atrocities of the enemy.

Mr. Phelan, of Mississippi, submitted a minority report from the same committee, in the form of a lengthy preamble, and the following resolution:

Be it resolved, &c., That from this day forth all rules of civilized warfare should be discarded in the future defence of our country, our liberties and our lives, against the fell design now openly avowed by the Government of the United States to annihilate or enslave us: and that a war of extermination should henceforth be waged against every invader whose hostile foot shall cross the boundaries of these Confederate States.

Mr. Hill, of Georgia: I must be allowed to say for myself that I regard the proclamation of Mr. Lincoln as a mere *brutum fulmen*, and so intended by its author. It is to serve a temporary purpose at the North. I fear we are dignifying it beyond its importance. As the Senate has concluded to notice it, I am in favor of the simplest and most legal action. We must confine our action within the line of right, under the laws of nations. In my opinion we have the right to declare certain acts as crimes, being in conflict with civilized war, and the actors as criminals; and a criminal, though a soldier, is not entitled to be considered a prisoner of war. While, therefore, I approve the general idea to treat persons guilty of certain acts as criminals, contained in the bill reported by the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. Semmes), and agreed to that report as being the one most favored by the majority of the committee, I also, in accordance with the understanding of the committee, propose the following bill, and ask that it be printed for the consideration of the Senate:

1. That if any person singly, or in organized bodies, shall, under pretence of waging war, kill or maim, or in any wise injure the person of any unarmed citizen of the Confederate States, or shall destroy, or seize, or damage the property, or invade the house or domicile, or insult the family of each unarmed citizen; or shall persuade or force any slave to abandon his owner, or shall, by word or act, counsel or incite to servile insurrection within the limits of the Confederate States, all such persons, if captured by the forces of the Confederate States, shall be treated as criminals and not as prisoners of war, and shall be tried by a military court, and, on conviction, suffer death.

2. That every person pretending to be a soldier or officer of the United States, who shall be captured on the soil of the Confederate States, after the 1st day of January, 1863, shall be presumed to have entered the territory of the Confederate States with intent to incite insurrection and abet murder, and unless satisfactory proof be adduced to the contrary, before the military court before which the trial shall be had, shall suffer death. This section shall continue in force until the proclamation issued by Abraham Lincoln, dated at Washington, on the 22d day of September, 1862, shall be rescinded, and the policy therein announced shall be abandoned, and no longer.

Mr. Clark, of Missouri, read a preamble and resolution embracing his views on the subject under consideration. The resolution proposed to recognize the enemy as "savage, relentless, and barbarous," and declares that it "is the duty of the Government of the Confederate States neither to ask quarter for its soldiers nor extend it to the enemy until an awakened or created sense of decency and humanity, or the sting of retaliation, shall have impelled our enemy to adopt or practise the usages of war which prevail among Christian and civilized nations."

On the motion of Mr. Semmes, of Louisiana, the several bills and resolutions were ordered to be printed.

The whole matter was finally disposed of on the last day of the session by the passage of a resolution, declaring that Congress would sustain the President in such retaliatory measures as he might adopt.

MISTREATMENT OF CONTRABANDS:
ARKANSAS, DECEMBER 1862

*Samuel Sawyer, Pearl P. Ingalls, and
Jacob G. Forman to Samuel R. Curtis*

Slaves who came within the Union lines often suffered from neglect and abuse at the hands of Northern soldiers. Three Union army chaplains sent this appeal to Major General Samuel R. Curtis, the commander of the Department of the Missouri. Sawyer was subsequently appointed superintendent of contrabands at Helena, with Forman serving as his assistant.

Helena Arkansas Dec 29th 1862

General The undersigned Chaplains and Surgeons of the army of the Eastern District of Arkansas would respectfully call your attention to the Statements & Suggestions following

The Contrabands within our lines are experiencing hardships oppression & neglect the removal of which calls loudly for the intervention of authority. We daily see & deplore the evil and leave it to your wisdom to devise a remedy. In a great degree the contrabands are left entirely to the mercy and rapacity of the unprincipled part of our army (excepting only the limited jurisdiction of capt Richmond) with no person clothed with Specific authority to look after & protect them. Among their list of grievances we mention these:

Some who have been paid by individuals for cotton or for labor have been waylaid by soldiers, robbed, and in several instances fired upon, as well as robbed, and in no case that we can now recal have the plunderers been brought to justice—

The wives of some have been molested by soldiers to gratify thier licentious lust, and thier husbands murdered in endeavoring to defend them, and yet the guilty parties, though known, were not arrested. Some who have wives and families are required to work on the Fortifications, or to unload Government Stores, and receive only their meals at the Public table, while

their families, whatever provision is intended for them, are, as a matter of fact, left in a helpless & starving condition

Many of the contrabands have been employed, & received in numerous instances, from officers & privates, only counterfeit money or nothing at all for their services. One man was employed as a teamster by the Government & he died in the service (the government indebted to him nearly fifty dollars) leaving an orphan child eight years old, & there is no apparent provision made to draw the money, or to care for the orphan child. The negro hospital here has become notorious for filth, neglect, mortality & brutal whipping, so that the contrabands have lost all hope of kind treatment there, & would almost as soon go to their graves as to their hospital. These grievances reported to us by persons in whom we have confidence, & some of which we know to be true, are but a few of the many wrongs of which they complain— For the sake of humanity, for the sake of christianity, for the good name of our army, for the honor of our country, cannot something be done to prevent this oppression & to stop its demoralizing influences upon the Soldiers themselves? Some have suggested that the matter be laid before the War Department at Washington, in the hope that they will clothe an agent with authority, to register all the names of the contrabands, who will have a benevolent regard for their welfare, though whom all details of fatigue & working parties shall be made though whom rations may be drawn & money paid, & who shall be empowered to organize schools, & to make all needfull Regulations for the comfort & improvement of the condition of the contrabands; whose accounts shall be open at all times for inspection, and who shall make stated reports to the Department— All which is respectfully submitted

	Samuel Sawyer
committee	Pearl P Ingalls
	J. G. Forman

WASHINGTON, D.C., JANUARY 1863

*Abraham Lincoln:
Final Emancipation Proclamation*

Lincoln marked January 1, 1863, with what he later called “the central act of my administration and the great event of the nineteenth century.” In late December 1862 he met with his cabinet to prepare the final version of the Emancipation Proclamation, which specified the “States and parts of States” in rebellion it applied to. At the suggestion of Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, Lincoln added the sentence calling the proclamation “an act of justice.” When it came time to sign the official copy the President remarked that he had been shaking hands at the White House New Year’s reception “till my arm is stiff and numb.” His signature would be closely examined, he said, “and if they find my hand trembled, they will say ‘he had some compunctions.’” Lincoln then “slowly, firmly” signed his name, “looked up, smiled, and said: ‘That will do.’”

January 1, 1863

By the President of the United States of America:
A Proclamation.

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

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

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

Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to-wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, (except the Parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. Johns, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the City of New-Orleans) Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South-Carolina, North-Carolina, and Virginia, (except the fortyeight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth-City, York, Princess Ann, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk & Portsmouth); and which excepted parts are, for the present, left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

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

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

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

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

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

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

By the President:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

Biographical Notes

John Boston An escaped slave from Maryland who took refuge with soldiers in the New York State militia who were stationed in Upton Hill, Virginia. It is not known whether his wife, Elizabeth Boston, and his son, Daniel, were free as well.

Benjamin F. Butler (November 5, 1818–January 11, 1893) Born in Deerfield, New Hampshire, the son of a merchant. Graduated from Waterville (now Colby) College in 1838. Admitted to the bar in 1840 and began practicing law in Lowell, Massachusetts. Married Sarah Hildreth in 1844. Served as a Democrat in the Massachusetts house of representatives, 1853, and in the Massachusetts senate, 1859. Commissioned as brigadier general of Massachusetts militia in April 1861 and as a major general of U.S. volunteers in May 1861. Led occupation of Baltimore in May 1861 before becoming commander at Fort Monroe, Virginia. Commanded troops that captured Fort Hatteras, North Carolina, in August 1861. Military governor of New Orleans, May–December 1862. Commanded the Army of the James in Virginia, 1864. Relieved of command by Ulysses S. Grant after his failed assault on Fort Fisher, North Carolina, in December 1864. Served in Congress as a Republican, 1867–75 and 1877–79, and was one of the House managers at the impeachment trial of Andrew Johnson in 1868. Elected governor of Massachusetts as a Democrat and served one-year term in 1883. Presidential candidate of the Greenback and Anti-Monopolist parties in 1884. Died in Washington, D.C.

Frederick Douglass (February 1818–February 20, 1895) Born Frederick Bailey in Talbot County, Maryland, the son of a slave mother and an unknown white man. Worked on farms and in Baltimore shipyards. Escaped to Philadelphia in 1838. Married Anna Murray, a free woman from Maryland, and settled in New Bedford, Massachusetts, where he took the name Douglass. Became a lecturer for the American Anti-Slavery Society, led by William Lloyd Garrison, in 1841. Published *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* (1845). Began publishing *North Star*, first in a series of anti-slavery newspapers, in Rochester, New York, in 1847. Broke with Garrison and became an ally of Gerrit Smith, who advocated an antislavery interpretation of the Constitution and participation in electoral politics. Published *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855).

Advocated emancipation and the enlistment of black soldiers at the outbreak of the Civil War. Met with Abraham Lincoln in Washington in August 1863 and August 1864, and wrote public letter supporting his reelection in September 1864. Continued his advocacy of racial equality and woman's rights after the Civil War. Served as U.S. marshal for the District of Columbia, 1877–81, and as its recorder of deeds, 1881–86. Published *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1881). After the death of his wife Anna, married Helen Pitts in 1884. Served as minister to Haiti, 1889–91. Died in Washington, D.C.

Jacob Gilbert Forman (January 21, 1820–February 7, 1885) Born in Queensbury, New Brunswick, Canada. Became merchant's clerk in Peekskill, New York, in 1836. Graduated from Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, with law degree in 1843. Married Sarah Elizabeth Carpenter in 1844. Practiced law in Cincinnati before becoming Unitarian minister in Akron, Ohio; later served as pastor in Massachusetts and Illinois. During the Civil War, served as chaplain of the 3rd Missouri Infantry, as acting chaplain of the 1st Missouri Cavalry and the 3rd U.S. Infantry, as superintendent of refugees in St. Louis, and as secretary of the Western Sanitary Commission. Published *The Christian Martyrs: or, The Conditions of Obedience to the Civil Government* (1851) and *The Western Sanitary Commission: A Sketch of Its Origin* (1864). Moved to Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1869 and opened a drugstore. Died in Lynn.

Pearl Parker Ingalls (February 1, 1823–May 18, 1887) Born in Franklin, Ohio, the son of a chair maker. Graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University and became a Methodist minister, holding pastorates for the next forty years in Ohio and Iowa. Became chaplain of the 3rd Iowa Cavalry in 1861. Mustered out in 1863 and returned to Keokuk, Iowa. Helped found the Iowa Soldiers' Orphans' Home in Davenport, serving as secretary, raising donations, and securing financial support from the Iowa legislature. Became editor of the *Iowa State Tribune* in 1879. Died in White City, Kansas.

Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813–March 7, 1897) Born in Edenton, North Carolina, the daughter of slaves. After the death of her mother in 1819, she was raised by her grandmother and her white mistress, Margaret Horniblow, who taught her to read, write, and sew. In 1825 Horniblow died, and Jacobs was sent to the household of Dr. James Norcom. At sixteen, to escape Norcom's repeated sexual advances, Jacobs began a relationship with a white lawyer, Samuel Tredwell Sawyer (later a member of the U.S. House of Representatives), with whom she had two children, Joseph (b. 1829) and Louisa Matilda

(b. 1833). In 1835, Jacobs ran away and spent the next seven years hiding in a crawl space above her freed grandmother's storeroom. In 1842, escaped to New York City, where she was reunited with her children. Worked as a nurse for the family of Nathaniel Parker Willis; moved to Boston in 1843 to avoid recapture by Norcom. Moved to Rochester in 1849, where she became part of a circle of abolitionists surrounding Frederick Douglass. In 1852, Cornelia Grinnell Willis, second wife of Nathaniel Parker Willis, purchased Jacobs's manumission. Published *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, Written by Herself*, pseudonymously in 1861. From 1862 to 1868 Jacobs engaged in Quaker-sponsored relief work among former slaves in Washington, D.C.; Alexandria, Virginia; and Savannah, Georgia. She then lived with her daughter in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and in Washington, D.C., where she died.

Abraham Lincoln (February 12, 1809–April 15, 1865) Born near Hodgenville, Kentucky, the son of a farmer and carpenter. Family moved to Indiana in 1816 and to Illinois in 1830. Settled in New Salem, Illinois, and worked as a storekeeper, surveyor, and postmaster. Served as a Whig in the state legislature, 1834–41. Began law practice in 1836 and moved to Springfield in 1837. Married Mary Todd in 1842. Elected to Congress as a Whig and served from 1847 to 1849. Became a public opponent of the extension of slavery after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Helped found the Republican Party of Illinois in 1856. Campaigned in 1858 for Senate seat held by Stephen A. Douglas and debated him seven times on the slavery issue; although the Illinois legislature reelected Douglas, the campaign brought Lincoln national prominence. Received Republican presidential nomination in 1860 and won election in a four-way contest; his victory led to the secession of seven Southern states. Responded to the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter by calling up militia, proclaiming the blockade of Southern ports, and suspending habeas corpus. Issued preliminary and final emancipation proclamations on September 22, 1862, and January 1, 1863. Appointed Ulysses S. Grant commander of all Union forces in March 1864. Won reelection in 1864 by defeating Democrat George B. McClellan. Died in Washington, D.C., after being shot by John Wilkes Booth.

Samuel Sawyer (June 20, 1823–May 23, 1902) Born in Goshen, New York, the son of a farmer. Graduated from the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1842. Attended Union Theological Seminary, 1845–48. Ordained as Presbyterian minister in 1849. Held pastorate in Rodgersville, Tennessee, 1848–57. President of the College of Indiana in Marion, 1857–61. Appointed chaplain of the 47th Indiana

Infantry in 1861. After the capture of Memphis in 1862, edited a Unionist newspaper in the city until it was closed by General William T. Sherman. Served as superintendent of contrabands at Helena, Arkansas, and St. Louis, 1863. Mustered out in 1864. Held church positions in Knoxville and Maryville, Tennessee, 1864–68; in Chillicothe, Missouri, where he edited a newspaper, 1868–72; and in East St. Louis, Illinois, and Pleasant Grove, New Jersey. Returned to Marion, Indiana, in 1880. Died in Indianapolis.

George E. Stephens (1832–April 24, 1888) Born in Philadelphia, the son of free blacks who had fled from Virginia after the Nat Turner rebellion. Worked as upholsterer and cabinetmaker. An active abolitionist, he helped found the Banneker Institute, a literary society and library for blacks, in Philadelphia in 1853. Served on coastal survey ship *Walker* in 1857–58 and visited Charleston, South Carolina. Became cook and personal servant to Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Tilghman of the 26th Pennsylvania Infantry in 1861 while serving as war correspondent for the New York *Weekly Anglo-African*, an influential black newspaper. Helped recruit in early 1863 for the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, the first black regiment raised by a northern state, then enlisted in the regiment as a sergeant. Served in siege of Charleston, South Carolina, and fought in the assault on Fort Wagner on July 18, 1863. Continued to write for the *Anglo-African* and protested the failure of black soldiers to receive equal pay. Commissioned as first lieutenant before being mustered out in July 1865. Worked for the Freedman's Bureau in Virginia educating freed slaves, 1866–70. Returned to Philadelphia before moving in 1873 to Brooklyn, where he worked as an upholsterer until his death.

Garland H. White (c. 1829–c. 1894) Born in slavery in Hanover County, Virginia. Sold around 1845 to Robert Toombs of Georgia and became his personal servant. Lived in Washington, D.C., while Toombs served in Congress, 1845–53, and in the Senate, 1853–61. Escaped from the District of Columbia in 1859 and fled to London, Canada West (Ontario), where he became a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Married Georgiana, a woman from Mississippi, around 1861. Began preaching in Toledo, Ohio, in January 1863. Helped recruit black soldiers in Indiana for the 28th U.S. Colored Infantry. Enlisted in regiment as private in January 1864 and began acting as regimental chaplain. Served with regiment in the Petersburg campaign. Wrote letters describing army life and the war to the *Christian Recorder*, an A.M.E. newspaper. Commissioned as regimental chaplain in October 1864. Reunited with his mother when he entered Richmond with his regiment on April 3, 1865. Served in

Texas, July–November 1865, before being mustered out in January 1866. Returned to church in Toledo. Served as minister in Halifax, North Carolina, 1872–82. Lived in Weldon, North Carolina, 1884–89, before moving to Washington, D.C., where he died.

Chronology, 1860–1865

- 1860 Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln wins presidential election, November 6, defeating Stephen Douglas (Northern Democratic), John C. Breckinridge (Southern Democratic), and John Bell (Constitutional Union). Lincoln receives 180 out of 303 electoral votes, all of them from free states. South Carolina convention votes to secede from the Union, December 20.
- 1861 Conventions in Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas vote to secede, January 9–February 1. Delegates meet in Montgomery, Alabama, and elect Jefferson Davis provisional president of the Confederate States of America, February 8. Lincoln is inaugurated, March 4. Confederates open fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, April 12. Lincoln calls forth 75,000 militia, April 15. Virginia votes to secede, April 17. Lincoln proclaims blockade of southern ports, April 19. Arkansas, Tennessee, and North Carolina join the Confederacy, May 6–20. Confederates win battle of Manassas (Bull Run) in Virginia, July 21. Davis is elected without opposition to six-year term, November 6.
- 1862 Ulysses S. Grant captures Fort Donelson, Tennessee, February 16. Confederate defeat at Pea Ridge in northwestern Arkansas, March 7–8, secures Union control of Missouri. Grant wins battle of Shiloh in southeastern Tennessee, April 6–7. Union navy captures New Orleans, April 25. Robert E. Lee defeats Union army outside of Richmond, Virginia, June 25–July 1, and wins second battle of Manassas, August 28–30. Battle of Antietam, September 17, ends Lee's invasion of Maryland. Lincoln issues preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, September 22, to take effect in all territory still in rebellion on January 1, 1863. Battle of Perryville, October 8, ends Confederate invasion of Kentucky. Lee defeats Union army at Fredericksburg, Virginia, December 13. Battle of Stones River (Murfreesboro) begins in central Tennessee, December 31.

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- 1863 Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, freeing all slaves in Confederate-held territory and authorizing enlistment of blacks in the Union army. Battle of Stones River ends, January 2, with Confederate retreat. Grant crosses Mississippi River, April 30, beginning campaign to take Vicksburg. Lee defeats Union army in Virginia in battle of Chancellorsville, May 1–4. Grant begins siege of Vicksburg, May 22. Lee is defeated at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, July 1–3. Confederate army at Vicksburg surrenders to Grant, July 4. Victory at Port Hudson, Louisiana, July 9, gives Union control of entire Mississippi River. Confederates win battle of Chickamauga in northern Georgia, September 19–20, and besiege Union army in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Lincoln gives address at Gettysburg, November 19. Grant defeats Confederates at Chattanooga, November 23–25.
- 1864 Grant is named commander of the Union armies, March 10, and begins spring campaign in Virginia, May 4. Lee and Grant fight battle of the Wilderness, May 5–6. William T. Sherman begins Union campaign in northern Georgia, May 7. Grant and Lee fight at Spotsylvania, May 8–20, and Cold Harbor, May 31–June 12, as Union army moves closer to Richmond. After crossing James River, Grant attacks Petersburg, Virginia, June 15–18, then begins prolonged siege. Sherman captures Atlanta, September 2. Lincoln defeats Democratic candidate General George B. McClellan, November 8, winning 212 of 233 electoral votes. Sherman leaves Atlanta, November 16, and begins march through Georgia. Union victory at Nashville, December 15–16, ends Confederate invasion of Tennessee. Sherman occupies Savannah, December 21.
- 1865 Congress proposes Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery, January 31. Sherman begins march through the Carolinas, February 1. Lincoln delivers his Second Inaugural Address, March 4. Sherman reaches Goldsboro, North Carolina, March 23. Grant assaults Confederate lines at Petersburg, April 2, forcing evacuation of Richmond. Lee surrenders to Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, April 9. Lincoln is shot, April 14, and dies, April 15; Vice President Andrew Johnson becomes president. Remaining Confederate armies surrender, April 26–May 26. Ratification

of the Thirteenth Amendment is declared, December 18. At least 360,000 Union soldiers, 260,000 Confederate soldiers, and 50,000 civilians were killed or died from disease, hunger, and exposure during the war.

Questions for Discussion

1. How does Union General Benjamin F. Butler propose to deal with runaway slaves? How does he justify his approach? How would you characterize his attitude toward slavery?
2. Why did President Lincoln revoke Union General John C. Frémont's emancipation proclamation? What distinction between "military" and "political" actions does Lincoln make in his letter to Orville H. Browning?
3. What is the significance of references to Canaan in the spiritual "Let My People Go," and in the letters of John Boston and George E. Stephens? How might the use of biblical imagery have affected the way northern readers understood slavery, or the cause and purpose of the Civil War?
4. What, according to Frederick Douglass, are the objections to emancipation? How are they, in his words, "somewhat contradictory"? Do you agree with his assertion, with respect to freed slaves, that "our duty is done better by not hindering than by helping our fellow-men"? How realistic is his vision for emancipation and its aftermath? How radical was his call for allowing blacks to be educated and to vote?
5. How does George Stephens make the case for the use of contrabands in the Union war effort? Does Stephens's report from Maryland, or Harriet Jacobs's portrait of the conditions among contrabands in the District of Columbia, or the letter from the Union army chaplains in Arkansas, bear out Douglass's optimism regarding emancipation? To what extent were the contrabands themselves forcing the pace of emancipation and shaping the debate over slavery?
6. What does patriotism mean for Garland H. White?
7. What are the citizens of Liberty County, Georgia, asking of the Confederate military? How do they explain the flight of their slaves? What do you make of their accusations of treason and their assertion that "the negroes constitute a part of the body politic in fact, and should be made to know their duty"?

8. Based on his letter to Browning, and the texts of the preliminary and final Emancipation Proclamations, how would you describe the evolution in Lincoln's thinking about slavery and emancipation? What do you think Lincoln means when he refers, in the final proclamation, to emancipation as "an act of justice"? What are the differences between the texts of the preliminary and final proclamations? Does reading the preliminary proclamation change the way you think about the final version? Do they afford any insights into the quality of Lincoln's leadership? To what extent was he shaping, or responding to, larger historical forces?
9. How does the announcement of Lincoln's preliminary proclamation transform the war in the eyes of the Confederate senators? What accounts for the vehemence of their response?
10. How does reading these firsthand accounts affect your sense of the purpose and meaning of the war? Does it change in any way how you understand the role of individuals—their words and actions—in historical events? What are the differences between exploring the war through participant accounts and reading a historical narrative of the same events?
11. Choosing one of the pieces, what do you think was the author's purpose for writing it? Do you think it achieves its purpose? How might the act of writing it have helped the author to make sense of his or her experience of the Civil War?
12. What did you find most surprising or unexpected about these writings?
13. How are these Americans' ongoing experiences of the Civil War reflected in the language, tone, attitude, and style of their writing?