

Born of Earnest Struggle

The 1862 Maryland Campaign:
Slavery and the Emancipation Proclamation



By the President of the United States of America.

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

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as Slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforth, and **FOREVER FREE**, and the EXECUTIVE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES, including the military and naval authorities thereof, WILL RECOGNIZE AND MAINTAIN THE FREEDOM of such persons, and will do no act or acts to oppress 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, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do hereby, in pursuance of the said Proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, in which the people thereof respectively shall then be in rebellion against the United States, and do hereby, in accordance with my purpose as to do so, in pursuance of the said Proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, the following, to wit: ARKANSAS, TEXAS, LOUISIANA (except Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, La Fourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and St. James), MISSISSIPPI, FLORIDA, ALABAMA, GEORGIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, MISSISSIPPI, NORTH CAROLINA, AND VIRGINIA (except Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Washington, Stafford, Westmoreland, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk (except part thereof)), in all which parts are for the present left precisely as they were when the said Proclamation were net

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, do hereby declare that all persons held as slaves in the parts of States ARE, AND HENCEFORWARD SHALL BE, FREE, and the Executive Authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to oppress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

And I hereby enjoin upon the Executive Authorities of the parts of States to which this Proclamation is applicable, to do all things lawfully within their respective powers which may be necessary and proper to carry this act into immediate effect, and to report the result of their actions to the Executive Authority of the United States.

And I further declare that all persons held as slaves in the parts of States to which this Proclamation is applicable, shall be forever free, and the Executive Authorities thereof, shall recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to oppress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

And upon this act, shall be the judgment of mankind.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of the Executive Authority of the United States, 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 the eighty-eighth.



When the Civil War began in 1861, there were over 4 million African Americans held in slavery. President Abraham Lincoln, sworn to uphold the Constitution which guaranteed slavery, carried out the war for the expressed purpose of saving the Union and preventing the fracturing of the nation. The issue of abolishing slavery was not something he readily embraced.

As the war continued, increasing numbers of enslaved people began to flee from bondage; some escaping north, others seeking refuge with the Union army. Escaped slaves entering Federal lines were classified as “contraband of war” and kept in Union camps. Many were assigned jobs as cooks and laborers for the army. With no other plan prepared, Lincoln allowed the Contraband policy to go into effect.

After the failure of the Peninsula Campaign in the summer of 1862, Union morale was low. The northern economy was shaky, optimism for victory had faded, and Lincoln’s cabinet feared growing Confederate strength would encourage foreign intervention. Something needed to be done to rejuvenate northern enthusiasm. Having done little in the way of forming an emancipation policy, Lincoln began to see freeing slaves not as a constitutional dilemma or a moral choice, but as a way of regaining an advantage in the war. Great Britain and France could not join in an effort to preserve slavery in the South. Many northerners opposed emancipation unless it was done to deny the Confederacy the labor and support the slaves provided. Was this the time to make a stand, change the course of the war, and proclaim freedom for the slaves of the South?



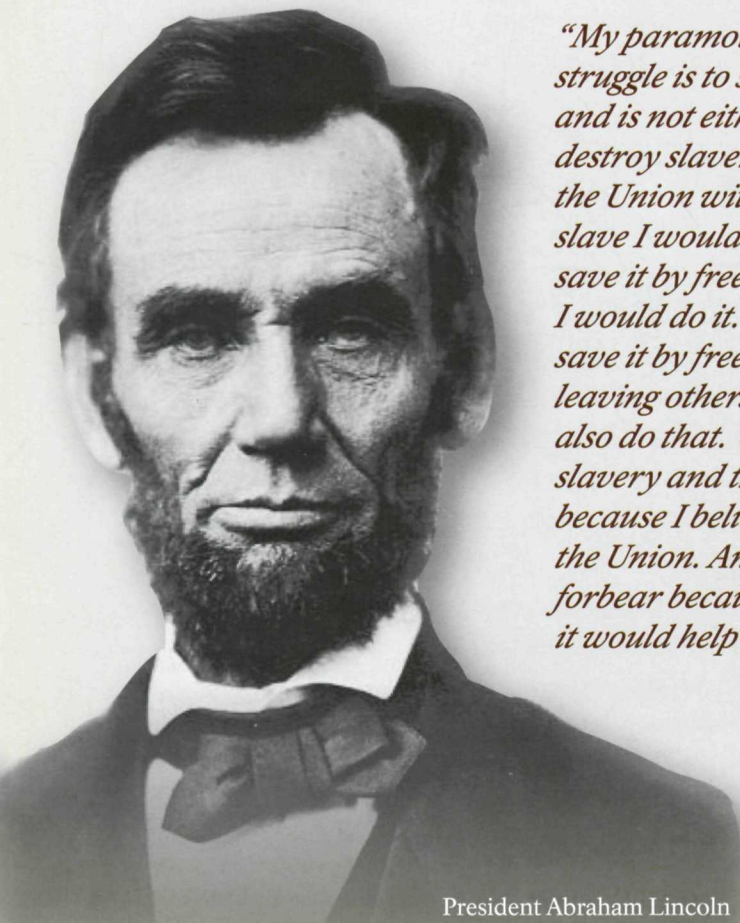
Federal soldiers watch as fugitive slaves ford the Rappahannock River, following the Union army as they withdraw across Virginia.



Greeley

On August 19, 1862, Horace Greeley, the influential editor of the *New York Tribune*, wrote an open letter to President Lincoln entitled “The Prayer of the Twenty Millions.” In the letter, he chastised Lincoln, writing that he and his readers were, “sorely disappointed and deeply pained by the policy you seem to be pursuing with regard to the slaves of the Rebels.”

Lincoln, already privately supportive of emancipation, had to respond to Greeley. His stern rebuke offered little insight into what the president was planning, but made clear that he was confident and determined to proceed on a path of his choosing. A year of war and strife had erased the timidity that marked Lincoln’s first months in office. Here was a Commander-in-Chief ready with strong words and bold actions:



“My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union with the freeing of any slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves I would do it. And if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race I do because I believe it helps to save the Union. And what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union.”

Little did Greeley, or the rest of the country know, Lincoln had already been planning for a revolutionary change in his war policy.

Beginning in July, Lincoln drafted and edited an proclamation of emancipation. Convinced that new energy was needed to win the war and finally sure that the nation would support it, he shared the document with his cabinet at a meeting on July 22nd. After a few minutes of shocked silence, the secretaries gave their opinions. Most supported it, Secretary of Treasury Salmon Chase going so far as saying that it was not forceful enough and it did not mention arming the freed slaves. Only Postmaster General Montgomery Blair was against it; fearing what it would cost the administration politically. Secretary of State William Seward brought up a point Lincoln had not considered:



Seward

“Mr. President, I approve of the proclamation, but I question the expediency of its issue at this juncture. The depression of the public mind, consequent upon our repeated reverses, is so great that I fear the effect of so important a step. It may be viewed as the last measure of an exhausted government, a cry for help.”

President Lincoln put aside his draft and waited for the right time to make his proclamation. With Union Gen. John Pope’s Army of Virginia maneuvering across northern Virginia looking for an opportunity to strike the Confederates, it seemed that a decisive battle was imminent.



First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln
by Francis Bicknell Carpenter

Compensated Emancipation in the District of Columbia

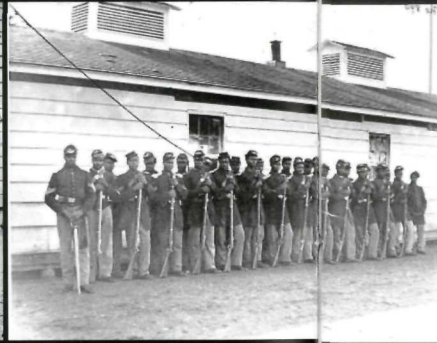
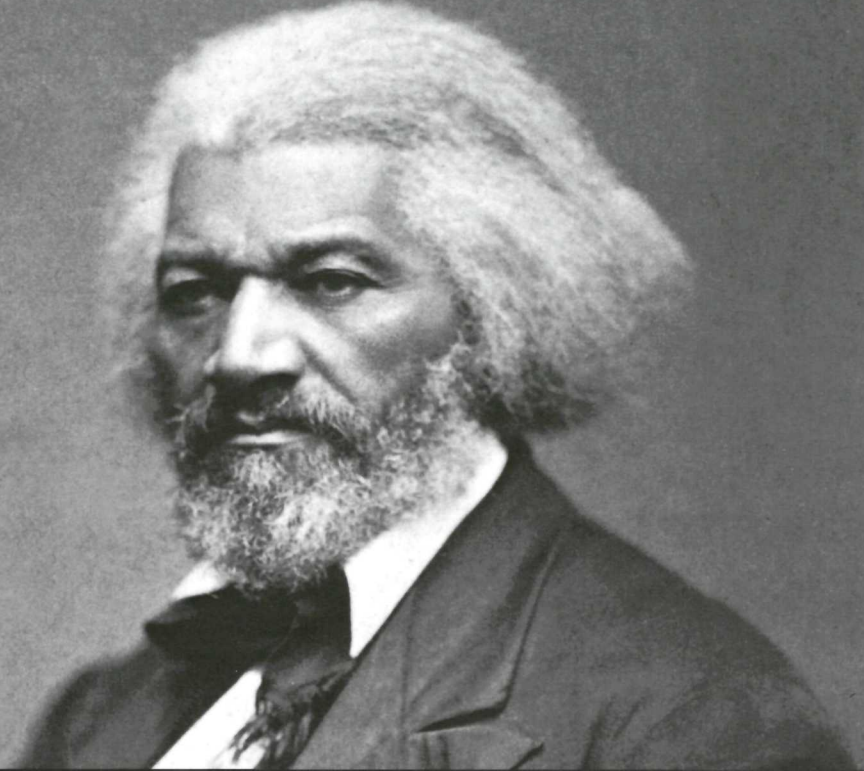
Many of Lincoln's early attempts at emancipation focused on a policy of compensation. Slave owners would be paid by the Federal government to willingly give up their "property." As a test of the policy, compensated emancipation worked to a small degree in the District of Columbia. The law went into effect on April 16, 1862, and freed 3,100 people. The Federal government paid almost one million dollars to compensate slaveholders who took a loyalty oath to the United States. Money was also paid directly to some of the freed people as encouragement for them to emigrate to Africa or the Caribbean.

While no longer enslaved, African Americans in Washington, D.C. were far from equal citizens. It would take a century of struggle and many defining moments, such as the March on Washington in 1963, to secure the "blessings of liberty" and civil rights for all; a struggle that continues today. Emancipation Day, April 16, is still an official holiday in the District of Columbia. Every year citizens celebrate freedom and remember those who worked and sacrificed to make it a reality.

(Left to Right) Drawing of a plea for freedom, a contraband camp, soldiers of the United States Colored Troops, a D.C. Emancipation Day celebration, and the home of Frederick Douglass

"The day dawns; the morning star is bright upon the horizon! The iron gate of our prison stands half open. One gallant rush from the North will fling it wide open, while four millions of our brothers and sisters shall march out into liberty."

~ Frederick Douglass



1862

June
Lincoln writes his first draft

August 28-30
The Second Battle of Manassas

September 22
Lincoln issues the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation

Compensated Emancipation in Washington, D.C.
April 16

Lincoln reveals the draft to his Cabinet
July 22

The Maryland Campaign
September 4-19

The Emancipation Proclamation
January 1, 1863

An Opportune Moment?

In late August 1862, Union Gen. John Pope's Army of Virginia clashed with Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at the Second Battle of Manassas. Lee's audacity and Pope's mismanagement combined for a spectacular Union defeat. With the Union army forced to withdraw to Washington, D.C. and reorganize under Gen. George B. McClellan, the Confederates used the opportunity to invade Maryland and turn the war in their favor by intimidating northern civilians and earning international recognition. The Maryland Campaign was a setback for Lincoln and the Union. Under this kind of pressure, issuing an Emancipation Proclamation could give the impression of desperation Seward had warned him about. Lincoln chose to wait longer, hoping that somewhere in Maryland, the Union army would win a victory and alter the course of the war.



The Robinson House on the Manassas Battlefield after the war

A House Divided

Before the war, Abraham Lincoln said, "I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free." One might wonder what James Robinson thought of that statement. After all, his own family was half slave and half free. As a free man, Robinson worked hard to establish himself as a farmer and businessman in the Manassas area. Eventually marrying a slave woman, Robinson made deals to ensure the safety of his wife and children. He bought his son, Tasco. Later his wife and two daughters were freed when their owner died. Unfortunately, two other sons were sold South. One of them, James, was never heard from again.

Not just once, but twice, major battles were fought on Robinson's farm. Refusing to abandon what he had worked so hard for, he stayed and witnessed both battles.

Convinced that a victorious South would imperil his status as a freedman, Robinson held strong Union sympathies. However, his loyalty afforded him little protection from the ravages of war. During the Second Battle of Manassas, Federal forces commandeered Robinson's house and farm and forced Robinson to serve as a guide on the battlefield. During the battle, Union corps commander Franz Sigel used the house as his headquarters, and when the general vacated the dwelling, it became an aid station for the wounded. Also, Federal troops carried off the Robinson family's livestock, crops, provisions, and household furniture. Robinson had asked a Union officer for a guard for the premises, but "he paid no attention to me in the world." After the war, Robinson filed a claim with the Federal government for compensation for his lost and damaged property. He won partial restitution, in the amount of \$1,249. With his personal liberty secure after the war, Robinson expanded his house, enlarged the farm, and became a prominent member in the now-free African American community.

The “Border State” Tug of War

Lincoln’s primary goal as president was to save the Union. He viewed the secession of states as unconstitutional and a terrible end to the experiment of American democracy. Critical to his war strategy and his success as president was preventing more states from seceding. Keeping the so-called “Border States” in Union control was of paramount importance. Maryland was one of these states, a slave state still in the Union. There were many southern sympathizers in the state, but the majority were loyal Unionists. Still, any hint of rebellion was quickly addressed by Lincoln’s administration and the military. The issue of emancipation could ignite dangerous reactions from the people of Maryland. Lincoln proceeded cautiously and stayed informed about what Marylanders were thinking.



African Americans fleeing slavery in Maryland




A Confederate patrol on the C&O Canal

The people of Frederick remained divided in their loyalties before and after the Maryland Campaign. On December 28th, Maj. Peter Vredenburg, of the 14th New Jersey stationed at Monocacy Junction, reflected local sentiment and reaction to the Emancipation Proclamation, when he wrote, "it will ruin us. Men here who were good Union sympathizers before are now on the other side."

The *Frederick Examiner* noted on October 1st that Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation would have no effect on Maryland as it did not apply to enslaved people in the state. However, it asserted that even if the proclamation were to apply, "the value and utility of slavery in Maryland has already been destroyed by the war; the domestic institution can receive no further detriment here." The editors proposed emancipation with some form of compensation for the loyal Maryland slave owners. By the summer of 1862, slave advertisements in the *Examiner* had practically disappeared; replaced with advertisements such as the following: "Wanted to Hire, a middle age slave woman from the country, by the month or year, to cook, wash and iron for a small family. A comfortable home and good wages."

African Americans in Maryland, slave and free, were caught in the middle. Earning freedom by escaping slavery or avoiding Confederate patrols was important, but keeping freedom with Union victory and abolition was the real prize.



ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD.
 —RAN AWAY from the subscriber on the 16th instant, a NEGRO BOY, named GEORGE STEWART, a slave for life. The said boy is about 20 years of age, five feet in height, of a bright mulatto color. Had on when he left, a pair of blue mixed pants, black frock coat, black hat, and coarse shoes.

The above reward will be paid if said boy is taken out of this State, and lodged in jail; or FIFTY DOLLARS if apprehended within the State and secured.

Baltimore County, September 17th, 1852.

NICHOLAS M. BRIAN,
 Stemmer's Run Post Office.

#18-1tW&3rd*

Only ten years earlier, runaway slave notices were common.

Henry Williams and Andrew Jenkins with a canal boat



A Route to Freedom

The Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, built on the north bank of the Potomac River in Maryland, was constructed by Irish and German workers, not enslaved workers, in spite of the fact Maryland was a slave state. There are occasional references to slaves working on the canal after its completion. Frederick, a slave at Ferry Hill Place across from Shepherdstown, was hired out by his owner, John Blackford, to work as a boat crewman.

Many free African Americans worked the canal. Pic and his son, Little Pic, were crew members on the *Caroline of Williamsport* just before the Civil War. Pic was first mate for Captain Coss and Little Pic led mules. Before and after the war, Henry Williams and Andrew Jenkins served as boat captains, though both were stripped of their titles because in 1857 a Canal Company ruling briefly barred “free Negroes or slaves upon the canal as masters of boats.”

Coal, wood, cement, and grains were the primary goods transported along the canal, but newspaper advertisements also show runaway slaves used the towpath as a route to freedom, traveling along the canal until they reached a mountain ridgeline, such as Catoctin Mountain or South Mountain, where they fled north to free states and beyond.

Accounts of the passage of runaways along the canal are elusive, but stories can be found in newspapers of the time. The *National Intelligencer* tells of Jerry, a runaway, who in 1830 is believed to have fled “from Washington pass up the Canal.” In 1852, another runaway, Ben, supposedly “left for Cumberland by way of the Canal.” In the 1830s, there were accounts of runaways from Virginia who were all last seen on the towpath. One, a runaway named William, was seen with his father George Soloman, a freeman who worked on the canal.

“Master Lincoln, he’s a great man, and I am a poor negro; but the negro can tell master Lincoln how to save the money and the young men. He can do it by setting the negro free.”

~ Harriet Tubman

Harriet Tubman

Tubman was born a slave on a plantation on the eastern shore of Maryland in 1822. She escaped slavery in 1849, and with aid from free blacks and Quakers, eventually reached freedom by traveling through Delaware to Philadelphia.

After hearing that her niece and children would soon be sold, Tubman arranged to meet them in Baltimore and lead them to freedom. It was her first trip as a conductor on the Underground Railroad, but it was not her last. Tubman made at least 11 trips into the South and led approximately 70 people to freedom.

A powerful speaker and a person of incredible will, Tubman helped the Underground Railroad to grow and pushed for the abolition of slavery. Famous in the abolition community and safe in the north, she again accepted great risks by serving as a spy, scout, and nurse for the Union army during the Civil War.



Harriet Tubman

The Shadow of John Brown

Just yards from the fire engine house where John Brown, a zealous abolitionist, made his final stand against slavery in 1859, a Union officer took his own stand defending a group of African American men.

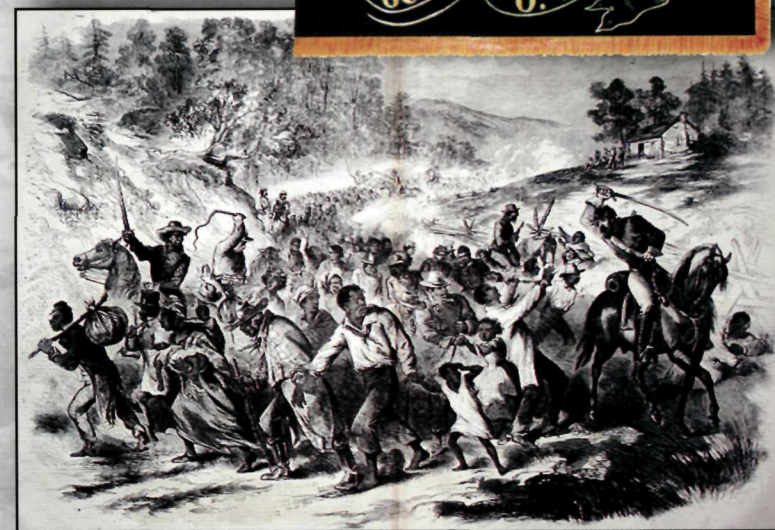
Between September 13th and 15th, 1862, as part of Lee's Maryland Campaign, Confederate troops under Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson surrounded and captured the 12,500-man Union garrison at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. In addition to the captured artillery, wagons, mules, small arms, and thousands of pounds of food, Confederates were rounding up hundreds of Contrabands or runaway slaves who had sought refuge behind Union lines. Col. William Trimble of the 60th Ohio Volunteer Infantry was concerned. He had a number of free African Americans who had been working as servants and teamsters for his regiment since they enlisted in Ohio. These men were free and Trimble was determined they would stay free. Trimble received passes for his free workers from Confederate Gen. A.P. Hill, allowing them to stay with the regiment.



John Brown

On the morning of September 16th, the 60th Ohio, now paroled prisoners, prepared to march across the Potomac River pontoon bridge into Maryland. The regiment was halted by a Confederate guard with crossed bayonets. The Confederate officer in charge refused to accept the passes for the freedmen and the rebels began "dragging the colored boys from their positions near the officers." Trimble reached into his holster and drew his revolver. "My men are unarmed—I am not!" he shouted. "I'll sell my life for these free boys. Unhand them! Guards, give way! Regiment, march!" The Confederates stepped aside, and the African Americans marched across the pontoon with the 60th Ohio.

A proclamation of emancipation would not be issued for another six days, but for Col. Trimble and the men of the 60th Ohio, the war was already about freedom.

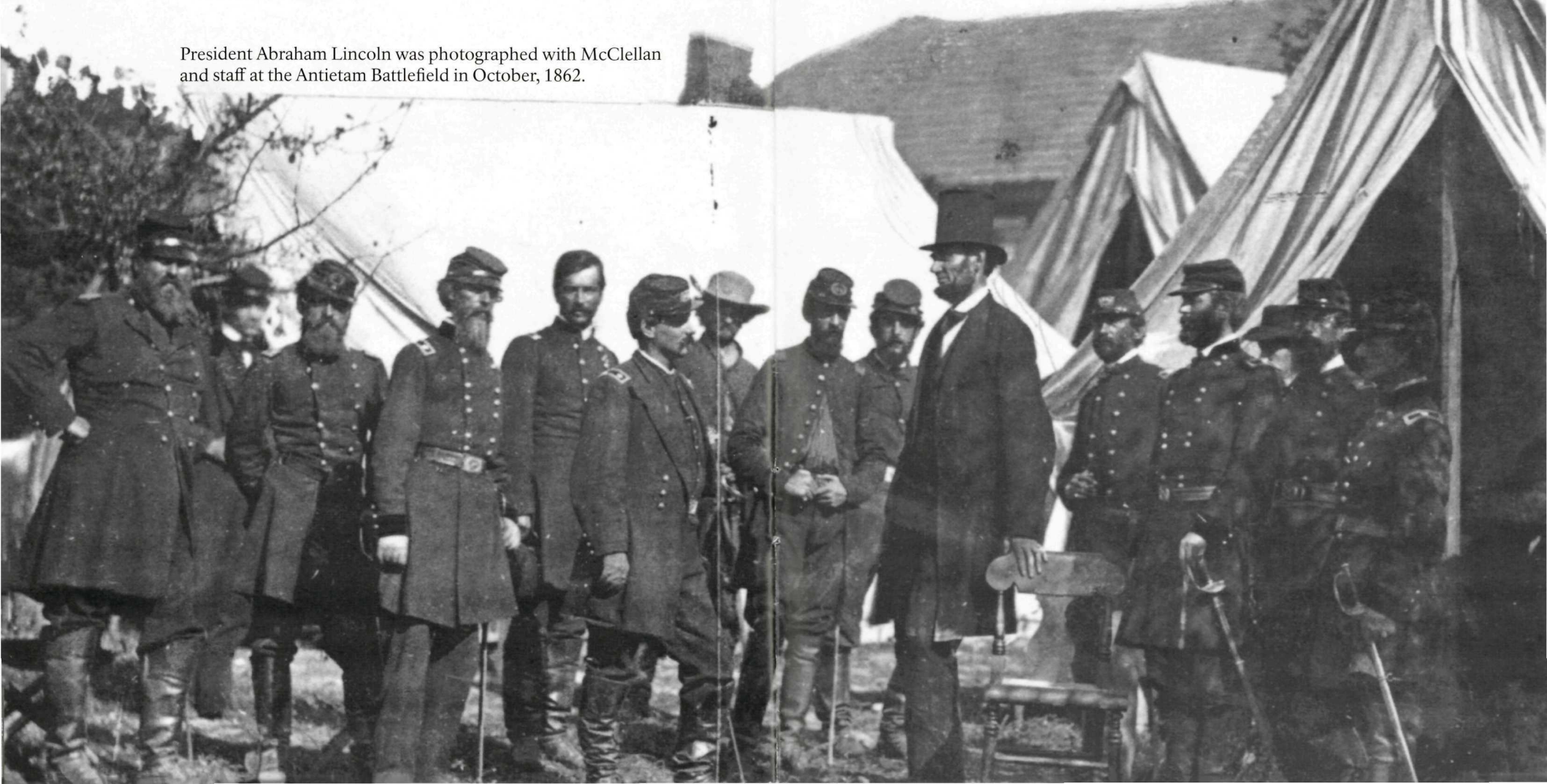


(Top) Regimental Flag of the 60th Ohio *Courtesy of Ohio Historical Society* (Bottom) Sketch of a Confederate officer driving captured African Americans

The Victory Lincoln Needed

Following the Union victory at South Mountain, McClellan prepared to strike Lee's army along the banks of the Antietam Creek. On September 17, in a bid to crush the Confederates and end the war, McClellan attacked near the town of Sharpsburg. The massive battle cost both armies more than 23,000 dead, wounded, and missing. Unable to absorb such losses, the Confederate army was forced to withdraw from Maryland. While not an absolute victory, the Battle of Antietam shifted momentum to the Union. Empowered by this victory, Lincoln seized the moment and issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

President Abraham Lincoln was photographed with McClellan and staff at the Antietam Battlefield in October, 1862.



"I put the draft of the proclamation aside, as you do your sketch for a picture, waiting for a victory. From time to time I added or changed a line, touching it up here and there, anxiously watching the progress of events. Well, the next news we had was of Pope's disaster, at Bull Run. Things looked darker than ever. Finally, came the week of the battle of Antietam. I determined to wait no longer."

~ President Abraham Lincoln

The Emancipation Proclamation: “Thenceforward and forever free”



President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in two parts. The preliminary proclamation was introduced September 22, 1862, and declared the intent to free enslaved people in those states in rebellion as of January 1, 1863. It also stated the United States “will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons.” This formally superseded the Contraband Policy and meant that any slave who could escape from Confederate territory would never be returned to his owner.

Cynics and critics at the time and today have been quick to point out that the proclamation only freed slaves in those states “in rebellion against the United States.” Secretary of State Seward pointed out this irony:

“We show our sympathy with slavery by emancipating slaves where we cannot reach them and holding them in bondage where we can set them free.”

When it went into effect on January 1, 1863, the Emancipation Proclamation did not free slaves in the “Border States” because Lincoln feared that such an act would drive them into rebellion. However, the proclamation was an obvious harbinger of the complete abolition of slavery. Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri now had enormous pressure on them to end slavery on their own. Maryland took steps to do this with a new state constitution in 1864. All other slave states followed when the 13th Amendment was ratified in 1865, which forever abolished slavery in the now reunited United States.

(Above) An ornate copy of the Emancipation Proclamation
(Background) Sketch of a freed slave

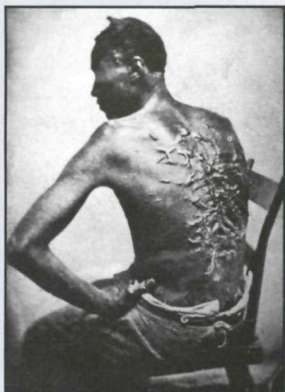
The Legacy of the Maryland Campaign: From Slave to Soldier to Citizen

Once the proclamation was issued, enslaved people in the South could vote with their feet and flee to the nearest Union camp. The Union army capitalized on this new momentum, and as more ground was captured, more enslaved people were free.

The Emancipation Proclamation was a bold and necessary step toward abolition. On New Year's Eve 1862, just hours before the proclamation went into effect, thousands of African Americans gathered in communities throughout the North waiting for the day of freedom. As clocks struck midnight, celebrations began and continued for days. Other African Americans, in states loyal to the Union, waited two more years for the 13th Amendment to end slavery.

The final proclamation provided for the recruitment of African American soldiers. By the end of the war, approximately 180,000 African American soldiers served in the United States Armed Forces.

Despite their sacrifices and the abolition of slavery, African Americans still confronted obstacles. In 1865, the "Freedman's Bureau" was created to begin the relief effort and the unprecedented social reconstruction to transition African Americans to full citizenship. The process continued as determined people from many backgrounds used politics and protest to fight prejudice and inequality; attempting to form a nation where, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood."



A scarred former slave



African American soldiers



“The Sesquicentennial of the Civil War is a time to commemorate those who fought and died during this pivotal era in American history. At the same time, it is an opportunity for us to renew our commitment to the ongoing march for freedom and equality for all people.”

~ Ken Salazar, US Secretary of the Interior

This series of booklets allows us to tell stories “beyond the battlefield” and examine how this terrible conflict affected ordinary people and the communities around them. Thank you for your support and interest.

Participating Parks and Partners:

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Harpers Ferry National Historical Park
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South Mountain State Battlefield
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