Abraham Lincoln, Kentucky African Americans and the Constitution

Kentucky African American Heritage Commission
Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial
Collection of Essays

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Kentucky Heritage Council

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Underground Railroad Research Institute University of Louisville, Department of Pan African Studies
for the Kentucky African American Heritage Commission, Frankfort, KY

February 2010

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Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission

The Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission (KALBC) was established by executive order in 2004 to organize and coordinate the state's commemorative activities in celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of President Abraham Lincoln. Its mission is to ensure that Lincoln's Kentucky story is an essential part of the national celebration, emphasizing Kentucky's contribution to his thoughts and ideals. The Commission also serves as coordinator of statewide efforts to convey Lincoln's Kentucky story and his legacy of freedom, democracy, and equal opportunity for all.

Kentucky African American Heritage Commission [Enabling legislation KRS. 171.800]

It is the mission of the Kentucky African American Heritage Commission to identify and promote awareness of significant African American history and influence upon the history and culture of Kentucky and to support and encourage the preservation of Kentucky African American heritage and historic sites. The Commission operates with nineteen members appointed by the Governor and includes representatives from the state's major universities, state agencies, community preservation organizations and interested citizens. The Commission is administratively attached to the Kentucky Heritage Council, with the council providing assistance and program oversight.

The Kentucky Heritage Council / State Historic Preservation Office sponsor of the Kentucky African American Heritage Commission are both dedicated to preserving buildings and places important to the history of Kentucky African Americans. Kentucky offers an array of sites that tell the story of slavery, the Underground Railroad, Civil War, education, and civil rights. Many architecturally significant buildings and museums preserve and promote local African American heritage. The Heritage Council has also worked in partnership with organizations across the state to identify remaining Rosenwald Schools in an effort to preserve and rehabilitate them.

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Weisiger Theatre Centre College *"Happy Birthday Mr. Lincoln"* celebration participants left to right: James H. Atkins, Centre College Vice President of Minority Affairs; Frederick Douglass (Charles Everette Pace); Abraham Lincoln (Kevin Lanham); Alicestyne Turley, Director, University of Louisville Underground Railroad Research Institute; Mike Norris, Centre College Director of Communications; and Georgia Tompkins, Communications Coordinator, Centre College Admission Office and Chairperson of Danville/ Boyle County Human Rights Commission *Photo courtesy Centre College*

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"Happy Birthday Mr. Lincoln"
Centre College
Celebration Kickoff

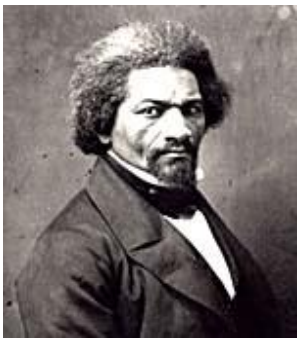
February 12, 2009

A Chautauqua—Frederick Douglass
and Mr. Lincoln

By

Charles Everette Pace

Charles Everette Pace, Great Plains Chautauqua Society Scholar, has undergraduate and graduate degrees from The University of Texas at Austin (B.A., biology) and Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana (M.A., American studies: history and anthropology). As well as being a Program Advisor at the Texas Union, University of Texas at Austin, Charles has taught at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Purdue University, and most recently Kentucky's Centre College. His research area is the anthropology of performance, experience and visual communications. He has performed and conducted workshops in hundreds of cities across the United States, as well as in London, England. Pace has conducted performance-based public diplomacy work for the United States Information Agency (USIA) in dozens of cities in nine countries across east, west and southern Africa. Charles Everett Pace has fifteen years experience as one of the scholars with *The Great Plains Chautauqua Society, Inc.* The Great Plains Chautauqua, a five-state touring scholar-in-residence project, is the nation's premier public humanities program principally funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.



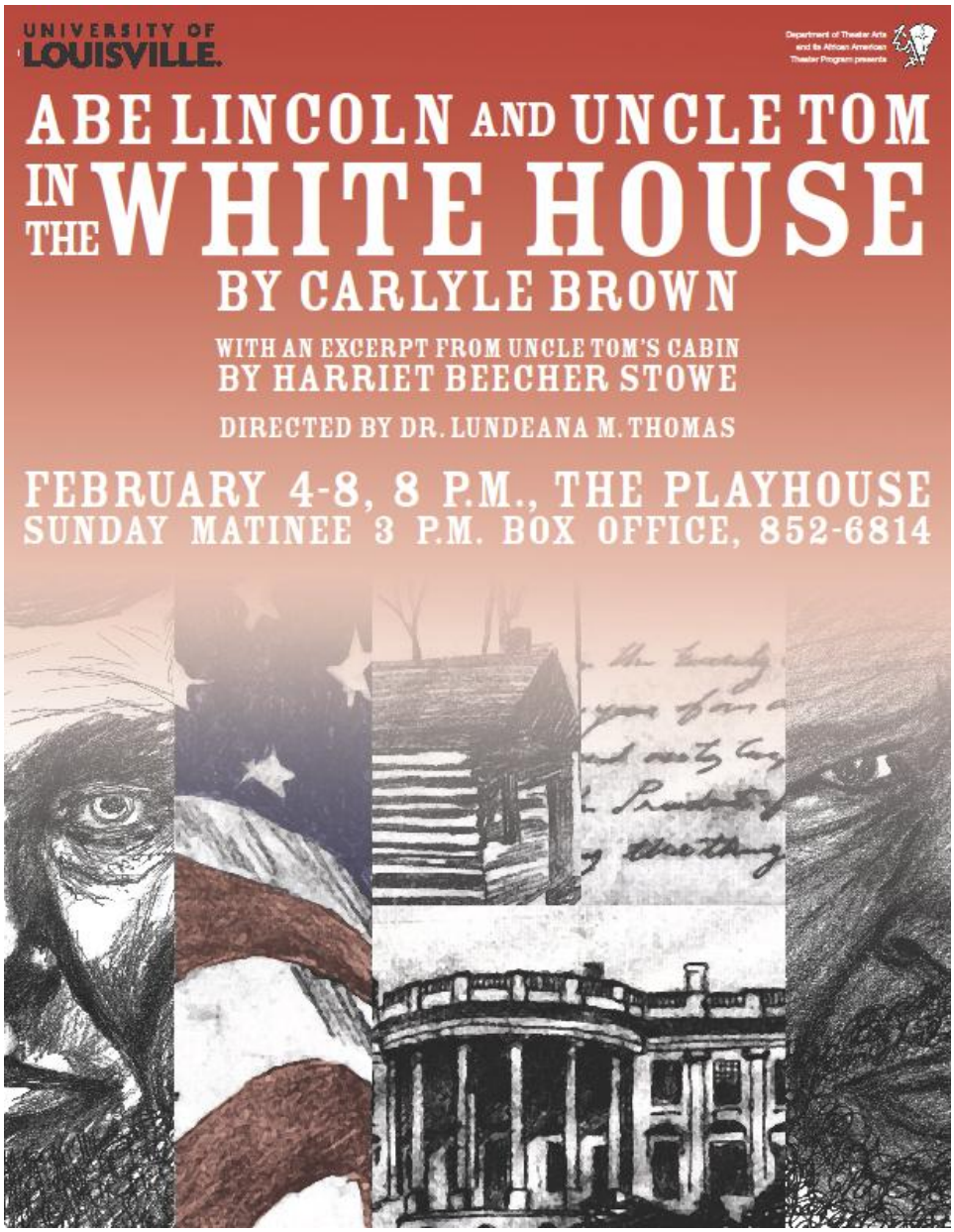
Frederick Douglass (1818-1895) A leading spokesman for the abolition of slavery, women's rights, and racial equality, Douglass became the first African American invited to the White House by an American President, Abraham Lincoln, on behalf of enslaved African Americans. Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey was born in February of 1818 on Maryland's eastern shore, the slave of a white father and a Maryland slave mother. While living in Baltimore and working at a shipyard, Douglass escaped slavery by train and steamboat to freedom in New York, September 3, 1838. Douglass assumed a new name, a new identity, and a new life in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Befriending William Lloyd Garrison, President of the American Antislavery Society, Douglass became a powerful and eloquent speaker for the Society, inspiring Garrison to comment that "Flinty hearts were pierced, and cold ones melted by his eloquence." Douglass published his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written By Himself* in 1845. Three years later, he began a speaking tour of England, Ireland, and Scotland. Upon his return to the United States, Douglass published the first issue of the *North Star*, a four-page weekly newspaper, out of Rochester, New York.

A Play -

Abraham Lincoln and

Uncle Tom in the White House

A play performed by the University of Louisville Theatre Department under the direction of Dr. Lundena Thomas.



Part I: Abraham Lincoln, America's "Agent of Change"

"I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father's child has."

Abraham Lincoln
Speech to 166th Ohio Regiment, August 22, 1864

Chapter 1
Introduction
Abraham Lincoln: An African American Perspective

Reprinted with permission from the *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society,* Abraham Lincoln Special Edition 2010

J. Blaine Hudson, Chair
Kentucky African American Heritage Commission

Dr. Hudson is Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Louisville, past chair of the Pan African Studies Department at the University of Louisville from 1998 to 2003, and a faculty member in the Department since 1992, in addition to holding various other administrative positions within the University. Dr. Hudson earned a doctorate in higher education administration at the University of Kentucky and both a master's and bachelor's degree from the University of Louisville.

For the past decade and more, my research has focused largely on the slave trade and slavery with special emphasis on African American resistance to slavery and the first true human-rights movement in the United States, the abolitionist movement that brought together a minority of men and women of conscience, black and white, who opposed slavery. In more specific terms, I have studied and written most about fugitive slaves and the Underground Railroad.

Ironically, we seldom, if ever, think of Abraham Lincoln as belonging to any of these groups or categories. Obviously, he was not black. Neither was he an abolitionist, according to those who were. At one time or another, he was denounced from all points along the national political spectrum. To some, he was an abolitionist; to others, he protected slavery. To some, he was too committed to war; to others, he was not committed sufficiently. Too hot or too cold. Too hasty or too slow.

Yet, in the storm-tide of change that was the American Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, the sixteenth president of the United States, was the chief executive who presided over the end of slavery—who liberated 4 million enslaved African Americans.

So, from the perspective of the African Americans of Lincoln's time and from the perspective of their descendants today, who was Abraham Lincoln—and what was and is his place in our history?

Abraham Lincoln: Biographical Overview

The bare facts of Lincoln's biography are simple and well-known. He was born February 12, 1809, at Hodgenville, Kentucky, named for his paternal grandfather who was killed by Native Americans near present-day Long Run Park in eastern Jefferson County on May 19, 1786. He and his family moved to Indiana when he was eight years old and to Illinois when he was a young man. There, he tried many occupations and eventually became an attorney. He married Mary Todd, of a prominent slaveholding Lexington, Kentucky, family. He was largely self-educated, possessed a keen mind, and demonstrated great skill with the written and spoken word. As contemporary descriptions and actual photographs attest, he was tall, awkward, somewhat homely, and given at times to melancholy.

Lincoln served briefly in the Black Hawk War and in the Illinois legislature in the 1830s. He was elected to one term in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1846. Lincoln slipped into virtual obscurity for several years but returned to political life when he denounced the "popular sovereignty" provision of the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854)—which, in effect, nullified the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and allowed for the extension of slavery into the western territories.

In 1856, Lincoln nearly captured the Republican Party's nomination for vice president of the United States. In 1858, he ran for the U.S. Senate and challenged Stephen Douglas—his longtime rival, incumbent senator from Illinois and, not coincidentally, author of the Kansas-Nebraska Act—to a series of debates. Douglas was already a national figure and an aspirant to the presidency, and these seven debates, between August 21 and October 15, 1858, seized the imagination of the nation. Each one, in its own way, focused on the issue of slavery

Lincoln lost the senatorial election but became a national figure himself—and was nominated for president by the Republican Party in 1860. On November 6, 1860, he was elected and, before his inauguration on March 4, 1861, seven slave states had seceded from the Union and had formed the Confederate States of America. Confederate forces began shelling Fort Sumter in the Charleston, South Carolina, harbor on April 12. Lincoln issued a "call to arms" on April 15 and the Civil War began—not to end slavery but for the purpose of suppressing rebellion and restoring the Union.

Still, by the time General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant on April 9, 1865, the Union had been restored and slavery was ending across the United States. Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth on April 14 and died the next day—with a plan in place, as enunciated in his Second Inaugural address and made manifest in legislative enactments, to reconstruct the sundered nation on a basis that would give the rights and opportunities of citizenship and government protection to 4 million newly emancipated African Americans.

Still, as I have reminded my students for nearly thirty years, Abraham Lincoln did not become the person "we think he was" until the last year of his life. So, to assess Abraham Lincoln fairly, we must consider several related dimensions of the man over time:

- his racial attitudes
- his views on slavery
- and how both evolved, particularly in the crucible of the Civil War.

Because Lincoln was a public figure who spoke and wrote volumes over several decades of public life, he can easily be taken out of context. Thus, as we explore these dimensions of Lincoln's thoughts and beliefs, it is important that we consider the totality of the evidence—not merely a few facts that can be cited selectively to fit and support a particular viewpoint. It is even more important that we let Lincoln "speak for himself."

So, who was Abraham Lincoln from the perspective of African Americans, then and now, and from the perspective of over 150 years since his untimely death?

Abraham Lincoln and Race

First, was Abraham Lincoln a racist, as so many have alleged—including Lerone Bennett, most recently in *Forced into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream* (2000)? The answer to this question is not simple, particularly if we view Lincoln in the context of his times, not ours.

Some of the most telling and widely publicized examples of Lincoln's racial views can be found in the Lincoln-Douglas debates. First, the September 18, 1858, debate in Charleston, Illinois, where Lincoln stated:

> I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been, in favor of bringing about in any way the social or political equality of the white and black races, that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality.[1]

[1] Michael P. Johnson, Ed. *Abraham Lincoln, Slavery and the Civil War: Selected Writings and Speeches* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2001), 73-74;

On October 13, 1858, in the sixth debate at Quincy, Illinois, Lincoln returned to this theme from a slightly different perspective:

> I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together on the footing of perfect equality, and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position.[2]

Then, however, Lincoln continues in a somewhat different vein:

> I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence—the right of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas that he is not my equal in many respects, certainly not in color—perhaps not in intellectual and moral endowments; but in the right to eat the bread without the leave of anybody else which his own hand earns, he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every other man.[3]

These last statements, which are often overlooked, are especially illuminating and reflect a viewpoint articulated by Lincoln on many occasions in the 1850s. In essence, Lincoln saw racial differences rooted definitively in color, conceded the possibility of the intellectual and moral inferiority of African Americans, and supported white supremacy. However, Lincoln also believed that African Americans were human beings with rights that could and should be protected by the U.S. Constitution.

Having had little or no direct contact with African Americans, Lincoln also seemed to share the popular prejudice against and fear of interracial relationships, as he stressed on June 26, 1857, in a speech opposing the Dred Scott decision.

> There is a natural disgust in the minds of nearly all white people, to the idea of an indiscriminate amalgamation of the white and black races . . . Now I protest against that counterfeit logic which concludes that, because I do not want a black woman for a slave, I must necessarily want her for a wife. I need not have her for either. I can just leave her alone.[4]

Privately, it seems that Lincoln recognized the inherent illogic of his own racial attitudes and those prevailing in antebellum America and mused in 1854:

> If A. can prove, however conclusively, that he may, of right, enslave B—why may not B snatch the same argument, and prove equally, that he may enslave A?
> You say A is white and B is black. It is *color*, then; the lighter, having the right to enslave the darker? Take care. By this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own.
>
> You do not mean color exactly?—You mean the whites are *intellectually* the superiors of the blacks, and, therefore have the right to enslave them? Take care again. By this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with an intellect superior to your own.

Robert W. Johannsen, Ed. *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008): 162-163.

[2] Johnson, 76-78.

[3] Ibid, Johannsen, 247-249.

[4] Ibid, 57.

> But, say you, it is a question of *interest*; and if you can make it your interest, you have the right to enslave another. Very well. And if he can make it his interest, he has the right to enslave you.[5]

These views reveal an interesting set of seeming inconsistencies. On one hand, Lincoln's attitudes have significant racist overtones and undertones. However, on the other, given the intensity of racial antipathy in antebellum America, the fact that Lincoln considered African Americans "human beings" actually places him in the category of a "racial moderate" in the context of his times. In other words, Lincoln believed that African Americans, while different, were neither outside the bounds of the law nor the applications of the "Golden Rule." Perhaps, George Fredrickson understood this paradox best thirty years ago when he observed that Lincoln viewed African Americans "as men, but not as brothers."[6]

Abraham Lincoln and Slavery

While Lincoln's racial attitudes through most, if not all, of his life were problematic, his antipathy toward slavery was far more intense and far more consistent. This viewpoint was influenced, to some degree, by his early years in the border states, in areas known for the movement of fugitive slaves and the presence of the Underground Railroad, and by his long and fast friendship with Joshua Speed of Louisville—and his visit to Farmington, the Speed plantation, in 1841. A few examples are instructive, the first from a letter (September 27, 1841) to Mary Speed, Joshua Speed's mother, recounting a steamboat trip on the Ohio River:

> A gentleman had purchased twelve negroes in different parts of Kentucky and was taking them to a farm in the South. They were chained six and six together. A small iron clevis was around the wrist of each, and this fastened to the main chain by a shorter one at a convenient distance from the others; so that the negroes were strung together precisely like so many fish on a trot-line. In this condition they were being separated forever from the scenes of their childhood, their friends, their fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, and many of them, from their wives and children, and going into perpetual slavery where the lash of the master is proverbially more ruthless and unrelenting than any other where . . . .[7]

Lincoln continues that despite "these distressing circumstances," the enslaved African Americans "were the most cheerful and apparently happy creatures on board."[8]

However, this incident affected Lincoln on a far deeper level than he expressed at the time. In his *Reminiscences* (1884), Joshua Speed believed that: "The scene he describes bears so intimate a relation to his after-life, I think it probable that it may be considered as concentrating his opposition to slavery."[9]

In other words, this direct exposure to slavery and the domestic slave trade was a defining moment, the source of images that would haunt him over the years. As one indication of the lasting power of this encounter, Lincoln himself recalled it fourteen years later in a letter (August 24, 1855) to Speed regarding the deepening differences between them on the "slavery question":

> In 1841, you and I had together a tedious low-water trip, on a Steam Boat from Louisville to St. Louis. You may

[5] Ibid., 49-50.
[6] George M. Fredrickson, "A Man but Not a Brother: Abraham Lincoln and Racial Equality," *Journal of Southern History*, 41 (1975): 39-58; George M. Fredrickson. *Big Enough to be Inconsistent: Abraham Lincoln Confronts Slavery and Race* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2008), 1-42.
[7] Johnson, 49-50.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Joshua F. Speed, *Reminiscences of Abraham Lincoln* (Louisville, 1884): 40.

> remember, as I well do, that from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio River there were, on board, ten or a dozen slaves, shackled together with irons. That sight was a continual torment to me; and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio, or any other slave-border. It is hardly fair for you to assume, that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of Northern people do crucify their feelings, in order to maintain their loyalty to the constitution and the Union.
>
> The slave-breeders and slave-traders, are a small, odious and detested class, among you; and yet in politics, they dictate the course of all of you, and are as completely your masters, as you are the masters of your own negroes.[10]

In far more memorable and public terms, Lincoln would state on June 16, 1858, when he accepted the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate:

> We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object and confident promise of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion, it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South.[11]

Much later, in a letter to A. G. Hodges of Kentucky (April 4, 1864), Lincoln would reiterate that: "I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I can not remember when I did not so think, and feel."[12]

Clearly, Lincoln believed that slavery, as an institution, was wrong—if not evil, regardless of how he viewed its victims. Still, although he opposed the extension of slavery into new U.S. territories, he believed that the Constitution protected the institution where it already existed. Clearly, Lincoln was no abolitionist who advocated the immediate end of slavery. However, unlike many of his contemporaries who shared his opposition to the "extension of slavery," Lincoln could accept the desirability of ending slavery altogether.

Abraham Lincoln, Emancipation, and Colonization

For much of his adult life, Lincoln reconciled this seeming paradox—opposition to slavery, on one hand, and the rejection of the equality of blacks and whites, on the other—by supporting colonization—the organized effort to remove free African Americans from the United States and resettle them in some other part of the world. In this belief, Lincoln was influenced strongly by his two political idols, Thomas Jefferson and Henry Clay, both of whom were strong advocates of colonization.

The abiding attraction of colonization as a concept, however impractical it was as a

[10] Johnson, 49-50.

[11] Ronald C. White, Jr., *A. Lincoln: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 2009), 251-55.

[12] Johnson, 285.

political strategy, was its promise to eliminate both the problem of slavery *and* the "problem," once slavery ended, of having a large free-black population on American soil. Colonization promised to solve the race problem, as if by "magic"—and was broadly influential. For example, the American Colonization Society (ACS) was formed in late 1816, with leadership drawn from the highest echelons of American government and, eventually, a network of state colonization societies also emerged, among which Kentucky's was one of the most active. The ACS lobbied for the Slave Trade Act in 1819, which led to the establishment of Liberia in the 1820s.

Still, the "magic" of colonization produced very limited results since African Americans recognized that colonization was not intended to benefit them but to protect slavery by removing the destabilizing presence of free people of color. Further, as the African American connection to Africa grew more tenuous by the year—by the 1830s, very few African Americans even had parents who had been born in Africa—the idea of entrusting their fate to an unknown land seemed reasonable only as a last resort, as was the case with Martin Delany and his followers in the troubled years of the 1850s. Consequently, since the government never appropriated any funds to support this scheme, only around fourteen thousand African Americans left the country in over forty years using private funds from whites.

Still, Lincoln referred to colonization—and its problems—on many occasions, for example, on June 26, 1857, he stated:

> I have said that the separation of the races is the only perfect preventive of amalgamation . . . Such separation, if ever effected at all, must be effected by colonization; and no political party, as such, is now doing anything directly for colonization . . . Let us be brought to believe that it is morally right, and, at the same time, favorable to, or at least, not against our interest, to transfer the African to his native clime, and we shall find a way to do it, however great the task may be.[13]

The failure of colonization before the Civil War did not lessen its appeal or weaken Lincoln's support. One of the most instructive examples can be found in the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, issued on September 22, 1862, which stipulates:

> That it is my purpose, upon the next meeting of Congress to again recommend the adoption of a practical measure . . . 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.[14]

At this juncture, it is important to note that Lincoln proposed voluntary colonization, at U.S. government expense—not forced deportation. Needless to add, a voluntary colonization plan required the acceptance and cooperation of black Americans and, although Lincoln was well aware of black attitudes toward colonization, he believed that he could convince black leaders of the wisdom of this course of action. After ending slavery in the District of Columbia in April 1862, Lincoln tested his assumptions, so to speak, by sending a relatively small group of African Americans on an unsuccessful attempt to found a black American settlement in Haiti. Consequently, even before issuing the preliminary Proclamation, he attempted to "sell" the "benefits" of large-scale colonization to a delegation of free people of color in a meeting on August 14, 1862. Lincoln stated:

> You and we are different races. We have between us a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races. Whether it is right or wrong I need not discuss, but this physical difference is a great disadvantage to us both, as I think your race suffer very greatly, many of them by living among

[13] "Speech on the Dred Scott Decision," ibid, 58.
[14] Ibid, 206-8.

> us, while ours suffer from your presence. In a word, we suffer on each side. If this is admitted, it affords a reason at least why we should be separated . . . even when you cease to be slaves, you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race. You are cut off from many of the advantages which the other race enjoy. The aspiration of men is to enjoy equality with the best when free, but on this broad continent, not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of ours. Go where you are treated the best, and the ban is still upon you.[15]

Not surprisingly, these remarks outraged African Americans and only intensified black opposition to colonization, led by the stinging spoken and written criticism of Frederick Douglass, perhaps the greatest of all African American leaders, before or since—who, not coincidentally, was not invited to this particular meeting. Apart from black opposition, the nations and colonies in the Caribbean and central and South America were disinclined to receive millions of displaced African Americans. Thus, as the fall of 1862 unfolded, it became increasingly clear to Lincoln that linking emancipation to colonization was untenable politically and, by the time he delivered his second annual message to Congress on December 1, 1862, he enjoined his audience to prepare for the continuing presence of African Americans on American soil. And when the final version of the Emancipation Proclamation was signed on January 1, 1863, all references to colonization had been removed.[16]

Still, there is a larger and more complex context. Lincoln *could* have made the Emancipation Proclamation effective in September 1862. Instead, he announced, in September 1862, his intention to end slavery in Confederate territory (which he did not control) in *January* 1863. Why the delay? And what was Lincoln hoping to accomplish in the interim? Clearly, "selling" colonization to African Americans was one of Lincoln's objectives—but he was also pursuing another and, perhaps, more fundamental, strategic goal.

For Lincoln, preserving the Union and ending slavery were, in 1861 and 1862, separate goals—and preserving the Union took precedence. Consequently, along with working for military victory, Lincoln spent nearly the first two years of the Civil War attempting to broker a compromise between slaveholding Unionists in the loyal states—Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and, eventually, West Virginia—and more moderate Confederates who wished to end the war. His strategy was to avoid any immediate attack on slavery but to encourage the Union slave states to adopt compensated, gradual emancipation plans. Colonization was linked, implicitly or explicitly, to such plans, and the terms under which Lincoln abolished slavery in the District of Columbia served as a model for other states. Lincoln also signaled that Confederates who would abandon rebellion would have the same options.

By announcing in September 1862 that emancipation (in Confederate territory) would take effect on January 1, 1863, Lincoln was, in essence, giving the Confederacy one last opportunity to compromise—to end the rebellion and retain slavery, at least for a time. When the Confederacy and even southern moderates, failed to indicate any willingness to compromise, their intransigence compelled Lincoln, finally, to recognize the futility of this strategy and to take successively stronger steps to end slavery directly.

The failure to achieve either of these goals in the fall of 1862 was a key turning point and crucial to understanding how and why Lincoln changed his strategy—and, perhaps, his attitudes, in the last years of the Civil War. As noted by James McPherson, once Lincoln reached this fateful crossroads, ending slavery and restoring the Union became the same goal in a new "national strategy." And this new "national strategy" was complemented by the "military strategy" of seeking the unconditional surrender of the

[15] White, "Address on Colonization," 200-204.
[16] Ibid, 218-19.

Confederacy after the complete defeat of its armed forces.[17]

In pursuing this strategy, Lincoln was moderate but resolute, moving forward at a halting pace that frustrated his abolitionist critics, but moving forward inexorably nonetheless. True, one could argue that Lincoln acted only out of military necessity, that ending slavery stimulated a floodtide of fugitive slaves that deprived the South of labor and struck at the heart of the southern social and economic order and sustained the Union Army. However, Lincoln's determination to end slavery cannot be explained entirely on pragmatic, military grounds.

For example, even if he lagged behind his most radical critics and friends, he usually overtook them. For example, referring to the seemingly rapid evolution of his own racial policies, Lincoln stated to his friend Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts: "The difference between you and me is a difference of a month or six months in time."[18] Similarly, in June 1862, Lincoln was described by Owen Lovejoy, abolitionist congressman from Illinois and brother of the martyred abolitionist, Elijah Lovejoy: "If he does not drive as fast as I would, he is on the right road, and it is only a question of time."[19]

Again and again, buried in the records of the time, this sentiment is expressed—that Lincoln was not so much opposing the Radical Republican agenda but rather allowing his more radical associates to serve as an advanced guard with him following along as the military and political situation allowed. Thus, one could argue rather convincingly that, in the tumult of the Civil War, Lincoln learned that the "old" solutions would not work, that he could not preserve the Union without winning the war, and that, since compromise with slavery was impossible in a nation so deeply divided, he could not win the war without ending slavery. He also learned that he could not end slavery without defining a place for emancipated African Americans as citizens in this country, not somewhere else, so that, as he stated in the Gettysburg Address (November 19, 1863), "this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."[20]

The African American Perspective: Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass

So, how, finally, did African Americans view Abraham Lincoln in his time—and how should we view him today, based on the totality of the evidence available to us?

In my view, only one of his contemporaries was both willing and able to see Lincoln and Lincoln's meaning as they were. By a fascinating coincidence, this contemporary was also the only man who could rival Lincoln as a visionary and as a leader. And he was an African American, once a fugitive slave—the great Frederick Douglass, who still towers over our history long after his death in 1895.

Time, not to mention objective historical research, has proved the appraisal of Douglass to be an honest, accurate, insightful, and balanced one. So, as we consider Lincoln from an African American perspective, we must consider Lincoln, first and last, from the perspective of Frederick Douglass—and in Douglass' own words.

By the Civil War, Douglass was as widely known and as controversial as Abraham Lincoln—although for rather different reasons. Lincoln personified the power of the state. Douglass was, quite literally, the tribune of his

[17] James M. McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 65-91.
[18] Archibald H. Grimke, *Charles Sumner: The Scholar in Politics* (New York, 1892), 338.
[19] William F. Moore and Jane A. Moore, Eds. *His Brother's Blood: Speeches and Writings, 1863-64, of Owen Lovejoy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 346.
[20] Johnson, 263.

people, the leading black abolitionist since the mid-1840s, perhaps the greatest orator in American history, and known internationally for his work. Still, Douglass was also a "minister without portfolio" and his "power," such as it was, derived solely from his own talents, convictions, and courage.

In this respect, Lincoln and Douglass were both self-made public men and knew of one another. Douglass was not invited to accompany the delegation of free people of color with whom Lincoln met in August 1862; he was too well-known and too closely identified with radical abolitionism for Lincoln to have any hope of convincing him of the wisdom of colonization. In fact, Douglass criticized Lincoln's colonization scheme with eloquence and anger, noting in September 1862:

> If men may not live peaceably together . . . in the same land, they cannot do so on the same continent, and ultimately in the same world. If the black man cannot find peace from the aggressions of the white race on this continent, he will not be likely to find it permanently on any part of the habitable globe. The same base and selfish lust for dominion which would drive us from this country would hunt us from the world.[21]

On August 10, 1863, Douglass met with Lincoln in Washington. Douglass pressed for equal pay and equal treatment for black soldiers. Lincoln, for his part, urged the black leader to continue recruiting for the Union army—and assured Douglass that he would honor his commitments to emancipation and to protecting black soldiers from Confederate retaliation. Lincoln treated Douglass with cordiality and respect, and Douglass was duly impressed and commented after the meeting that: "Though I was not entirely satisfied with his views, I was so well satisfied with the man and with the educating tendency of the conflict that I determined to go on with the recruiting."[22]

On August 18, 1864, Douglass met Lincoln again—this time at Lincoln's invitation. At this meeting, the two talked for hours and Lincoln made the fascinating and little-known proposal that Douglass organize a literal "underground railroad" operation in the South that would lure increasing numbers of African Americans into Union-controlled territory. As David W. Blight noted:

> It is remarkable that Lincoln suggested such a scheme to Douglass; it would have forged an unprecedented alliance between black leadership and federal power for the purpose of emancipation. On August 29, 1864, Douglass wrote to Lincoln, outlining a plan where twenty-five agents would work at the front, channeling slaves into Union lines.[23]

After General William Tecumseh Sherman took Atlanta on September 2, there was no necessity to implement this plan, which is reminiscent of the organization of the Anti-Slavery League along the Kentucky–Indiana Ohio River border in the 1850s or John Brown's "subterranean pass-way." Still, that Lincoln would have considered this strategy and the alliance it implied—and that Douglass, after consulting other black leaders, would have considered becoming a black "John Brown" at Lincoln's request—are equally stunning.

More than two centuries of slavery and racism divided them. The determination to end slavery and mutual respect united them—even to the point that Lincoln invited Douglass to his second inaugural, where they met for the last time on March 4, 1865. At the inaugural reception, Lincoln asked Douglass what he thought of the inaugural address, saying "there is no man in the country whose opinion I value more than yours." And Douglass replied that it

[21] David W. Blight, *Frederick Douglass' Civil War: Keeping Faith in Jubilee* (Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press, 1989), 142.

[22] John Stauffer. *Giants: The Parallel Lives of Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2008), 17-22.

[23] Blight, 183-84.

was "a sacred effort."[24] After Lincoln's assassination, Douglass shared the nation's sense of grief and loss, and observed in December 1865 that even if Lincoln "did not control events, he had the wisdom to be instructed by them. When he could no longer withstand the current, he swam with it."[25]

Douglass would give his most complete and, perhaps, most thoroughly considered appraisal of Abraham Lincoln many years later when he spoke on April 14, 1876, at the dedication of a monument in Washington, D.C., about Lincoln in the role of "emancipator." By this time, Reconstruction was ending—and the vision of racial justice and equality, which he believed Lincoln's plan for reconstruction would have achieved, was fading from the minds of his countrymen. In this eloquent and courageous speech, Douglass sought both to tell the truth about Lincoln and to preserve that fading vision—more for posterity than for a nation that wanted mythology more than history, that wanted more to forget than to remember.

Standing before President Ulysses S. Grant, the leadership of both houses of Congress, and the U.S. Supreme Court, Douglass soon warmed to his task:

> It must be admitted, truth compels me to admit, even here in the presence of the monument we have erected to his memory, Abraham Lincoln was not, in the fullest sense of the word, either our man or our model. In his interests, in his associations, in his habits of thought, and in his prejudices, he was a white man.
>
> He was preeminently the white man's President, entirely devoted to the welfare of white men. He was ready and willing at any time during the first years of his administration to deny, postpone, and sacrifice the rights of humanity in the colored people to promote the welfare of the white people of this country. . . . First, midst, and last, you and yours were the objects of his deepest affection and his most earnest solicitude. You are the children of Abraham Lincoln. We are at best only his step-children; children by adoption, children by the forces of circumstances and necessity.[26]

Then, Douglass continued:

> While Abraham Lincoln saved for you a country, he delivered us from a bondage, according to Jefferson, one hour of which was worse than ages of their oppression your fathers rose in rebellion to oppose.
>
> Our faith in him was often taxed and strained to the uttermost, but it never failed. . . . We saw him, measured him, and estimated him, not by stray utterances to injudicious and tedious delegations, who often tried his patience; not by isolated facts torn from their connections; not by any partial and imperfect glimpses, caught at inopportune moments. . . . We came to the conclusion that the hour and the man of our redemption had somehow met in the person of Abraham Lincoln. It mattered little to us what language he might employ on special occasions; it mattered little to us when we fully knew him, whether he was swift or slow in his movements; it was enough for us that Abraham Lincoln was at the head of a great movement, and was in living and earnest sympathy with that movement, which, in the nature of things, must go on until slavery should be utterly and forever abolished in the United States.[27]

[24] Stauffer, 295.
[25] Blight, 187.

[26] "Oration in the Memory of Abraham Lincoln," in Philip S. Foner, Ed. *The Life and Writings of Fredrick Douglass* (New York: International Publishers, 1955), 4:309-19.
[27] Ibid.

Nothing more need be said. Douglass saw Lincoln and Lincoln's meaning whole. Douglass also remembered well that, eleven years before, Lincoln, backed by a Republican majority in Congress, was taking the following actions before his death:

- land redistribution along the South Carolina coast (January 1865)
- the Thirteenth Amendment, passed by Congress in January 1865 and ratified on December 18, 1865
- the creation of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands (the Freedmen's Bureau), established March 3, 1865
- voting rights for African American veterans and African Americans with education (as noted in Lincoln's last speech before his assassination)

Douglass understood that if these actions and policies had not been subverted by Lincoln's successor, Andrew Johnson, African Americans would have embarked on their new journey as free men and women with an economic foundation, a role and place as citizens in the political process—and the commitment of the federal government to protect their rights. Instead, by 1876, serfdom was replacing slavery and African Americans were fast becoming powerless paupers, surrounded by their former owners, in an increasingly hostile and segregated society. And conditions would become much worse before Douglass died in 1895.

So, as Douglass stated with such power and clarity, the question of whether Abraham Lincoln was a "great white father" was irrelevant. The image of Lincoln as the benevolent and saintly white liberator had, as its counterpart, the image of the downtrodden and reverently grateful "slave" being freed from bondage. African Americans knew that neither image was accurate, that Lincoln was as Douglass described him and that African Americans themselves had paid for their freedom with their own blood and tears.

But African Americans knew as well—as African Americans knew under Franklin Roosevelt, John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter, and Bill Clinton—that the "enemy of my enemy is my friend," that it was far better to have a president whose policies helped more than hurt them, regardless of how questionable his other views and motivations might be. What mattered to Frederick Douglass and to African Americans, then and now, was that Abraham Lincoln was committed to ending slavery—and acted with the power of the federal government to translate that commitment into reality.

Conclusion

When he was being led to the gallows in December 1859, John Brown, the abolitionist martyr, handed a note to a guard that stated simply: "I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land can never be purged away but with blood."[28]

In many respects, Brown's apocalyptic vision anticipated the haunting passages from Lincoln's Second Inaugural address (March 1865), which juxtaposed the stark image of the Civil War as a divine judgment on both North and South for their complicity in the sin of slavery with the vision of forgiveness and a new nation purged of that sin. In prose that rises to the heights of both poetry and prophecy, Lincoln stated in this brief address:

> Fondly do we hope, fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord and true and righteous altogether."

[28] J. Blaine Hudson, *Encyclopedia of the Underground Railroad* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2006), 46.

> With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.[29]

Then, as now, there were those who believed that what was "good" for "some" Americans—a slavocracy or plutocracy or "ruling class"—was synonymous with what was "good" for the nation. Lincoln's vision and his plan for reconstructing the nation included everyone. Had this program been carried out, American history—for all Americans—might have been very different. How different, we shall never know.

Thus, to Abraham Lincoln, African Americans were "men, but not brothers." And, to African Americans, Abraham Lincoln was not a father or a brother, but an ally—and, in the end, perhaps even a friend.

[29] Johnson, 320-21.

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Chapter 2
Commentary:
Which Lincoln Do We Celebrate?

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Originally presented February 14, 2009 and Revised Kentucky African American Heritage Commission Lincoln Symposium Panel Presentation Centre College, Danville, Kentucky

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I thought I would move this conversation on Abraham Lincoln on a slightly different path. I am not a Lincoln scholar but a teacher of the middle period of American history and African American history who typically must address undergraduate student questions about the man and his significance. My perspective comes from one who has taught and hopefully continues to teach about the complex person who was Abraham Lincoln.

During this year we have seen a flood of scholarly (and some say not so scholarly) books on Lincoln. These works read like a who's who of Lincoln scholarship—reprints of Carl Sandberg's works, David Herbert Donald, Doris Kearns Goodwin and not to mention Michael Burlingame's huge two volume treatment of Lincoln.

Earlier in this session, Dr. Hudson carefully outlined the Kentucky, Indiana and Illinois Lincoln who became a lawyer, then a politician who later became the presidential Lincoln. He was a complicated man with uncomplicated roots. Some writers contend he suffered from bouts of depression during the Civil War and a lingering type of behavior called by contemporary observers as the "melancholy." Moreover, his demeanor was affected by the loss of his son and he could not always get along with his generals or cabinet members. As this complicated man with uncomplicated roots, he "married up" with a marriage to Mary Todd who brought with her the sophistication that men of that era so highly valued.

In this year of Lincoln's birth bicentennial, we have almost elevated him to the level of political sainthood as suggested by presidential admirer Barack Obama. African Americans tend to focus on his "post-racial years" from January 1, 1863 to his death in

April 1865. He became the reluctant emancipator with doubts about emancipation support, since his birth state of Kentucky staunchly resisted emancipation of its Africans. He did support the creation of a Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands which often provided assistance to whites and aided the "lately emancipated" blacks. Yet, some black leaders such as Frederick Douglass initially expressed public concerns (and private doubts) regarding Lincoln's sincerity about emancipation surrounding issuance of the pre-emancipation document in September 1862. Lincoln evolved from the status of a lukewarm emancipationist to a more forceful abolitionist in 1863 while carefully allowing loyal slave-owners to keep their slaves thus depriving disloyal ones of their property. It could be argued that Lincoln walked the fine line of opposing slavery but defending its right to exist among loyal whites. There is evidence loyal slaveholders maintained that the Emancipation Proclamation was not an enforceable law but a military order to ultimately undermine the labor equation among rebellious slaveholders. According to the 1860 census, many slaveholders held between five to twenty slaves. A loss of even one slave would be disruptive to the Confederate economic structure.

In any event, the Emancipation Proclamation encouraged un-emancipated blacks to obtain freedom on their own and join Union forces. Today, there are present in the audience re-enactors of the 12th U.S. Colored Troops to remind us of the role African American soldiers played in the Civil War. These 186,000 soldiers and sailors had some of the highest casualty rates of any segment of the military-38,000 deaths. These soldiers (often self-emancipated slaves) often fought with the lowest pay and least effective weapons and equipment. Their saga is also part of the Lincoln war legacy.

Mr. Lincoln's participation in the war as commander-in-chief and as the Great Emancipator also redefined the metric for assessing his role in the war both as the president and as a sort of Greek tragic figure. Among the variables that must be taken into account are that he was a president that led the country through an unpopular war and at times, dysfunctional society; he waged a war in an era when many could care less about slavery or those enslaved; he was a largely political novice from a new political party cobbled together from fragments of old political groups and new ones; he had few connections to those of substance (the Speed family for example); he was not a member of the wealthy political elites of that era; he had limited personal contacts with African Americans save Elizabeth Keckley who worked in the White House as a modiste for Mrs. Lincoln and of course, his contact with black abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

Simply, Lincoln was a common man who read law books, became a lawyer and managed to lead a disunited United States through an "uncivil" war. Moreover, his actions declared some blacks free while keeping others in loyal states and territories enslaved. He was convinced the U.S.

Constitution sustained what he considered to be a prudent and moral choice. Before his death, he resisted pressure to rescind his emancipation directive and restore slavery. With the South's military defeat, he became a national symbol of a successful common man who was then killed by a deranged Confederate sympathizer who believed that killing President Lincoln could change the war's outcome. To most Americans, Lincoln's values and actions in war became the best example of America's soul: hard work, moral fiber and commitment to do the right thing for national unity. Philosopher Immanuel Kant argued that humankind has an absolute innate moral sense about right and wrong. Abraham Lincoln as the war time president then became the quintessential American who had the innate sense of right and wrong about slavery, emancipation and national unity.

One hundred forty-four years after his death, we continue to celebrate him as a national historical figure of substance. In 2009, a recently inaugurated Barack Obama used the historical Lincoln to guide him through his presidential journey. If President Obama had lived during Lincoln's time, it would be unlikely Obama would have been emancipated. As a "colored" person, his free status would have been questionable.

Thus, we should give our 16th president his due and deserved respect as a war time president. We must remember that he was still a human being with imperfections which enabled him to be a president of, by, and for those people who elected him. Sadly, African Americans could not elect him in 1860 or 1864. Blacks did elect him after April 14, 1865 to a place that transcended politics. "Father Abraham" (as Dr. Anne Butler so aptly described him earlier in this panel discussion) achieved the reverential status of an almost biblical character among contemporary blacks. Today, a century and a half later, we still accept him as the ultimate political pragmatist and national leader with flaws, but oh so uniquely American.

Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln at "Happy Birthday Mr. Lincoln" celebration, Centre College Weisiger Theatre, February 12, 2009
Photo courtesy Centre College

Chapter 3
Lincoln and Emancipation: A Moral, Political and Constitutional Question

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Abraham Lincoln saw slavery as a moral evil and as a repudiation of the very principles of democracy and equality on which America was founded. His incisive common sense cut cleanly through those arguments that would justify this institution: "As I would not be a slave," he explained in 1858, "so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy." Yet, as a lawyer and politician, Lincoln realized the very real legal and political obstacles in the way of abolition. Lincoln's wrestling with this dilemma provides us with one of the most searching case studies of the attempt to reconcile morality and political realities.

Lincoln saw the Constitution itself as an obstacle to abolition. While slavery violated the Constitution's fundamental principles, Lincoln also understood that it created a national government of limited, delegated powers, and left the question of slavery in the hands of the states. Lincoln firmly believed that the Founders held slavery to be a moral wrong that they accepted only as a necessary accommodation of existing economic and social realities, and that they thought it would eventually die a natural death. The Founders had placed slavery "on a course of ultimate extinction," and there it must be kept. It might be necessary to accept slavery where it already existed, but we should never allow it to be extended, and the national government should exclude it from those areas, like the western territories, that were under its constitutional control. This position Lincoln consistently argued in his 1858 debates with Stephen Douglas and in his 1860 presidential campaign. His election to the presidency on this principle would lead eleven slave states to secede from the Union even before Lincoln had taken the oath of office.

Secession, then, presented Lincoln with serious political obstacles to emancipation. While the Constitution gave the president no authority to abolish slavery, it did impose on him the solemn obligation to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." Saving the Union, then, was the "paramount object," of Lincoln's presidency, and not "*either* to save or to destroy slavery."[30] Saving the Union, to Lincoln meant saving "the last, best hope of earth," the only government on the face of the earth engaged in the great experiment of self-government. And it also meant preserving a Union in which slavery was kept on the course of ultimate extinction. Thus, Lincoln refused to make the concessions, urged by Southern Unionists to avert secession that would have

[30] (Lincoln, 343)

foresworn the national government's authority to ban slavery from territories.[31] To do so would, in Lincoln's view, retreat from the Founders' goals of democracy and equality.

The election of 1860 gave Lincoln no mandate for abolishing slavery, and forced him to build a coalition for preserving the Union out of disparate groups, many of whom would be alienated by emancipation. Lincoln was elected with less than 40% of the popular vote, and won no more than 10% of the vote in any slave state.[32] Lincoln's Republican Party included many who opposed the extension of slavery into the western territories, but equally opposed abolition. The support of Northern Democrats was vital to a unified war effort, but they were even less supportive of abolition. The border slave states were crucial for their strategic and moral importance. "I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game," Lincoln wrote to Orville Browning.[33] Attacks on slavery ran the risk of forcing these states into the arms of the Confederacy. And finally, Lincoln held out the hope that Southern Unionists (who accounted for nearly half of the 1860 vote in many Southern states) would vote out the secessionist governments and return peacefully to the Union.

Within these political and constitutional limits, Lincoln immediately took steps to limit slavery that were, in his words "comely and not altogether outrageous." [34] As Allen Guelzo notes, "Lincoln understood from the first that his administration was the beginning of the end of slavery and that he would not leave office without some form of legislative emancipation policy in place."[35] He signed legislation ending slavery in federal jurisdictions—the territories and the District of Columbia, and in March of 1862 he proposed federal funding for gradual, voluntary, compensated emancipation in the Border States.

By the summer of 1862, however, Lincoln realized that his "paramount object" of saving the Union could only be attained by means adopting a radically different approach to the problem of slavery. By the summer of 1862, no decisive Union victory had materialized to break the back of the Confederacy. While the Border States were, by the fall, securely in Union hands, nowhere but in West Virginia had Southern Unionists repudiated secession and established loyal governments. By 1862, volunteers were no longer adequate to fill the massive manpower needs of the Union armies and state governments were forced to turn to conscription to fill the ranks of their militias, with Congress enacting a federal Conscription Act the following year. By the summer of 1862, no border state legislature had responded favorably to Lincoln's plan for compensated emancipation. And by 1862, there was need for some uniform national policy concerning the status of runaway slaves who left the plantations and flocked to the Union armies. And finally, Northern public opinion was growing increasingly impatient with military failure and increasingly reluctant to support the staggering costs of war.

In light of these realities, Lincoln came to the conclusion that some stronger measure was needed to undermine Southern morale and disrupt the Southern economy. As he later explained, "We had about played our last card, and must change our tactics or lose the game!"[36] Lincoln had come to accept emancipation as "a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the government," and thus within the laws of war and the president's constitutional authority as commander-in-chief. Lincoln was thus constitutionally able to accomplish as commander-in-chief what he would not have been permitted to accomplish through the legislative process.

Having reached this resolve, Lincoln issued a preliminary Proclamation on September 22, 1862 that on January 1, 1863 that all persons held in bondage in any state in rebellion against the United States would be "thenceforward and

[31] (Kelly, Harbison and Belz, 295)
[32] (Leip)
[33] (Leip, 318)
[34] (quoted in Guelzo, 87)
[35] (5)

[36] (Quoted in Donald, 364)

forever free."[37] Lincoln's lingering doubts about emancipation are reflected in the fact that he offered the rebellious states one last chance to keep their slaves by rejoining the Union peacefully, and in the fact that in December he asked Congress to approve compensation for those states which would emancipate their slaves before the end of the century. By January 1, 1863, however, Lincoln's doubts about emancipation, whatever they might have been, had disappeared. As he signed the final Proclamation—which contained no mention of compensation or colonization—Lincoln told his Cabinet, "I am a man under orders, I cannot do otherwise. . . . I have never in my life felt more certain that I was doing right than I do in signing this paper."[38]

Military necessity, thus, convinced Lincoln of the need for emancipation, and also provided him with the constitutional justification—the law of war clearly recognized the power of a belligerent to seize enemy property necessary to the war effort. But military necessity as a justification also placed serious limits on the reach of emancipation. First, since the power of seizure extended only to enemy property, the Proclamation was limited to those areas still in rebellion. Second, Lincoln was uncomfortable with the idea that the temporary necessities of war could justify a permanent termination of property rights by the government. The narrow legal basis of his Proclamation thus led Lincoln to fear that the restoration of peace might also bring about a restoration of slavery.

Whatever Lincoln's constitutional doubts about emancipation, he was adamantly determined that the gains of his Proclamation should not be lost. To avert any such possibility, Lincoln strongly campaigned for a constitutional amendment that would end slavery permanently and absolutely, regardless of any state objections to the contrary. He pressed Edwin Morgan, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, to include a plank calling for such an amendment in its platform for the 1864 presidential election, even though such a position might spell electoral defeat for the President and congressional Republicans. His party had, after all, suffered severe losses in the congressional elections of 1862, following less than two months upon the issuing of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation.

Nonetheless, once the abolition measure was before the Congress, Lincoln involved himself in the legislative process to a degree unmatched by any president before the 20th Century. In his annual message to Congress in December of 1864, he appealed to both parties, but especially to Democrats, to support the proposed amendment. He worked closely with its House sponsor and identified members whose support might be won and invited them to the White House for personal persuasion, urging them to vote for the amendment as a means of bringing the war to a swift end.[39] There are also indications, although no recorded evidence, that Lincoln resorted to patronage and deal-making to win support for this proposed Thirteenth Amendment, legislative tactics that we have come to accept and even expect in the days since Franklin Roosevelt, but which, in Lincoln's day, would have approached, if not crossed over into impropriety. As Senator Thaddeus Stevens noted of the passage of the anti-slavery amendment, "The greatest measure of the nineteenth century was passed by corruption, aided and abetted by the purest man in America."[40] Suffice it to say that Lincoln's determination to use to the fullest the powers and the persuasive force of his office on behalf of the anti-slavery amendment are unsurpassed by the legislative efforts of any of his predecessors or of any of his successors for decades to come.

Military necessity also led Lincoln to enlist freed slaves in the Union Army, a step that marked a further evolution of Lincoln's views on the place of African-Americans in American society. By 1863, Lincoln faced Union ranks reduced by staggering casualty rates and the impending expiration of tours of duty of those who had enlisted at the start of the conflict. "I was,"

[37] (Lincoln, 345)
[38] (Quoted in Guelzo, 181, 182)
[39] (Donald, 554)
[40] (Ibid.)

Lincoln wrote in an open letter defending his decision to enlist blacks, "driven to the alternative of either surrendering the Union, and with it, the Constitution, or of laying strong hand upon the colored element."[41] In the face of a threatening manpower shortage, then, Lincoln decided to tap the vast available reserve of black men, eager to fight in a war that they saw, in Eric Foner's words, "as heralding the long-awaited destruction of slavery."[42]

Lincoln took this decision fully aware that the bearing of military arms had long been regarded as both the privilege and the duty of citizenship. The nation simply could not ask men to risk their lives for the Union, and then deny them the benefits of freedom under that Union. As he wrote in an open letter to James Conkling, "You say you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem to be willing to fight for you. . . . But negroes, like other people, act upon motives. Why should they do anything for us, if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us, they must be prompted by the strongest motive—even the promise of freedom. And the promise being made, must be kept."[43] And the promise was not only freedom, but full citizenship for African-Americans.

What, then, can we conclude about the road that Lincoln travelled on the way to emancipation? Constrained by political and constitutional realities, and by the racial preconceptions of his day, Lincoln was not, until well into the war, a champion of emancipation, let alone racial equality. Indeed, the political and constitutional obstacles in his path to emancipation were cleared away only by the greater military necessities of waging a war to preserve the Union. As he would himself admit on this question, "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me."[44]

Still, while Lincoln's actions toward slavery may have been dictated by the necessities of saving the Union, Lincoln always understood the Union that he was saving to be one from which slavery would ultimately be banished. A leader less committed to this principle might easily have preserved the Union by allowing slavery to continue to expand. A leader less attuned to political necessities might have lost the Union, and consequently permitted slavery to continue indefinitely in the South.

Lincoln's example, then, suggests that effective leadership requires more than moral clarity. Commitment to moral principles must be joined with practical wisdom regarding the means for implementing those principles. Effective leadership requires sensitivity to the realities of the context in which principles are to be actualized, and a willingness to learn from that context and adjust to its changes. "As our case is new," Lincoln urged the Congress, "we must think anew, and act anew."[45] In the changed context of war, Lincoln was able to "disenthrall" himself from the preconceptions of his generation in order to save the Union and lead his country to the ending of slavery. Lincoln, as a political leader demonstrated a remarkable capacity for growth in his understanding of the nature of the problem and flexibility in his choice of means for its solution. I would argue that Lincoln's path to emancipation was *profoundly* moral precisely because he treated moral principles not just as academic abstractions but as values to be realized in an imperfect world.

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[41] (Lincoln, 420)
[42] (Lincoln, 420)
[43] (Lincoln, 392)
[44] (Lincoln, 420)
[45] (Lincoln, 364)

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Part II:

"The Lincolns, Slavery and Opening of the West"

"It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes."

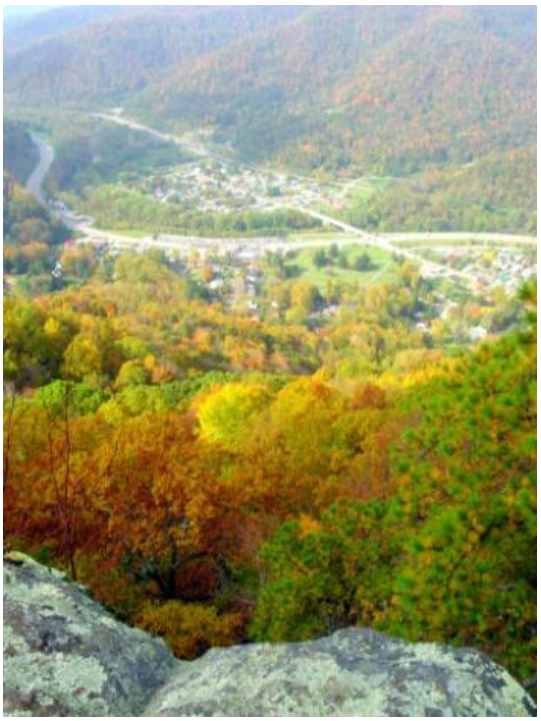
Abraham Lincoln
Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865

Left: Left: Thomas Lincoln, (1778-1851) the father of the president. *Photo courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Museum of Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, TN.*

Like so many others, the Lincolns entered Kentucky through Cumberland Gap from Virginia (Rockingham County) during the early 1780s. Thomas Lincoln's father, Abraham (1744-1786), sold his Virginia farm then led his wife and five children over the mountains into Kentucky in search of his fortune. Considered distant cousins of Daniel Boone, the Lincolns, like Boone were originally residents of Pennsylvania. Thomas witnessed the death of his father in 1786 during an Indian raid on the family's Jefferson County farm in May 1786. Following the death of Abraham Lincoln, Thomas' mother Bathsheba (Herring) relocated the family to Washington County, near Springfield in the fall of that same year.

From the mid-1700s through the 1830s, thousands of free and enslaved African Americans joined the Lincoln's and thousands of other pioneering families moving through Cumberland Gap to begin new lives in the West.

America's First Pathway to the West: Cumberland Gap and The Wilderness Road



Cumberland Gap is a pass through Cumberland Mountain in Bell County on the border of Kentucky and Virginia, just northeast of Tennessee. For both animals and humans, the pass was one of the most accessible routes to land west of the Appalachian Mountains. ATHAWOMINEE (Path of the Armed Ones, or Warriors' Path) was the name Shawnee Indians gave the rugged road west. The first white person to pass through the Gap is believed to have been Gabriel Arthur, who returned on June 18, 1674, to Fort Henry (Petersburg, Virginia) after spending nearly a year among the Indians. The Wilderness Road, used by the pioneers of the late eighteenth century, passed through this famous Gap. Among the early hunters, explorers, and adventurers who crossed the Gap were Thomas Walker (1750), Henry Scaggs (1764), Colonel James Smith (1766), Daniel Boone and John Findlay (1769-71), Colonel James Knox and the Long Hunters. Settlers and land speculators followed in increasing numbers. Around 12,000 had passed through the Gap by the time the colonies won their independence in 1783. By 1800 more than 200,000 settlers had headed west along the Wilderness Road.

Approaches to the Gap are steeper on the west than on the east. This steepness has always been a hindrance to the movement of freight, in spite of the steady improvement of the overland trail, beginning in 1792. A railroad tunnel beneath the Gap was completed in 1889 for more efficient movement west of the Appalachians, and its construction coincided with the development of coal mining in the area. The prehistoric origins of the Gap have been confirmed by geologic studies on the surface and in the pilot tunnel driven through Cumberland Mountain for highway relocation.

During the 1920s a movement began to recognize Cumberland Gap as a landmark in the westward expansion of the United States by making it a national park. Spearheaded by Robert Kincaid of Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee, key local and state officials of Virginia and Kentucky founded an association in 1937 to campaign for creation of the park. After studies by the National Park Service, President Franklin D. Roosevelt on June 11, 1940, signed a law authorizing the creation of Cumberland Gap National Historical Park.

The states of Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee purchased land for the park over a period of fifteen years. Lands in Kentucky and Virginia were purchased by Howard J. Douglas of Middlesborough, who was appointed land buyer. The Tennessee Park Commission bought property in Tennessee. Douglas purchased more than 240 tracts, totaling 18,157.98 acres: 10,680 in Kentucky and 7,477.98 in Virginia. The Tennessee Park Commission acquired 2,027.06 acres. On September 14, 1955, the title deeds from the three states were formally presented to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, and Cumberland Gap National Historical Park was formally established. Official dedication ceremonies began with a visit by Vice-President Richard M. Nixon on July 3, 1959. On July 4 representatives of the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and the three states assembled at the new visitor center for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

The park, which attracts over 1 million visitors a year, has more than fifty miles of hiking trails, numerous campsites, and the Pinnacle Overlook, rising nearly 1,000 feet above Cumberland Gap. Within the park is the Hensley Settlement, containing the abandoned farmsteads of a once flourishing community.

Wilderness Road - The first written record of the Wilderness Road is an announcement in the *Kentucky Gazette* on October 15, 1796: *"The Wilderness Road from Cumberland Gap to the settlements in Kentucky is now completed. Waggons loaded with a ton weight, may pass with ease, with four good horses."*

The original Wilderness Road was not paved, but logs were added later in some sections as a surface material; one such section of “corduroy” road near Wildcat Mountain could still be seen as late as 1970. The log surfaces were probably installed by the Union Army during the Civil War to support artillery and heavily loaded army wagons. On the north side of Wildcat Mountain, two parallel roads led up the hill, about sixty feet apart. One lane was used by double-teamed wagons going up the hill, the other by the spare horses going back down the hill to be double-teamed to another wagon.

Before that time, most people called the route either Kentucky Road or the road to the Holston settlements, depending upon the direction of travel. On John Filson's map, the old trail is called "The Road from the Old settle[ments] thro' the great Wilderness." The Wilderness Road more or less followed what is known as the old “Warriors' Path” through Cumberland Gap to Flat Lick, then parts of Skaggs's Trace from Flat Lick to Crab Orchard, Kentucky. Old trails and county roads that extended from Crab Orchard to Harrodsburg and Louisville are also frequently called the Wilderness Road by historians. To follow the Wilderness Road today, the traveler starts from Gate City, Virginia, and takes U.S. 58 to Jonesville. At this point the old road went northward to the base of the Cumberland Mountains and followed the mountains southwest to the Cumberland Gap after rejoining U.S. 58 east of today's Rose Hill, Virginia. One of the trail’s earliest settlements, Martin's Station, was located on the road near Rose Hill and Davis Station was on the Kentucky side of the Gap, in what is now national park land. From Cumberland Gap to present-day Baughman, Kentucky, the Wilderness Road was nearly the same as U.S. 25E, except that it followed the west side of Yellow Creek north of Middlesboro and the east side of the Cumberland River north of Pineville.

The original route ran north of present-day Barbourville, then joined and followed KY 229 to present-day London. Modrel's Station was built along the road on the west side of the Little

Laurel River in 1795; twenty-two militia men were stationed there. North of London the road was approximately the same as U.S. 25 to Wood Creek, where it turned north and led to the top of Wildcat Mountain, where there was a trench battle during the Civil War. Farther north, the road ran along the ridge inside the bend in Rockcastle River, ascended on the northwest side, and crossed the river at Ford Creek below Livingston. The road then went up the south fork of Ford Hollow Creek to Sand Hill and followed the former Chestnut Ridge road into present-day Mt. Vernon. Part of the old road was destroyed during the construction of interstate highway I-75.

West of Mt. Vernon, the original Wilderness Road is still visible, crossing Little Renfro Creek about 1.5 miles below U.S. 150, and following Boone's Fork of the Dick's (now Dix) River to Brodhead. The road followed the north side of the river for about two miles to a salt lick, then crossed to the south side, and followed for the most part U.S. 150 into Crab Orchard. From this point, travelers took county roads to their destinations. One of the most frequently used routes northward from Crab Orchard led to Danville and Harrodsburg, then to the salt works at Bullitt's Lick, and finally to Louisville. Another road to Louisville from Harrodsburg ran north along the town fork of Salt River past McAfee's Station to Hammons Creek, then across Big Benson Creek to Squire Boone's Station, and westward past Lynn's Station, Asturgus's Station, the Dutch Station, Floyd's Station, and the Spring Station.

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Bound for Freedom: The Story of Frontier Slave Monk Estill

Presented by Robert O'Bryan Green

A native of Laurens, South Carolina, Mr. Green received his MFA in theatre performance from the University of Louisville. He earned his B.A. in drama education at South Carolina State University. Mr. Green has portrayed boxing legend Muhammad Ali in *Fighting for the Principle* for the Kentucky Historical Society and has appeared in many University of Louisville theatrical productions.

Monk Estill first came to Kentucky on a scouting expedition during the 1770s with his owner, Captain James Estill from Augusta County, Virginia. Captain Estill arrived in Madison County, Kentucky in 1775 and five years later founded, along with his brother Samuel, Estill's Station, a fort about three miles southeast of what is now Richmond. In 1779, Monk Estill planted and maintained a nursery of apple trees in Boonesborough for the benefit of the Estill family. On March 20, 1782, Wyandot Indians ambushed and killed fourteen-year-old Jennie Gass and captured Monk Estill. Estill played an integral role in the survival of the inhabitants of Estill's Station by exaggerating the strength of the garrison and convincing the Indians to postpone their planned assault. Two days after the initial assault, James Estill and twenty-five of his men attacked the Wyandot at Little Mountain, now known as Mt. Sterling. As the battle raged on, Monk was able to escape from his Indian captors and carried one of the wounded men, James Berry, nearly twenty-five miles back to Estill's Station. For his act of valor, James Estill's son Wallace granted Monk Estill his freedom.

Chapter 4
The Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration
February 12, 2009

Sandy Brue
Chief Interpreter (Retired)
Abraham Lincoln Boyhood Home National Historical Park
Hodgenville, KY

Sandy Brue, Chief of Interpretation and Resource Management (retired) Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park, Hodgenville, Kentucky.

"You suggest that a visit to the place of my nativity might be pleasant to me. Indeed it would be, but would it be safe? Would not the people lynch me"[1]

Neighbors living near the cabin where Abraham Lincoln was born remembered that Kentucky was gripped in ice, snow, and bitter cold on February 12, 1809.[2] Dennis Hanks lived about two miles from the Lincolns. He remembered that his Ma was delayed by chores when news arrived that he had a new cousin. Dennis wasn't busy, he ran to the Lincoln cabin, becoming one of the first to see the baby. Dennis later stated that Thomas, Lincoln's father had built up the fire and thrown a bear skin over the babe and his mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln, to keep them warm.[3] Born on the Kentucky frontier and growing up in the wilderness of Indiana, Abraham Lincoln would be no stranger to cold frigid winters.

Lincoln's Birthplace National Park Unit

The Birthplace features 116 acres of Thomas Lincoln's Sinking Spring Farm. An early 19th century Kentucky cabin, symbolizes the one in which Abraham was born. The cabin is enshrined inside the Memorial Building at the site of his birth. The National Park Unit also includes the Sinking Spring, site of the Boundary Oak tree and other reminders of the Nation's 16th President's beginnings.

[1] *(Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. 4., 2008), 70. Samuel Haycraft, a Hardin County, KY clerk invited Lincoln to visit the scenes of his birth and boyhood near the city of Hodgenville, Kentucky. Lincoln was born in Hardin County, KY but the place of his birth was then in LaRue County. Lincoln replied in this letter dated, June 4, 1860

[2] (Louis A. Warren, 1926), 97.

[3] (Warren, 104).

February 12, 2009

In late January 2009, as the nation prepared to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth, an ice storm blanketed Kentucky. The areas surrounding Lincoln's birthplace, now a unit of the National Park Service lost lights, telephone and heat for more than a week. This was the intended location for a gala bicentennial event. The program was to be staged outdoors at the foot of the Memorial Building, which stands on the exact location of the original Lincoln cabin and houses the symbolic birth cabin. These plans were scrapped when the storm closed the park. However, in spite of the weather, on February 12, 2009, local and out-of-state visitors arrived early, jamming the parking lots and blocking traffic so they could find front row seats for the celebration. They were joined by school children from around the area in a festive hall where period music performed by the Lindsey Wilson College choral group set the tone. Lincoln re-enactors and ladies in period costume greeted the guests. Despite the storm, downed trees, closed trails and limited parking, hundreds came to Hodgenville, Kentucky for a splendid celebration that was relocated to the local auditorium of LaRue County's High School. Attendees wandered through exhibits produced by the Kentucky Lincoln Bicentennial Commission that encouraged visitors to explore additional Lincoln sites along the revived, Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail.

The program provided a fitting tribute to Kentucky's native son on his 200th birthday. State Governor, Steve Beshear, and the Deputy Director of the United States Mint, Andy Brunhart unveiled the Kentucky Lincoln Penny featuring a frontier cabin scene. It was the first of four new penny designs to be released throughout 2009.

Lincoln was first introduced on the U. S. one cent piece in honor of his 100th birthday. The reverse design was altered during the Lincoln sesquicentennial celebration; therefore it seemed fitting for a new design in honor of his bicentennial. Each of the four 2009-penny designs represent major aspects of Lincoln's life and the places he lived.

Following the Lincoln penny release there were speeches from the Governor, noted historians and a show-stopping rendition of Lincoln's favorite song, "Battle Hymn of the Republic.[1] Then, adults lined up to exchange cash for rolls of new coins while the governor handed out shinny pennies to all the schoolchildren. Birthday cake and punch were served and those waiting in the long penny line enjoyed the sugary treats.

At noon there was a community luncheon and a commemoration given by Captain Michael Jabaley, Commander of the *USS Louisville* and a Lincoln scholar. Then, ignoring the downed trees and limbs blocking much of the landscape of Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park, those attending the morning celebration came to see the place where Lincoln took his first breath and gaze at the Sinking Spring where he took his first drink of water. All afternoon visitors streamed around the roped off debris and up the hill to the Memorial Building. In 1909 this building was dedicated to commemorate the centennial of Lincoln's birth. Park employees continued to serve birthday cake, threw open the doors to the Visitor Center, laughed and cried with the visitors, bus loads of school children, scouts and church groups. Many told their own personal stories about what Lincoln's legacy meant to them. A lady who had traveled from New York for the occasion stood facing the Memorial Building with tears streaming down her face. "I had to be here today. He was so humble, did so much good and faced such tragedy," she told those nearby.

In downtown Hodgenville, visitors spent time in the Lincoln Museum viewing dioramas from twelve major events in Lincoln's life. The local post office, renamed Abraham Lincoln Birthplace Station sold 2009 Lincoln stamps that could be cancelled on his bicentennial.

A Two-Year Celebration

This capstone program marked Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park's

[1] Performed by Anne Milligan of Louisville, Kentucky

two year commemoration of the president's birth and his life-long achievements. Planning for the bicentennial began in 1999 with a 10-year interpretive plan that laid the foundations for programming, media needs and new exhibits. The overarching theme for this plan was the challenge, "how do you convey to the public the significance of Lincoln's first seven years living in Kentucky, and how those years shaped the fundamental character he needed to lead the nation successfully though the trials of the Civil War."[2]

Education was the major tool used to meet this challenge. An education specialist was hired to coordinate programming for state and local students and the general public. A teacher's workshop was held and web-based lesson plans were made available on the park's webpage through a partnership with the Kentucky Historical Society.[3] The park's webpage, press releases and media stories publicized on-going events. There was a bicentennial speaker's series featuring noted Lincoln historians, a first-person reenactment of the Lincoln – Douglas debates on the 150th anniversary of the first debate, public outreach nation-wide, and staff training that included visiting Lincoln sites, locally and throughout the country.

Three units of the National Park Service; Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park, Indiana's Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial, and Lincoln Home in Springfield, IL, co-authored a handbook that relates the Lincoln story from birth to the White House. This handbook won numerous awards and is a top seller for all three historic sites.

The Birthplace's visitor center was remodeled and new exhibits were installed that focused on the Lincoln family history. Noted authors and historians came to the site to conduct research for the numerous publications issued in honor of the bicentennial. First Lady, Laura Bush paid a visit and helped dedicate Hodgenville's new Abraham Lincoln Elementary School. Partnerships between all the Kentucky Lincoln sites, the Kentucky Historical Society, the cities of Springfield and Hodgenville, KY developed. Close associations with local universities and colleges evolved through the creation of the Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission.

Kentucky Educational Television produced a two-hour documentary on the life and times of Abraham Lincoln, funded through a grant from the Kentucky Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission. Excerpted from this documentary Abraham Lincoln National Historical Park received a new orientation film, the first high definition film in the National Park Service.

State and National Planning

Those preparing this two-year celebration identified a need to raise public awareness that Kentucky was Lincoln's birthplace. They wanted to demonstrate the degree that Kentuckians influenced Lincoln, and increase the understanding of Kentucky's role in shaping Lincoln's policies and politics. To accomplish this, the Kentucky Bicentennial Commission revived a 1960s effort to unite all the Kentucky Lincoln sites along a Kentucky Lincoln Bicentennial Trail. This unification effort provided a springboard for many initiatives Kentucky Lincoln supporters championed during the build-up for the bicentennial. This effort provided visitors maps to the 19 sites throughout Kentucky associated with Lincoln's life. Wayside and highways signs were developed for each Lincoln site and an 800 square foot Lincoln exhibit offered materials to thousands during Kentucky's state fair. These efforts demonstrated Kentucky's current feelings for Abraham Lincoln compared to how they felt when he ran for president.

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[2] Long-Range Interpretive Plan, Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site (Harpers Ferry Center, WV: National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center, 1999, 19.

[3] http://www.nps.gov/abli/forteachers/curriculummaterials.htm and http://www.kylincoln.org/education/

Few Kentuckians voted for Lincoln in either 1860 or 1864.[4] Time has changed the state's relationship to the young boy who left with his family for Indiana shortly before his 8th birthday. Lincoln received only 10 votes from his ancestral and birth counties, Hardin, Washington, and LaRue during the 1860 election.[5] The threat of secession and the issue of slavery were tearing the state apart. Slavery strongly tied Kentucky to the southern cause but the abolitionists were at work throughout the south and the state's railroads and economy were strongly tied to the north.

Slaves came into Kentucky with their owners, through the Cumberland Gap from Virginia, and down the Ohio River on flatboats that brought settlers into the territory, before statehood in 1792. As part of the Lincoln Bicentennial celebration Cumberland Gap National Park designed wayside markers along the Wilderness Road that tells the story of the Boone and Lincoln families as well as other future Kentuckians, blacks and whites, moving west. Educational programming and wayside markers explain that Thomas Lincoln, the future president's father and his mother Nancy Hanks came into Kentucky as children.

By 1810 when the Lincoln family lived at the Knob Creek Farm[6] there were 80,561 slaves living in the state.[7] Lincoln's first recollections are of the Knob Creek farm situated along the Cumberland Green River Highway, which runs between Louisville, and Nashville. Here the world, including slavery, passed by the Lincoln family's front door. Lincoln's neighbors throughout the Knob Creek Valley owned slaves. Peter Atherton who ran the ferry the Lincolns would have used to cross the Rolling Rock River when going north owned 7 or 8 slaves between 1813 and 1816. The ferry was located close to the one room schoolhouse where Abraham and his sister Sarah attended school.[8]

Kentucky, Lincoln, and slavery were intertwined many times throughout his life. In 1859, John L. Scripps of the Chicago Press and Tribune asked Lincoln for an autobiographical campaign sketch. In this account, written in the third person, the longest of his autobiographies, Lincoln offers information about his early years. When discussing why the family left Kentucky for Indiana, Lincoln states, "This removal was partly on account of slavery, but chiefly on account of the difficulty in land titles in Kentucky." [9]

When the threat that border slave state Kentucky might secede from the Union Lincoln was reported to have said that he hoped to have God on his side, but he had to have Kentucky. As an adult Lincoln visited the family of his friend Joshua Speed at their Louisville Farmington plantation and his, wife, Mary Todd Lincoln's family in Lexington, Kentucky, but he never came back to LaRue County or the place of his birth.

Relations between Lincoln and his home state of Kentucky were strained again when Camp Nelson[10] was constructed in Jessamine County. The largest recruiting, mustering and training center for African American troops was founded and constructed by Major General Ambrose Burnside's 9th Corps of the Army of the Ohio in June 1863. On February 29, 1864 the enlistment of African American soldiers brought Kentuckians and their governor, Thomas E. Bramlette to near rebellion.

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[4] (Lowell H. Harrison, 2000), 9-10

[5] www.kylincolntrail.com/lincolnStory - Lincoln was born in Hardin, now LaRue Co. and his parents lived and were married in Washington Co.

[6] Today the Knob Creek Farm is a unit of the National Park Service, Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historical Park – Boyhood Home Unit.

[7] Harrison, 22

[8] From Hardin County, Kentucky tax records, tax rolls 1802 – 1817, roll #008013 – research by ABLI Education Specialist, Steve Brown

[9] Abraham Lincoln. Autobiographical notes possibly written for John L. Scripps, June 1860. Holograph manuscript. Robert Todd Lincoln Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (068.00.00) Digital ID # al0068p1 *When Lincoln first ran for President in 1860, John L. Scripps of the Chicago* Press and Tribune *asked him for an autobiography to write a campaign biography about him. This is taken from that autobiographical sketch.*

[10] Today a Kentucky State Park Site along the Kentucky Lincoln Heritage Trail

However, when Lincoln was assassinated Governor Bramlette, a strong Unionists who had often disagreed with Lincoln paid the slain president a gracious tribute in a speech given on April 18, 1865. "We may differ with him, and have differed with him, but when the judgment of future events has come, we found we were differing blindly: that he was right and we were wrong"[11]

Gracing the State Capitol Rotunda stands sculptor, Adolph A. Weinman's statue of President Abraham Lincoln. President William H. Taft unveiled this work of art in November 1911 during his visit to Hodgenville and the dedication of the completed Memorial Building in Hodgenville. In 2006, the Kentucky Legislature appropriated funds to add three more Lincoln statues to the Kentucky landscape. The first was a statue of the boy Lincoln, a bronze life-size statue sculpted by The Daub Firmin Hendrickson Sculpture group of Berkeley, CA. It depicts Lincoln at age seven leaning against an old tree trunk. The May 2009 unveiling was the 100 anniversary of Adolph A. Weinman's seated Lincoln that has graced Hodgenville City Square since the centennial celebration in 1909.

A second statue by Sculptor, Paula B. Slater, "In Sacred Union" was installed, June 2009, in Springfield, Kentucky's Judicial Center across from the courthouse where Lincoln's parents' wedding bond and marriage license were found, after his death. The third statue, by Sculptor, Ed Hamilton is the centerpiece of The Lincoln Memorial at Louisville Waterfront Park. This statue overlooks the Ohio River, considered a gateway to the Kentucky Lincoln sites. It commemorates Lincoln and his friend Joshua Speed's boat trip landing at the Louisville riverfront where Lincoln witnessed a dozen slaves chained together. Lincoln recalled how that very scene "tormented" him.

The National Park Service (NPS) began preparations for the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial in 2002 and formalized an action plan in 2006.[12] NPS Lincoln-related sites throughout the country held symposiums, workshops, staff training, public events and other celebrations to highlight the coming bicentennial. On February 12, 2009, from the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. to Springfield, IL, visitors joined in commemoratives events.

On-going legacy projects include the designation of Kentucky State Hwy 31E as a National Heritage Trail that passes Lincoln's birthplace and his boyhood home. Hwy 31E continues into Louisville and includes Farmington, the home of Lincoln's friend, Joshua Speed and his brother James who became Lincoln's second attorney general. Currently, a two-year study is underway to designate twelve of the Kentucky Lincoln sites as a National Heritage Area.

During the bicentennial period the groundwork was laid for another commemoration, the sesquicentennial of the Civil War, 2011 – 2016. Unlike the centennial of the Civil War, the nation is now prepared as it was never before to tell the untold stories of that conflict, unpleasant as they might be. The fractures in our nation's fabric must be acknowledged, exposed and accepted before they can bind.

"I like to see a man proud of the place in which he lives. I like to see a man live in it so that his place will be proud of him."[13] Well, if Lincoln were to walk down any street in Kentucky today, he would be assured that the place where he first breathed the cold air of morning, is exceedingly proud of him

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Chapter 5
African Americans, Migration, and Lincoln's Trans-Appalachian World[1]

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[1] This essay is extracted with permission from R. Darrell Meadows, "Toward a View of Abraham Lincoln's Trans-Appalachian World in Motion," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* [hereafter *Register*] 106, no. 4 (2008): 333-72.

The Lincoln family entered Kentucky in 1779—a moment when neither the international balance of power over the "western lands" was fully settled nor the ultimate dominance of Anglo-Americans over Native American populations in that land assured.[1] Viewed from the perspective of the Civil War era for which Abraham Lincoln is mostly remembered, it is also worth recalling that, in 1779, none of what would later become the "slave south" yet existed. Yet, by the time of Abraham Lincoln's birth in 1809, tens of thousands of free and coerced migrants had already passed into and through Kentucky, simultaneously populating the Old Southwest and the Old Northwest. While sketching the broad contours of African American migration into this emerging "trans-Appalachian" world, this essay probes existing literature and evidence on slavery in Lincoln's early years with an eye to new questions and avenues for research into the lives of those free and enslaved migrants whose labor built Lincoln's Hardin County "neighborhood."

The subject of slavery in Lincoln's childhood has not been a subject of major research, though Lincoln biographers have been keenly interested in locating the origins of Lincoln's antislavery views in his Kentucky years. Louis A. Warren examined the records of South Fork Baptist Church (of which Nancy Hanks and Lincoln's uncle, Jesse Friend, were members, and which stood two miles from Lincoln's birthplace) and showed how the 1806 case of a runaway slave named David led some fifteen members to leave the congregation, including Jesse Friend. By about 1810, members, led by minister William Downs, had formed an antislavery congregation, Little Mount Baptist Church, to which Thomas and Nancy belonged. It was here, Warren claimed, that Abraham Lincoln would have heard his first antislavery sermons, from Downs's successor, David Elkin.[2] Yet, in the absence of direct testimony from Lincoln's parents or fellow congregants, or texts of sermons preached by Downs or Elkin, the nature and intensity of antislavery in the Lincoln household remains obscure. Thomas Lincoln, moreover, had also served on slave patrols, making any interpretation of Lincoln's later statement that his father left Kentucky "partly on account of slavery" highly ambiguous. The most that can be said is that Thomas Lincoln's motivation likely resembled thousands of other whites who left the state for the Old Northwest: to bypass competition with slave labor.[3]

Lincoln scholars have had even less to say about the place of slavery as a real social and economic presence in the Lincolns' Hardin County "neighborhood." To date, scholarship has not advanced much beyond Warren's early work of the late 1920s, when he investigated the

[1] François Furstenberg, "The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History," *American Historical Review* 113 (2008): 647-77; Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All: Indians, Europeans, and the Remaking of Early America* (Baltimore, 1997), xiv; see also Eric Hinderaker, *Elusive Empires: Constructing Colonialism in the Ohio Valley, 1673-1800* (New York, 1997). See also Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge, 2005), 9; John Craig Hammond, *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion in the Early American West* (Charlottesville, 2007), 14-15, 18.

[2] Louis A. Warren, *The Slavery Atmosphere of Lincoln's Youth* (Fort Wayne, 1933), 6 and idem, "The Religious Background of the Lincoln Family," *Filson Historical Quarterly Review* [hereafter *Filson*] 6 (1932): 72-88.

[3] This appears to be Lincoln's understanding of his father's antislavery, a position implied in his debate with Douglas at Alton, in which he asked his audience [and they responded], "How many Democrats are there about here ["a thousand"'] who have left slave States and come into the free State of Illinois to get rid of the institution of slavery. [Another voice—"a thousand and one."] I reckon there are a thousand and one. [Laughter.]" Roy P. Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 3:312 (hereafter cited as *CW*); Warren, *Slavery Atmosphere of Lincoln's Youth*, 10; Abraham Lincoln, [May-June] (Autobiographical Notes), transcribed and annotated by the Lincoln Studies Center, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois. Available at Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division (Washington, D.C.: American Memory Project, [2000-01]), http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alhome.html (hereafter ALPLC); Michael Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln: A Life*, 2 vols. (Baltimore, 2008), 1:19.

issue of slavery and Lincoln's family in Kentucky and found evidence of slaveholding among numerous individuals and family close to the Lincolns (though not Thomas Lincoln). Among these were two of Thomas Lincoln's uncles, Isaac and Thomas Lincoln, his brother and Abraham Lincoln's uncle, Mordecai Lincoln, as well as Richard Berry, in whose family Nancy Hanks had lived[4] prior to her marriage to Thomas Lincoln, and Edward Berry, his son. At Elizabethtown in the 1790s, Thomas Lincoln had worked alongside hired slaves. At Knob Creek from 1811 to 1816, the Lincolns lived along the Old Cumberland Road, which connected Louisville and Nashville. It was Warren's belief that the Lincolns would have observed gangs of slaves being driven to southern markets and that Abraham Lincoln would have seen slaves laboring at nearby Atherton's Ferry. And belying later testimony by Dennis Hanks, who said that no more than fifty slaves resided in Hardin County during Lincoln's childhood years, Warren used tax lists to show that in 1811, there were at least 1,007 slaves in Hardin County, compared to 1,627 white males.[5] For Warren, documenting the presence of slavery was the issue. Today, the workings of slavery in Hardin County need to be examined—its place in this changing society and its impact on the lives of enslaved men and women as well as slaveholders and non-slaveholders like Thomas Lincoln.

The settlement of Kentucky (and later, the Old Southwest) would not have occurred the way it did without the labor of some three hundred thousand African American slaves forced to migrate westward, often alongside their white settler masters. Indeed, by 1790, one in six Kentuckians was enslaved, and in 1792, 23 percent of Kentucky households owned slaves.[6] As Kenneth Stampp remarked long ago, those who "cut down the forest, grubbed the stumps, cleared the cane brakes, drained the swamps, and broke the virgin soil—were Negro slaves as well as white pioneers." Enslaved men and women endured the same rigors of migration and discomforts of frontier life and faced the same danger of Indian attack. But their separation from kin was not a matter of choice.[7]

Slaves were often the "advance party" that preceded the migration of planter families—establishing an initial settlement, clearing land, starting a first-year crop.[8] But in this early period, slave hiring and use of slaves as barter were also components of westward migration

[4] Douglas L. Wilson and Rodney O. Davis, eds., *Herndon's Informants: Letters, Interviews, and Statements About Abraham Lincoln* (Urbana:, 1998), 27, 36. The best available genealogy of the Hanks line remains that of Paul H. Verduin, published as an appendix to this volume.

[5] Louis A. Warren, *Lincoln's Parentage & Childhood: A History of the Kentucky Lincolns Supported by Documentary Evidence* (New York: The Century Company, 1926), chap. 18, esp. 283-86; idem, *Slavery Atmosphere of Lincoln's Youth*, 4-9. For other post–Civil War reminiscences denying the presence of slavery during Lincoln's youth, see (Rohrbough 1978 reprint, 2008)Wilson and Davis, eds., *Herndon's Informants*, 36, 257.

[6] Malcolm J. Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian Frontier: People, Societies, and Institutions, 1775-1850*, 3rd ed. (1978; repr., Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 56; Joan Wells Coward, *Kentucky in the New Republic: The Process of Constitution Making* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky,1979), 37. See also J. Blaine Hudson, "Slavery in Early Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky, 1780-1812," *Filson* 73 (1999): 249-83. Even at this early date, several thousand migrants had already passed through Kentucky to areas north of the Ohio. Elizabeth A. Perkins, *Border Life: Experience and Memory in the Revolutionary Ohio Valley* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 54-55.

[7] Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage, 1956), 237; Ellen Eslinger, "The Shape of Slavery on the Kentucky Frontier, 1775-1800," *Register* 92 (1994): 22; Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian Frontier*, 56; Richard J. Cox, "'A Touch of Kentucky News & State of Politicks': Two Letters of Levi Todd, 1784 and 1788," *Register* 76 (1978): 219. Some free blacks, runaway slaves, and whites fled Virginia in order to escape slavery. See Philip J. Schwartz, *Migrants against Slavery: Virginians and the Nation* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001).

[8] Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian Frontier*, 10, 42, 156; Joan E. Cashin, *A Family Venture: Men and Women on the Southern Frontier* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 215-16.

and settlement, and very important in Kentucky, where available "free labor" lagged from the beginning. Farmers regularly hired slave labor from neighboring slaveholders. The profits to be gained by slave hiring sometimes meant that white settlers did the work on their own farms themselves but earned additional income by hiring out their slaves to others. Before John Breckinridge moved his family to Kentucky in 1793, he sent eighteen slaves—seven men, three women, and their eight children—ahead of his own family, hiring them out under the direction of Samuel Meredith and William Russell, who had assured Breckinridge that his slaves would be in great demand. The income earned by his slaves allowed Breckinridge to conclude his Virginia business in the course of a year before migrating, while guaranteeing no loss of income from "idle" slaves.[9]

Very little is known about this migration of enslaved men and women into Hardin County—the Lincolns' "neighborhood"— or into neighboring counties just outside the Bluegrass east of the Green River Valley. Despite the yeoman-like work of Ellen Eslinger to document "the frontier of slavery" in early Kentucky, much more remains to be done. As Malcolm Rohrbough put it some time ago: "That we lack a number of accounts of such enslaved peoples in this frontier setting over three generations [1775-1850] does not diminish the necessity for historians to retrieve and articulate their presence."[10] New research on the economic development of Hardin, Nelson, and other nearby counties will help to situate this region in—and perhaps complicate our understanding of —the westward expansion of slavery in the early national United States.[11]

To understand the formation of the Lincolns' Pennyroyal neighborhood, it will be important, at a minimum, to document chain migration to the area, household structures, and how free and enslaved laborers, artisans, judges, lawyers, merchants, and ministers—in addition to land speculators and landowners—factored into this process. Can we situate the lives of migrants like Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, their families, and the enslaved into the step-by-step expansion of economic and social relationships in market towns and hamlets like Bardstown and Elizabethtown, and growing ties to more distant markets?[12] But in so doing, it will be useful to view both the sending and receiving areas simultaneously: How did the out-migration of families like the Lincolns in and around Rockingham County, Virginia, affect family members and others left behind?[13] Is it possible

[9] Upon his arrival in 1793, he continued to hire out some of his slaves and used others for land clearing. Some of the cash earned financed his move farther westward. Terry, "Sustaining the Bonds of Kinship," passim; Jonathan D. Martin, *Divided Mastery: Slave Hiring in the American South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 35-36. Some slaveholders moving north of the Ohio in a subsequent generation would follow this same pattern. See Emil Pocock, "Slavery and Freedom in the Early Republic: Robert Patterson's Slaves in Kentucky and Ohio, 1804-1819," *Ohio Valley History* 6 (2006): 3-26.

[10] Rohrbough, *Trans-Appalachian Frontier*, 10. As J. Blaine Hudson notes, "The absence of evidence is often mistaken for the evidence of absence." See "Slavery in Early Louisville," 249-51.

[11] Kentucky and the Upper South, for example, do not figure in any detail in Adam Rothman's recent synthesis of work on slavery expansion and the origins of the Deep South (*Slave Country*, 10, 11, 19, 20, 174, 200).

[12] John R. Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers: Three Regions in Transition* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 241-53; idem, "Witness to Expansion: Bishop Francis Asbury on the Trans-Appalachian Frontier," *Register* 82 (1984): 334-57.

[13] Cf. Allan Kulikoff, *The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992), 185, 207-8. Excellent examples of such studies include John Thomas Schlotterbeck, "Plantation and Farm: Social and Economic Change in Orange and Greene Counties, Virginia, 1716-1860" (PhD dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1980); Richard R. Beeman, *The Evolution of the Southern Backcountry: A Case Study of Lunenburg County, Virginia, 1746-1832* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984); Frederick F. Siegel, *The Roots of Southern Distinctiveness: Tobacco and Society in Danville, Virginia, 1780-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), and Philip D. Morgan and Michael L. Nicholls, "Slaves in Piedmont Virginia, 1720-1790," *William and Mary Quarterly* 46 (1989): 211-51. Several additional studies can

to re-create the social networks and other relationships forged during these movements and further step migration within Kentucky, even among the enslaved, as more and more free migrants found it impossible to settle in the Bluegrass and moved westward toward the Green River Valley and elsewhere?

Abraham Lincoln's two flatboat trips to New Orleans are often remarked upon. But his father's several trips down the Mississippi—like his storytelling—came first.[14] And they tell us something of the new economic frontier that the War of 1812 made possible. Thomas Lincoln largely failed in his efforts to profit from expanding trade links to New Orleans and the development of the Natchez Trace during Jefferson's administration. But his example reminds us just how little we know about the concrete linkages being forged in these years between this supposedly remote part of Kentucky and the wider world.[15]

The place of slavery in the Lincolns' Kentucky neighborhood from the 1790s through the 1810s was no doubt shaped by the westward migration of slaves and the domestic slave trade—but how did that occur and to what degree? Decisions made in the 1790s and 1800s—such as the 1792 Kentucky Constitution, which provided constitutional protections to slavery and slaveholders—proved pivotal. In 1798, local slaveholding interests beat back antislavery forces in Congress in the establishment of the Mississippi Territory.[16]

With the opening of the Old Southwest, demand for slaves increased at the same moment that incentives in the East emerged to fuel the supply of slaves being moved or sold westward. In 1790, over half of all slaves in North America resided in Virginia and Maryland, yet planters in these states had already begun the switch to grain production. Many planters went into debt, while others began to "liquidate" their slave property. Over a decade later, Thomas Jefferson looked to development of the Old Southwest as a solution to the slaveholders' dilemma. Through a secret request to Senator John Breckinridge of Kentucky, who chaired the committee charged with organizing the Louisiana Territory, Jefferson had inserted into the Louisiana Ordinance a clause prohibiting the "foreign" slave trade, but allowing the domestic trade into the new lands. For Jefferson, who saw the concentration of slaves in Virginia as both a drain and a threat (in light of the 1791 slave uprising in Haiti, which sent thousands of "French negroes" to eastern United States ports, and Gabriel's plot of 1800), westward expansion would provide opportunity to manifest the ideals of liberty and the pursuit of happiness for slaves as well as whites. The "diffusion" of Virginia's "excess" slaves across vast stretches of territory, he believed, would lead to the same process of gradual emancipation already underway in the northeastern states.[17]

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serve as models for an investigation of Lincoln's Pennyroyal neighborhood as proposed here: John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986); Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Diane Mutti Burke, "'Mah pappy belong to a neighbor': The Effects of Abroad Marriages on Missouri Slave Families" in *Searching for Their Places: Women in the South across Four Centuries*, ed. Thomas H. Appleton and Angela Boswell (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003), 57-78; "On Slavery's Borders."

[14] Wilson and Davis, eds., *Herndon's Informants*, 102; Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln*, 1:4, 5, 7-9, 56.

[15] Thomas D. Clark and Elizabeth L. Parr early on attempted to show the broad contours of the increasingly integrated regional economies of the Bluegrass and the cotton-growing south. Thomas D. Clark, "The Ante-Bellum Hemp Trade of Kentucky with the Cotton Belt," *Register* 27 (1929): 538-44 and "Live Stock Trade between Kentucky and the South, 1840-1860," *Register* 27 (1929): 569-81; Elizabeth Parr, "Kentucky's Overland Trade with the Antebellum South," *Filson* 2 (1928): 71-81.

[16] Hammond, *Slavery, Freedom, and Expansion*, 25-36.

[17] Lacy Ford, " (Deyle 1992)Reconfiguring the Old South: 'Solving' the Problem of Slavery, 1787-1838," *Journal of American History* 95 (2008): 95-122; Steven Deyle, "The Irony of Liberty: Origins of the Domestic Slave Trade," *Journal of the Early Republic* 12 (1992): 43-48; Rothman, *Slave Country*, 23. See also Joanne Pope Melish, *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and "Race" In New England,*

Between 1790 and 1820, slaveholder migrants to the Old Southwest took with them an estimated 250,000 slaves. And between 1787 and 1807, before the closing of the "foreign" slave trade, another 100,000 Africans were sent to the backcountry.[18] Although most slaves traveled with their masters until about 1810, a time when most migrants were already bypassing Kentucky, research on the origins of the domestic slave trade shows "internal" slave-trading networks forming as early as the 1780s. (Indeed, evidence of captured runaways and some free blacks being sold as far away as New Orleans dates from the 1770s.) By 1810, slave traders regularly served local and interstate markets in Virginia, Maryland, and Kentucky—where slave dealers were particularly active in Fayette and Nelson counties. By the late eighteenth century, the sight of slave coffles moving out of the Chesapeake toward the Carolinas, Kentucky, and Tennessee was a common one.[19]

Like the 113,000 slaves forced to migrate to Kentucky and Tennessee between 1790 and 1820, most of the 1,007 enslaved men, women, and children who resided in Hardin County in 1811—some in close proximity to the Lincolns and their kin—had probably migrated with their owners. But others no doubt endured separation from spouses and family. Along with new insights on the households of the 1,627 white males present that year, new research can strive to shed light on the re-creation of family and rekindling of kinship networks among slaves in this rapidly changing society.[20]

New research may also provide an opportunity to capture the movement of the free and enslaved through the western Bluegrass into Tennessee and points beyond, especially after 1815. As yet, few detailed studies exist to show the organic nature of this frontier settlement.[21] If the Natchez Trace was never a major avenue for migration into the Old Southwest, it is also true

1780-1860 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998); (Bogert 2002)Ashli White, "The Limits of Fear: The Saint Dominguan Challenge to Slave Trade Abolition in the United States," *Early American Studies* 2 (2004): 362-97.

[18] Kulikoff, *Agrarian Origins*, 231-32. Kulikoff also notes that of 98,000 slaves estimated to have departed the Chesapeake region between 1790 and 1810 approximately 54,000 were taken to Kentucky, and another 25,000 went to Tennessee, with lesser numbers taken to the Carolinas, Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana (239, Table 8). The shift in net slave migration toward the Old Southwest is clear for the decade after 1810. Of 124,000 Chesapeake slaves forced to move westward in this period, 24,000 and 10,000 were taken to Kentucky and Tennessee respectively, whereas 51,000 went to Mississippi and Alabama, 26,000 to Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri, and 13,000 to Georgia (242, Table 9).

[19] Pen Bogert, "'Sold for My Account': The Early Slave Trade between Kentucky and the Lower Mississippi Valley," *Ohio Valley History* 2 (2002): 4-5; Deyle, "Irony of Liberty," 50-57, 59, 61; Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders, and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 11-12, 21, 65; Kulikoff, *Agrarian Origins*, 234-35; Eslinger, "Shape of Slavery on the Kentucky Frontier," 8-10; Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge: Oxford University Press (Goodstein 1979) , 1999), 5, 48-49.

[20] Kulikoff, *Agrarian Origins*, 253-55; Anita S. Goodstein, "Black History on the Tennessee Frontier, 1780-1810," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 38 (1979): 401-20. On contacts between enslaved men and women forced to migrate and those left behind, and the creation of new slave communities, see also Terry, "Sustaining the Bonds of Kinship."

[21] John R. Finger, *Tennessee Frontiers*, for example, does not discuss the impact of even limited migration out of Kentucky or the (re)peopling of his three Tennessee regions generally. And though he notes the Wilderness (or Kentucky) Road at several points, his limited chronological scope prevents him from exploring its economic or migratory importance after about 1790. A possible model for a new history of the Wilderness Road is Craig Thompson Friend, *Along the Maysville Road: The Early American Republic in the Trans-Appalachian West* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005). Karl Raitz of the University of Kentucky department of geography is currently undertaking a study of the Wilderness Road. Unfortunately, case studies such as Christopher Morris's on frontier Mississippi do little to show economic or other linkages to areas north or east, from which they were populated. Christopher Morris, *Becoming Southern: The Evolution of a Way of Life, Warren County and Vicksburg, Mississippi, 1770-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

that most of those who settled the Great Bend region of the Tennessee River (Madison County, Alabama), for example, had "moved down" from Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina. As early as the 1790s, approximately six thousand small slaveholding families were already moving out of the Mississippi River counties of Kentucky and Tennessee into Spanish-held Upper Louisiana. By 1804, these migrants already dominated the Missouri population of ten thousand, which would double again before the War of 1812.

A significant void in the Kentucky and regional literature—noted by Thomas Clark some time ago—remains fine-grained migration studies that make use of genealogical techniques, follow individuals across space and time, and seek to show individuals in the contexts of their wider familial, social, and economic networks.[22] For free and enslaved migrants alike, theirs was truly a world in motion. For historians, the challenge remains how to capture it fully. The prospects for new research are many. If pursued, they will deepen our understanding not only of the Lincolns, but of countless thousands of enslaved African Americans in early Kentucky, and their place in the shaping of trans-Appalachian societies.

[22] Clark and Guice, *The Old Southwest*, 87-89, 180-81. Also note their comment (Craig Thompson Friend n.d.)nt, 292n59. Kaye, *Joining Places*, and Cashin, *A Family Venture*, both provide models for the sorts of studies needed to see Lincoln's frontier world in motion, as does Christopher Waldrep's study of the settlement of and impact of high population turnover on parts of western Kentucky; see "Opportunity on the Frontier South of the Green River" in *The Buzzel about Kentucky*, ed. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1998) (Lawson 1983), 153-72. Migration into the Jackson Purchase counties of Trigg and Calloway involved second-generation migration within Kentucky, as well as direct migration from Virginia, the Carolinas, and Tennessee, and may resemble the (understudied) migration streams into Missouri. See Hughie G. Lawson, "Geographical Origins of White Migrants to Trigg and Calloway Counties in the Ante-Bellum Period," *Filson* 57 (1983): 286-304. Figures for Missouri come from Burke, "On Slavery's Borders," 21-22. See also Russell L. Gerlach, *Settlement Patterns in Missouri: A Study of Population Origins* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986) and R. Douglas Hurt, *Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri's Little Dixie* (Columbia, 1992).

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Chapter 6
Abraham Lincoln and African Americans: A View Across the Racial Divide

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Introduction

As a means of justifying the horror of the Civil War, portions of the American population used their memory of Abraham Lincoln to find healing or purpose for the suffering. Most remembered him as important or influential, but held differing opinions as to the final nature of his influence. Northern whites, who maintained mixed opinions during the war, showed favor to Lincoln after his death. Many began to collect mementos of the late president's life, purchase biographies, and attending public commemorations honoring Lincoln and Civil War leaders. Southern whites held a substantially lower value of Lincoln's influence. Instead of the savior of the Union, many saw in Lincoln an American czar and tyrant.

Well into the mid-20th century, African-Americans saw him as the emancipator first and primarily. Although other causes were important, they paled in comparison to the role of emancipator. During the later part of the Civil War, tens of thousands of former slaves and free blacks fought with the federal army. They fought for their own freedom. After all, what good would be a Union that continued to accept their enslavement?

The Emancipation Proclamation became a personal escape route from slavery even in areas where it did not take effect. Several recent studies illustrate that slaves took ownership of the Proclamation and amended it to their expectations. Large numbers left slavery with this document as a political guide. Long after whites in the north and academic historians abandoned the importance of this document, the descendents of those "freed" by it viewed the role of the Emancipation as truly central to change in America.[1] Should Lincoln really receive the credit as emancipator and what did he really believe about African-Americans and slavery?

Lincoln in His Own Words

Lincoln spent great amounts time working over his speeches. His private letters are rich with material for analyzing his attitudes. It is good historical practice, that unless there are known conditions to the contrary, one should assume a historical character believes what he says about himself.

As for context, Lincoln was born in a slave state, but of parents who hated slavery for both

[1] (Guelzo, 10-12)

religious and economic reasons. He lived his whole life among persons from southern states who at least tacitly supported slavery. Most of his adult life he served as a Whig politician. The Whig party split on this issue. Most Whigs opposed slavery as an economic policy but considered it a bad inheritance. The institution could not be jettisoned without destroying the national economy. Whigs considered it a moral wrong because it cheapened wage labor.

During Lincoln's single term in Congress, he consistently supported the Wilmot Proviso to bar the extension of slavery into the territories conquered from Mexico. This was not so much a direct attack on slavery as a support of wage labor in the free states.

Several years later Lincoln made private comparisons between the Russian autocracy and the American political structure that supported and expected to expand American slavery. Lincoln saw slavery as hypocritical of the ideals declared in the Declaration of Independence. This closely resembles the international embarrassment the U.S. suffered in the propaganda wars with the Soviet Union during the Civil Rights era.

By 1853 Lincoln's letters, speeches and various notes reveal a statesman grappling with the slavery question. In a brief memo in 1854, he wrote that there was no logic to slavery because any reason used to enslave blacks could also be used to enslave whites. If skin color were the issue, those with a lighter complexion might enslave anyone darker. This same year in a private letter to his good friend Joshua Speed, he stated that he opposed any extension of slavery and that their mutual memory of seeing "ten or a dozen slaves shackled together with irons…" had become a "continual torment to me". He continued on with stronger language to condemn the "slave-breeders and slave-traders" as a " small, odious, and detested class…and yet in politics they dictate the course of all of you, and are as completely your masters, as you are the masters of your own negroes."[2]

In several speeches, he declared that the central issue revolved around the position of African-American humanity. Lincoln challenged listeners to "judge if a Negro is a man," and if so, then he should be protected by the ideals in the Declaration of Independence and the statutes of the Constitution. "When a white man governs himself that is self-government; but when he governs another—that is despotism."[3] Despite his hesitancy to identify with Radical Republicans and abolitionists, Lincoln the statesman, had become more morally opposed to slavery. Lincoln may have tolerated a declining slave system, but as it began to resurrect and grow it became a political and moral threat.

Although through several political races he spoke less aggressively against slavery, it must be remembered that he was merely a politician. He was very aware of the prejudices of his society. Lincoln never claimed to be a reformer. He lived in the complex world sandwiched between revolution and public passions.

In his public and private discussions, Lincoln often promoted gradual emancipation with voluntary colonization. The bigotry of American society was very familiar to Lincoln. He found the Southerners no guiltier of slavery then Northerners. Even though he appeared to be truly changing, the weakness of the society he served limited his ability to make changes. In 1876 Frederick Douglass, who had known Lincoln well politically, said that "if he had put abolition ahead of Union he would have failed at both."[4] Lincoln knew not to tell everything on his mind to everyone.

During the War Lincoln was forced to endure a strongly contested election. Not at all certain of victory, Lincoln was tempted to minimize the issue of emancipation to maintain War Democrats in loyal support. Lincoln answered one such War Democrat, Charles Robinson, that the Union was now dependent on African American forces to fight the Confederacy. These men were fighting for their freedom and it

[2] (Johnson, 52-53)

[3] (White, 200)

[4] (Gates, 924)

would be highly immoral and possibly very dangerous to break promises made to them.

Once Lincoln secured the election of 1864, he seemed more open toward the social changes expected with African-American emancipation. In his final public address, April 11, 1865 he defended his reconstruction policies with the State of Louisiana. In this address, Lincoln discussed the issues of equal access to public schools and black enfranchisement.[5]

It appeared that Lincoln had rationalized his position starting from economic injustice, to a moral issue, to a military necessity, and finally to government policy. For a statesman who honored logic and rational thought it seems to make great sense. His willingness to accept slavery in its historically tolerated position came from his respect for the rights of states to regulate personal relationships and popular opinion.[6] He had made comments as to the danger of ignoring popular opinion. However, when it came to "natural rights" guaranteed by the constitution and the privileges and "immunities of citizenship" Lincoln evolved into a true egalitarian. [7] Lincoln was accused of being inconsistent, but indeed he was not over his lifetime. He became a much different man in his later presidency than he was even when running for the Senate, as a result of much consideration and growth.

Lincoln Viewed by Douglass

The famous abolitionist Frederick Douglass had a mixed relationship with Lincoln not only during the President's life but afterward. Douglass was one of several African-Americans credited with an influence on Lincoln's policies. When it came time for Lincoln to issue an Emancipation Proclamation, he had begun following individuals that were more aggressive and had learned from African-American leaders about their position. Abolitionists, including the critical Frederick Douglass, called on the President several times. Rapidly, Lincoln's moral disgust with the slavery institution changed into military policy and then political policy.

Eleven years after Lincoln's assassination, Douglass was the featured speaker at one of the earliest public commemorations of Lincoln. No better commentator could be found to discuss the relationship of Lincoln as emancipator to African-Americans for his century. According to Douglass, the public commemoration itself gave testimony of progress for his race because of Lincoln's policies. Douglass did not blindly honor Lincoln, though. "Lincoln was not… our man or our model. In his interests, in his associations, in his habits of thought and in his prejudices, he was a white man." Despite this, "the name of Lincoln was near and dear to our hearts in the darkest and most perilous hours of the Republic". Then in a deep yet measured statement honoring Lincoln, Douglass summed up the African-American thought by saying "Though the Union was more to him than our freedom or our future, under his wise and beneficent rule we saw ourselves gradually lifted from the depths of slavery to the heights of liberty…"[8]

By the time of the American Revolution Centennial, attitudes toward this president fluxed as race-related issues became more or less public. As further emancipation stalled, Lincoln seemed to receive the blame for the frustration. By the early 20th century, Lincoln had become the symbol of the American Dream and a demigod of patriotism. As long as the dream lived, Lincoln's status as hero remained. If the dream died, he became the villain. The vast number of public memorials, historic sites, and museums dedicated to him attested that Lincoln became the ultimate symbol of America, and therefore the popular image of what was right or wrong with the American nation.

In the recent PBS documentary titled *Looking for Lincoln*, contemporary African-American scholars reviewed Lincoln's legacy and image. Narrator Henry Louis Gates, Jr. led the viewer from the unfailing loyalty of the "freedmen" to

[5] (Johnson ed., 332)
[6] (Oates, 111)
[7] (Ibid, 110)
[8] (Gates, 917-918)

the reassessment of Lincoln in the 1960's. Only well after the upheaval of the Civil Rights era when Lincoln and the founders of the American Republic were condemned as oppressors, did many return to Douglass's guarded 1876 position.

Lincoln's Public Image

Many Northern whites in 19th century America loved Lincoln but rapidly forgot about the Emancipation once the 14th and 15th amendments were passed. The growth of Jim Crow legislation and later segregationist counters to integration, caused many whites to reject this role as a problematic issue. By the time of the Sesquicentennial of Lincoln's Birth and the Civil War Centennial (1959-1965) most public commemorations lacked an "integrated" Lincoln. The Cold War needed a patriotic and strong military commander-in-Chief; segregationists needed a tyrant to blame for the start of all the nation's troubles, or a Lincoln who was fighting exclusively for the Union. Public commemoration lacked any racial images.

Ironically, academe damaged Lincoln's reputation the most. The first early academic Lincoln biographers and Civil War scholars were strongly influenced by southern political thinking. They interpreted slavery as a non-issue in Civil War discussions. James Randall and others of his school of thinking influenced generations of school books, which in turn influenced later students. This outdated scholarship passed into the 1960's when a more polarized society floundered for historic moorings. The absolutist thinking of reformers and revolutionaries during the 1960's Civil Rights movement held little patience for a Lincoln that followed politics of rational debate and incremental growth, let alone one that was still racist.[9]

The negative stereotyping of Lincoln from Academia followed with the eventual abandonment of Lincoln "the Emancipator" by his most loyal fan base; African Americans demoted the American icon to another White Racist. This represented a paradigm shift in the national image of our past. Not only were large groups negative about the way things currently were, they rejected that there had ever been any good in America.

The Civil Rights movement focused the debate in public and academic forums around the nature and history of American race relations and the history of racism. In this complex debate, Lincoln remained a central figure. In the midst of the assault on Lincoln's motives or attitudes, historian Benjamin Quarles, from an African-American perspective, still wrote in defense of Lincoln's integrity by assuming Lincoln believed his own words. Quarles argued that Lincoln himself defeated colonization with the Emancipation. However, it was the freedmen who applied meaning to the President's order and freed themselves. They used the starting point of the Proclamation to take action beyond what was expected. Other historians disagreed with Quarles, viewing Lincoln as too weak on issues of great contemporary importance to merit his historic iconic status.

Summary

Was Lincoln a Revolutionary? What did he expect to accomplish and what actually happened to the condition of the United States by the time of his death? James McPherson in his *Second American Revolution* (1991) saw Lincoln's accomplishments as a mixture of revolutionary results with conservative intensions. As McPherson said to "preserve the Union AND remove slavery" was a shift from moral desire to military expediency to political strategy and then to policy.

It is true that Lincoln opposed slavery as a means to support wage or free labor and its value in the nation's economic health. Free labor support reflected conventional Whig politics, Lincoln took it much farther. He began including the African-American race as part of those who had a right to earn their support from their own labor, since "all men are created equal." It was only under Lincoln's policies that the classic free labor doctrine merged with

[9] (Zilversmit, 42)

abolitionism.[10] Though he appeared slow to the radical abolitionists, even Douglass noted that by the "sentiment of his country, a sentiment as he was bound a statesman to consult, [Lincoln] was swift, zealous, radical and determined."[11] Lincoln the lawyer knew that precedent must be set to establish standing in law. Radical actions were transitory. The next election could undo any extreme actions. Instead, Lincoln used incremental steps for irreversible actions taken in drastic times.

Despite the apparent slow and conservative bent of Lincoln's policies, the change in America deserves our review. During the election of 1860, the United States was a slave holding nation where sections were bent on expanding the institution in more areas and protecting it from assaults and critics. After the war, slavery was outlawed, though racism remained the social rule of the land. The change in political realities foreshadowed the much slower social changes. These changes started through Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation issued as an early part of a series of acts and policies that would continue past the mid-20th century.

The special irony of this saga is that in the year of the Lincoln Bicentennial Commemorations, America's first African-American president was inaugurated. President Obama's well documented admiration of Lincoln has infused new life into the public's recognition. Lincoln's public status continues to mirror racial relationships in the United States. Perhaps the national dream is improving after all.

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[10] (Oaks, 115)
[11] (Gates, 921)

Part III:

Kentucky African Americans And the Constitution

"The privilege of the writ of habeas corpus, shall not be suspended unless, when in cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety may require it,...is a provision that may be suspended when, in cases of rebellion or invasion, the public safety does require it. It was decided that we have a case of rebellion, and that the public safety does require the qualified suspension of the privilege of the writ which was authorized to be made."

Abraham Lincoln
Message to Congress, July 4, 1861

STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS
Candidate for President, 1860.

Stephen A. Douglas, "The Little Giant," was wealthy, famous, and one of Washington's most powerful senators. He came to Illinois from New York penniless, but soon improved his fortune by teaching law prior to opening his own law practice, after which he was soon engaged in Illinois politics. He served as an Illinois state legislator, secretary of state, as justice of Illinois's Supreme Court, was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, and the U.S. Senate. He believed in majority rule, states' rights, expansion of the United States, and saving the Union.

Photograph courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Museum, Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee.

Chapter 7
Commentary: Kentucky's Place in National Politics

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In the dark hours of October 28, 1811, Louisville's Fourth Street wharf was awash with excitement. The steamboat *New Orleans* had arrived eight days out of Pittsburgh. The noise of the steam pistons was so great that one person felt the end of the world was at hand while an enslaved man assured others that the Day of Judgment could not come at night. Perhaps not, but the Day of Judgment had come for Lexington. Land locked and sixty miles from the Ohio River her days as Kentucky's commercial center would end. When the steamboat showed it could go back up river, it quickened the pace of Louisville's growth. Described as an enchanter's rod waved over our progress, the era of Mike Fink ended and that of Mark Twain began. In 1820 Lexington had more than three times the population of Louisville, but by 1860 Louisville was seven times larger.

However the eclipse of Lexington in no way diminished its political clout. Kentucky politics remained firmly in the hands of inner Bluegrass politicos who had a tradition of leadership. This was due to several reasons. Kentucky's government first met in Lexington and Frankfort looked to it for leaders. Its agricultural wealth brought and bought political influence. It was the home of Henry Clay the single most important political figure in antebellum Kentucky. And Louisville seemed perfectly willing to tend to its commercial and manufacturing concerns by building markets and clearing harbors rather than dirty its hands in political intrigue. And there was much political intrigue. To this day only one governor has been native to Jefferson County and he claimed to be from Middletown.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries political intrigue had an international bent. Kentucky was a land locked state with no access to the ocean. But it had magnificent rivers and these led to that ocean and that to markets. Kentucky would do anything to keep the rivers open even if it meant complicity and intrigue with Spanish authorities controlling the Mississippi. Until the Louisiana Purchase some prominent Kentuckians were on the Spanish payroll. The names Wilkinson, Innes, Burr, and Sebastian constitute a dark page in Kentucky history.

Revealing that dark page were the Federalists such as Humphrey Marshall who won few friends with their accusations of treason and disloyalty. Federalists stood for centralization, commercialism, qualifications for voting and

holding office, rule of the wealthy and well-born, and they favored Great Britain. All this only strengthened Kentucky's drift to the Democrat Republican party of Thomas Jefferson. Kentucky was the frontier and it was naturally drawn to Jeffersonian democracy. It willingly adopted Jefferson's resolution against the Alien and Sedition Acts and firmly placed itself on record as favoring states' rights. Jefferson's election in 1801 was greeted with feasting, toasting, singing, and dancing. For thirty years the Democrat Republicans controlled the state.

Local issues and personalities meant a fractious party. From history we recognize the unlikely chance of beating certain historical cycles and one is recessions. Monroe's era of good feelings suffered a blow when the economic panic of 1819 resulted in unemployment, loss of markets, foreclosures, seizures, ruin and suffering. Responding to the will of the people for relief the Kentucky legislature forced creditors to accept payment in inflated paper money. When the Court of Appeals declared such acts unconstitutional, legislators simply appointed a new court initiating a bitter political struggle between old and new courts. Old court supporters, reflecting ideas of John Marshall, said it had the right to declare an act of the legislature unconstitutional. The new court held to the supremacy of the people over the courts. What we see in this judicial anarchy that witnessed rioting in the streets, was the emergence of the two new parties in Kentucky—the Whigs of Henry Clay who were old court supporters and the Democrats of Andrew Jackson who were new court supporters.

Henry Clay, born in Virginia in 1777, moved to Lexington, married into Bluegrass aristocracy, entered politics and for thirty years was Kentucky's most important political figure. Amos Kendell observed, "I have learnt the way to be popular in Kentucky. Drink whiskey and talk loud, with the fullest confidence, and you will hardly fail of being called a clever fellow." In reality it was Clay's brilliant eloquence, courage, energy, and indomitable spirit that made him the competitor for Andrew Jackson, who possessed some of the same qualities.

Clay's strength was such that he weathered the storm following his support for John Quincy Adams in the 1824 election. Having lost himself, Clay supported Adams rather than Jackson, who had run second in Kentucky. Accused of a corrupt bargain to become Secretary of State and called a Judas of the West, Clay's popularity suffered. Explaining himself Clay apologized saying "That I have often misconceived your true interests is highly probable. That I have ever sacrificed them to the object of personal aggrandizement I utterly deny." Jackson carried Kentucky in 1828 to become president but it was his last hurrah here.

Andrew Jackson was the hero of the Battle of New Orleans where many Kentuckians served under his command. In 1820 he accompanied President Monroe on a visit to Louisville where a public dinner, a ball and general hilarity and good feelings distinguished the occasion. After all it was the era of good feelings. In light of his popularity and at a time of growing democracy for Jackson to lose the support of Kentucky is remarkable. He was the descendent of Jefferson, advocate of the common man, and enemy of exclusivity and favoritism. But he was no match for the power of Henry Clay. When Jackson vetoed the Maysville Road bill Clay screamed against him. Internal improvements supported by the federal government were part of Clay's American System along with a national bank and protective tariffs. Kentucky and the Louisville business element bought into this system to foster economic growth. Adams's administration had given money to complete the Portland Canal. When Jackson vetoed the re-chartering of the national bank, Clay again attacked calling him King Andrew I. By 1832 the Whigs were organized against the king's tyranny and beginning their ascendency. After 1832 Kentucky cast its vote five times for Whig presidents. All the General Assemblies were Whig controlled. Like UK basketball fans Whigs felt winning was an entitlement. That the Democrat Party survived said historian Samuel Wilson, is evidence of its ability to take punishment. He said, "During all that period it

was cut off from the loaves and fishes and derived its entire nutriment from the crumbs falling from the table of national politics."

By 1832 Kentucky politics were closely interwoven with national politics. Candidates were now judged on principles and one was the bank. On July 10, 1832, Jackson vetoed the re-chartering of the national bank. For him it was a corrupt monopoly of the moneyed aristocracy. While the veto had supporters in Kentucky, his attack on the bank ushered in a second economic panic beginning in 1837. By that time Jackson was in retirement back at the Hermitage regretting only two things, that he did not hang John C. Calhoun and shoot Henry Clay. The panic lasted until 1843 and nowhere was its effects more evident than in Louisville. James Guthrie's dream of a new court house was brought to an end as it sat unfinished for twenty years. Visiting his friend Joshua Speed at the time, Abraham Lincoln saw a town where business was depressed. Main Street was like an avenue in some deserted city. Whole rows of houses were tenantless and daily expectation was to see who would be the next to close. A city radiant with hope and promise was changed to one of fruitless commerce. In 1842 Charles Dickens remarked that "some unfinished buildings and improvements seemed to intimate that the city had been overbuilt in the ardor of going ahead…."

Democratic hard times caused Kentucky to give the Whig William Henry Harrison his largest majority in 1840. Stopping off in Louisville on his way to the inauguration, Harrison was dead within a month. John Tyler was president but he was a Whig in name only. When he vetoed a new national bank bill his effigy was burned in front of the offices of the Louisville Journal. Maybe Louisvillians did take their politics seriously. Certainly it was serious to George Prentice whose *Louisville Journal* was a vocal organ of the Whig party. It was a newspaper Lincoln read. Across the way was Walter Haldeman's *Louisville Courier*, a Democrat organ.

When the top ten presidential mistakes are listed I include James K. Polk's war against Mexico for it renewed the dread specter of slavery. In Kentucky the issue loomed large for the state was increasingly interested in national affairs. There was a strong pull here for Texas independence and the feeling of manifest destiny. The legislature called for the acquisition of Oregon. It is a testimony to Clay's popularity that he received more than 10,000 votes over Polk in the presidential election of 1844 in spite of his opposition to a war. James Speed had warned that Texas would open so profitable a market for slaves that Kentucky would become a slave-growing state. Nevertheless Kentucky entered the war with enthusiasm and the Louisville legion offered its services. Factories here closed when all their workmen volunteered.

From the beginning the outcome of the war was never in doubt. The hero of Buena Vista, Zachary Taylor, rode his victory to the White House. Taylor had grown up outside Louisville. In 1848 the Whigs abandoned Clay because they thought he could not win and drunk with success elected Taylor. A bitter Clay pondered, "After the long period of time during which I have had the happiness to enjoy the friendship and confidence of that state, what have I done to lose it?" What he did was grow old and exhibit a habit of loosing. Taylor also passed through Louisville on his was to his inauguration. A little more than a year later he would die in office leaving a country badly divided over the matter of slavery. In a last hurrah, Clay mended the fences with the Compromise of 1850 postponing the Civil War for ten years. But the 1850s witnessed increasing sectionalism. It spelled doom for the Whig party that was gone by 1853. While it existed it provided Kentucky abler leadership and served better perhaps than any party Kentucky has known before or since. Kentucky went for Democrat James Buchanan in 1856.

In 1849 Abraham Lincoln was in Lexington dealing with the estate of his father in law. He took particular interest in the debates of our constitutional convention. In 1849 Kentucky was nearly unanimous for slavery even while it

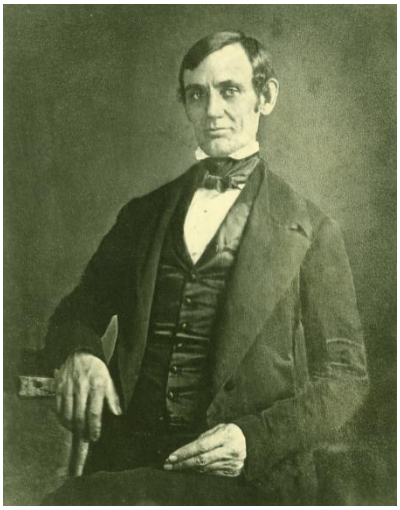
was dying as a practical institution. As a political and constitutional issue it welded the people into a strong majority for its continuation. Nevertheless abolitionists saw Kentucky a border state as the logical place to challenge slavery. On the other hand protagonists were convinced that the hour to act to strengthen the institution had come following an1848 attempt to aid slaves to flee to Ohio. The losses to Kentucky in runaways was said to be $200,000 annually. Speaking for the non-importation gradual emancipation movement was Walter Haldeman, "Friends of truth, of justice, of eternal rights of that golden rule which teaches each man to do unto others as he would wish others to do to him, now is the day, now is the hour of your labor." But it was not yet the hour and the new constitution not only defended slavery but imposed harsher rules instructing freed slaves to leave the state. Instead of Haldeman the convention had listened to the likes of William C. Bullitt of Oxmoor farm near Louisville. "I am firmly persuaded that the Negro slave of Kentucky is in a more happy condition than he ever has been, or can be placed in, in any part of the world. He is in a much better condition than the free Negro now in this country….I say it is neither a moral nor a social evil, but a decided political blessing." A disappointed Lincoln remarked on Kentucky's crass and insensitive attitude to the enslaved. It may have strengthened him to oppose its spread since once entrenched, it held tenaciously in spite of criticism. Lincoln's regrets were countered by the more hopeful *Lexington Observer*, another paper he read. "Perhaps not today, but soon, Kentucky will take, must take another step in this great school of wisdom. The light that is covering the earth cannot turn to darkness upon her pleasant hill sides and along her smiling plains. When the day has come for mankind to break their chains and burst open their prisons, she will not select that day to consecrate her soil to eternal slavery, and dedicate her children to eternal wrong."

It is ironic that such a strong statement of freedom should come from Lexington where slavery was strongly defended. Such words from a Louisville editor would be more understandable. In 1860 slaves numbered only 4,903 here out of a population of 225,000. It was dying a natural death at the Falls and the rest of Kentucky viewed the city as an abolition hole. Some work of slaves was filled by immigrants—German and Irish. That was not without its problems. Germans who settled here tended to be radicalized by the failed revolutions of 1848. Their Louisville Platform of 1854 criticized much that was wrong with the United States while calling for the abolition of slavery, direct elections, and equality of men and women. The next year the Know-Nothings, descendents of the Whigs, took control of Kentucky politics. This was done under most intense partisan feelings surrounding state elections. By concentrating on the plague of immigration they hoped to suppress the controversial sectional issues. The result was riots and deaths of immigrants who tended to be Democrats. Soon after the Bloody Monday riots the Know Nothings vanished and reluctantly many went into the Democrat Party. In doing so they changed its nature giving it an element of Unionism.

Unlike Southern cities Louisville had a substantial foreign population. Unlike Northern cities it had slavery. So it was buffeted by both north and south pro-slavery yet pro-Union. Louisville's internal cleavage followed sectional lines. Main Street wholesale merchants, who dealt mainly with the South, provided most Confederate support. Rising industrialists, blue collar workers, small retailers and professional men supported the Union. As Civil War descended on the country, a correspondent for the *New York Tribune* observed the divided spirit of our city writing, "At the breakfast table one looked up from his New York newspaper to see his nearest neighbor perusing the *Charleston Mercury*. He found the *Louisville Courier* urging people to take up arms against the government. The *Journal* published just across the street, advised Union men to arm themselves…In the telegraph office, the loyal agent of the Associated Press, who made up dispatches for the north, chatted with the secessionist, who spiced the news for the southern palate." The forces of Union prevailed

in Louisville and throughout Kentucky a majority heeded the admonition of Louisvillian Joseph Holt who said, "There is not and cannot be any neutral ground for loyal people between their own government and those at the head of armies who are menacing its destruction." Holt, and I like to think Lincoln, may have recalled the words of an old and ill Henry Clay. Interviewed on November 16, 1851, while lying in bed at a Maysville hotel, Harry of the West had lost none of his passion for the Union when he said, "There are persons in our country who talk about dissolving the Union of the states because it is not exactly suited to their idea of what they call free government or in other words, the independent sovereignty of the states….To prevent this, and to hold every state in its place in the Union, is worth fighting for, should it ever be necessary, which may God forbid. The Union of these states is worth more than all the blood that may be shed to preserve them….I shall be gone myself, but I will not doubt that those who come after me will maintain the true principles of civil and religious liberty for all time to come…."

Blood was spilled, the Union was preserved, the slave was freed. Louisville emerged from the Civil War solidly Democrat along with the rest of Kentucky. (Irvin Cobb said the straw that broke the camel back was when it first voted for a Republican for president.) Kentucky joined the Confederacy--Louisville to make money and the state to salve its conscience. Kentucky turned its eyes Southward where early steamboats plied, rubbed its commercial and agricultural hands together and began to sell all it could over the Louisville and Nashville Railroad warning one and all to avoid the damn Yankee peddlers of Cincinnati. After all they were Republicans.



A young Abraham Lincoln, attorney-at -law. Photo courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Museum of Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, TN.

Chapter 8
Locating Lincoln within African American Myth and History

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In his book, *The Search for a Usable Past* (1967), historian Henry Commager Steele wrote:

> Certainly, of all modern heroes it is *Lincoln who lends himself most readily to mythology*; *his birth humble and even mysterious*; [emphasis mine] his youth gentle and simple; his speech pithy and wise; his wit homely and earthy; his counsels benign. He emerged briefly to save the nation and free the slaves, and died tragically as the lilacs bloomed;[1]

I believe Steele accurately captures the powerful influence that Abraham Lincoln has had not only upon the canons of historical literature, but more significantly, upon the country's collective consciousness or "national character." There is indeed an extraordinary degree of "myth" surrounding Mr. Lincoln, and exploring the reasons for its predominance yields greater clarity into what has shaped our contemporary minds. But what is *myth* anyway, how is it defined?

Africa-centered scholar Molefi Asante writes that "myth" "is a way to discover the value of a spiritual, traditional, even mystical rhetoric as it confronts a technological, linear world."[2] To those familiar with "Afrocentricity" it should be apparent that Asante's reference to a "technological, linear world" is code for a Eurocentric worldview whose dominant focus is upon the more material or "concrete" aspects of life. In contrast, things "spiritual" and "mystical," are traditionally seen as having more importance within the African worldview. This is one of the postulates of Africalogy.[3] So what is it about President Abraham Lincoln that has made his legacy so much more mythical, *mystical and spiritual*, than that of other prominent figures of American history? Is it because of his mysterious origins, complete with stories of mixed Melungeon (African/ Moorish) ancestry?[4] Is it because of his association with Spiritualists following the death of his beloved son Willie in 1862? Or, is it because of Lincoln's reputation for being less materialistic

[1] Henry Commager Steele, *The Search for A Usable Past* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 16.

[2] Molefi K. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 98.

[3] See Edward Bruce Bynum, *The African Unconscious: Roots of Ancient Mysticism and Modern Psychology* (New York (Bynum 1999): Teachers College Press, 1999), xxiv.

[4] N. Brent Kennedy, *The Melungeons: The Resurrection of A Proud People* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997).

and profit-driven, than most of his "white" male contemporaries? Perhaps it is an aggregate of all of these things… and more.

The last question relates directly to Lincoln's views on slavery and the so-called "Negro," some four million of whom were classed as valuable property. Not only was Lincoln known for hating slavery, but most Confederates were convinced that he viewed Africans with a greater degree of equality than did the vast majority of so-called "whites" of his day. In short, Lincoln's contemporaries regarded him as profoundly more egalitarian (more spiritual) than the vast majority of his peers. It was this reputation that prompted the South's immediate move to secede following his election in 1860. Given these facts, how should Mr. Lincoln be remembered by *African*-Americans? The field of "Black Psychology" has proven that mental health and history are inter-related, so this is an important question.[5] "Black" minds have been strongly influenced and warped by the assessments of historians.[6] So the careful review of the African person's experience is essential for a proper understanding of the African's *place* in this world.

Forged within the fires of the Civil Rights and "Black Power" struggles of the 1960's, black scholars like Lerone Bennett, came to represent efforts towards critiquing the mythic Lincoln, in relation to African Americans specifically and African peoples in general. In *Forced Into Glory (*2000), Bennett suggests that the Lincoln myth has largely misrepresented the 16th President as a kind of *Christ-figure* for black folks. Bennett's book was an expansion of his 1968 *Ebony* article entitled: "Was Abraham Lincoln A White Supremacist?" His essential thesis was that Lincoln was neither "The Great Emancipator," nor did he hold any altruistic desire to either free or assist enslaved African peoples. Lincoln's motivation for emancipation and subsequent support for abolition, were nothing more than political theatre. Bennett concluded that Lincoln was like the majority of "White" men of his time, a typical "White Supremacist."[7] Bennett's work would become a classic amongst many "Black Nationalist" scholars and laypersons, interested in proving -once again- that most (if not all) heroes of *White* American history (like Washington and Jefferson) were nothing more than charlatans culturally imposed upon the minds of impressionable young blacks.

Following Bennett's initial 1968 *Ebony* article, came the "Afrocentric" movement of the 1980's and 90's, largely led by sages like Molefi Asante. Asante and other Africa-centered scholars[8] took the consciousness movement of the 1960's to another level. They began developing methodologies that reflected an increased awareness of African cultures, agency, and values. It was within this "Afrocentric/Africalogical School" of thought, that folks began using terms like "location," "centeredness" and the "African worldview (perspective)." Asante's works would become handbooks for progressive thinkers addressing the Pan-African experience. Asante for example, emphasized the need "to place African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior."[9] Asante also identifies core traditional African values (ideals) as: harmony, justice, diligence, patience and good natured-ness.[10] Asante also highlights the importance of illustrating "African agency" within our respective social settings. The ideal in African *axiology* -he points out- is to encourage as well as seek "Good" and "Right Conduct." But "What constitutes good," writes Asante, "is *a matter of the historical conditions and cultural developments of a particular society*."[11] In keeping within this definition, how then should

[5] Na'im Akbar, *Chains and Images of Psychological Slavery* (Tallahassee: New Mind Productions, 1984).
[6] Amos Wilson, T*he Falsification of Afrikan Consciousness: Eurocentric History, Psychiatry and the Politics of White Supremacy* (New York: African World InfoSystems, 1993).

[7] Lerone Bennett, *Forced Into Glory: Abraham Lincoln's White Dream* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., 2000).
[8] Such as Maulana Karenga, C.T. Keto, Na'im Akbar, and Nana Kwaku Sangodare/Wade Nobles.
[9] Asante, 2.
[10] Ibid, 7.
[11] Molefi Asante, *Afrocentricity and Knowledge* (New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1990), 11.

one judge or perceive President Lincoln in relation to African peoples? *Africalogically* speaking, this is a matter of "locating" Mr. Lincoln.

So the two primary questions posed in this brief essay are, "Is Bennett's assessment a fair one?" And if not, "Where should Lincoln be 'located' within the African American experience?" Some may ask why any African centered scholar would be concerned with how this "white" man is remembered? For me the answer is obvious. Because of the legacy of black enslavement in the Americas, Lincoln's name and legacy are intimately tied to the history of Africans. Therefore, providing *the most accurate and just evaluation* of Lincoln's *location* (place) within African American history, is ultimately in line with African values and interests. This is not simply an issue of being ethical; it is necessary for creating wiser, more stable and more considerate communities. Asante writes: "Ethical issues have always been connected to the advancement of African knowledge which is essentially functional."[12] In other words, truly conscious Africans have always known that any deliberate or unintentional misrepresentation of events, phenomena, or people, prevents the maturity (evolution) of the African (human) soul. One analogy might be in lying to a physician about one's health condition. False information leads to a false diagnosis, thereby hindering healing.

In critiquing Bennett's thesis, I am not suggesting that any errors in his critique of Lincoln were intentional. I only maintain that they are there, and thereby prevent the vitally important "advancing [of] knowledge" which Asante speaks of. In my effort to "locate" Mr. Lincoln, this brief essay will speak to the following questions: What were Lincoln's pre-Presidential attitudes towards slavery and "blacks"? What did he actually achieve within the violently anti-black United States? How did prominent African Americans of the time like Frederick Douglass, Martin Delaney, and Lincoln family confidante Mrs. Elizabeth Keckley, characterize him? Addressing these questions should help us to better "locate" Mr. Lincoln within the African American experience.

During a protest in the Illinois Legislature in 1837, Lincoln declared: "The institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy."[13] Lincoln said this some 25 years before he took office as President. He also seems to be rejecting any notion of *inherent* superiority based upon complexion, in a July 1, 1854 commentary. Lincoln aptly argued that the rationale for the country's unjust exploitation of "blacks" was essentially rooted in the simple self-"interest" of one group, and not in any weak arguments regarding inherent superiority based upon "color" or "intellect."[14] Yet, critics of Lincoln's sincerity often point to his famous debates with Judge Stephen Douglas in 1858. There, Lincoln said that he rejected any notion of *"social and political equality between the white and black races."*[15] But Lincoln knew the law, and was keenly aware of the legal restrictions placed upon those defined as "blacks"/"negroes." At best, "blacks" held limited "privileges," as opposed to "*rights*," under the law. Never the less, Lincoln still considered Africans to be as human as any other people, limited only by unjust societal impositions. He said during that 1858 debate:

> There is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white *man*. I agree with Judge Douglas he is not my equal in many respects-certainly not in color, *perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment*. [emphasis mine]But in the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, *he is my*

[12] Ibid.

[13] (Gabor S. Boritt ed., 1996), 133.

[14] Ibid, listed under the title of "Fragment of Slavery."

[15] (Roy P. Basler. Editor. 1953-55), 16.

> *equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man."* [16]

Lincoln clearly considered Africans as men and women, and he even implies that there were Africans whose morality and intellect exceeded that of "whites." But more importantly, he attributed any inequity to one's level of education and treatment by the society at large. Proof of this can be seen in a speech Lincoln gave one month later where he described the "evil" process of "*dehumanizing the negro*."[17] He said: "when you have put him down…to be but as the beasts of the field; when you have extinguished his soul, and placed him where the ray of hope is blown out in darkness you have essentially taken away a portion of his humanity, as well as your own.[18] Lincoln's reference to souls is important, because in accordance with Judeo-Christian teachings, only humans have souls.

Lincoln frequently tried to inform the ignorant masses that the dehumanizing processes which stemmed from enslaving Africans, was the most likely foundational reason for such wide inequalities amongst the "races." Another example is seen in a speech he made a year later in Indianapolis on Sept 19, 1859. Lincoln said critically of Judge Douglas and others like him, that they'd sought to take "the negro out of the catalogue of man."[19] Years later in April 1864 Lincoln commented, "The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty, and the American people, just now, are much in want of one."[20] Lincoln sought to provide them with one. To me, Lincoln represents here the Jonathan Kozol of his time. Lincoln well understood the destructive impact of slavery and the resultant anti-African sentiments that dominated American society. Slavery was the ultimate source of most of the inequality.

Yet, Lincoln himself is known to have occasionally used the word "nigger" during such speeches, and allegedly in private conversations. But such use is no more an automatic indication of believing that African people were/are inherently inferior, than that of current blacks who use the term to refer to other blacks. How many times have blacks who consider themselves just and egalitarian, engaged in the use of derisive names against other groups? Do they/we really mean it *in general*, or is its application more conditional and specific? I would gather that the latter is more often the case. Context is everything. And in the context of 19th century America, any man running for the Presidency had better *appeal* to the rank-and-file citizen whom he hoped would put him in office. Once in office however, a man of conscience could then take any calculated legal steps necessary to implement his conscience.

Many have criticized *President* Lincoln for having moved too slowly on a number of issues that were of particular importance to African Americans. This includes Emancipation as well as the arming of black troops during the Civil War. Sadly, many of his critics- be they his contemporaries or present-day, seem to have ignored the "national character" of the U.S. during that time. Historian James McPherson reminds us:

"To us today it seems self-evident that the emancipation of four million slaves from bondage was a great triumph of liberty. But for *the majority of white Americans in the Civil War era*- until almost the end of the war- this accomplishment represented *the antithesis of liberty*. This majority of white Americans included most southerners and more than two-fifths of the northerners- the Democrats, who *opposed emancipation to the bitter end. It was the outcome of the war that transformed and expanded the concept of liberty to include abolition of slavery, and it was Lincoln who was the principal agent of this transformation*." [emphasis mine] [21]

The deadly New York City Draft Riots in the

[16] Ibid, 16.
[17] Boritt, 11.
[18] Boritt, 11.
[19] Ibid.
[20] The Lincoln Institute/Lehman Institute Website

[21] (James McPherson, 1990), 45.

summer of 1863 illustrates the truth of McPherson's assessment.

Frederick Douglass was one of Lincoln's contemporary critics. Douglass like other "Radical Abolitionists" demanded an immediate end to slavery. In Douglass' eyes Constitutional law as well as the psychological dangers of slavery's long social custom, were to be damned and ignored. Consequently, when Douglass heard Lincoln's First Inaugural Address he was very critical. Lincoln declared that he had "no lawful power to interfere with slavery in the States" and held no "inclination" to do so. More troubling to Douglass was Lincoln's assertion that "fugitive slaves" should in accordance with the law, be returned to their owners, and any efforts at insurrection would be met with military force.[22] This is clearly troubling. But from Lincoln's perspective and position, what would be the *best* political strategy to resolve these grave insults?

Lincoln was a lawyer, but more importantly he'd been elected President of the *entire* – and still unified - United States. As such, he was sworn to uphold the U.S. Constitution and maintain the Union. Lincoln wasn't afforded the luxury of any immediate and unrestricted implementation of his personal conscience regarding African Americans. Lincoln knew that he would have to employ a *legal* opportunity to address the many challenges facing the country's oppressed "black" population. He understood that such an approach was vital if *success* was the ultimate intention. The *Jeremiad-like* rhetoric of men like Douglass from the sidelines of the central government was indeed warranted and vital. However, the immediate enactment of such rhetoric was simply impossible.

Lincoln was the President, and not the King, of a predominantly Caucasian citizenry. When it came to public support for any legislation which sought to assist the so-called "Negro," the attitude of the vast majority of those citizens, ranged somewhere between lukewarm and overtly hostile. Greater political stability and public support would be necessary before the country's *evils* could be crushed using federal forces. That time came with Lincoln's Second Inauguration. Hence, in November of 1864, Lincoln declared that the North and South had suffered "this terrible war" as punishment for the shared sin of slavery. He then railed like a prophet against the country's historic mistreatment of enslaved Africans:

> "Fondly do we hope- fervently do we pray- that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by *the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago*, so still it must be said the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether." [emphasis mine][23]

Any attempt to call this empty political rhetoric meant to draw votes is an irrational argument. For whose votes would this have drawn- certainly not disenfranchised "blacks?" In fact such *reap-what-you-sow* criticism was not necessary, as Lincoln had already been re-elected! And in spite of Douglass' impatience with Lincoln's seeming slowness in ameliorating the injustices leveled against "blacks," Douglass still held a very high opinion of the man.

Douglass spoke of Lincoln's "humane spirit," honesty and prudence.[24] Following his August 19, 1864 meeting with President Lincoln at the White House, Douglass said:

> "He treated me as a man; he did not let me feel for a moment that there was any difference in the color of our skins! *The President is a most remarkable man.* I am satisfied now that he is doing all that circumstances will permit him to do."

[22] (Doris Kearns Goodwin, 2005), 331.

[23] Ibid, 699.

[24] Ibid, 552.

[emphasis mine][25]

It was also during this August 19, 1864 meeting that the President said, "Douglass, I hate slavery as much as you do, and I want to see it abolished altogether."[26] But Douglass was especially shocked and impressed by the socially uncharacteristic equity afforded him when Lincoln made the Governor of Connecticut wait, "because I want to have a long talk with my friend Frederick Douglass."[27] As for Lincoln's opinion of Douglass, he told General John Eaton: "considering the conditions from which Douglass rose, and the position to which he had attained, he was…*one of the most meritorious men* in America."[28] We should again take heed of his choice of words, "meritorious" meaning *excellent, worthy of praise*; and "*men*" meaning *one whose maturity and personhood is a postulate.*

Another example of Lincoln's extraordinary character is seen in an 1864 letter to former Wisconsin Governor Charles Robinson (Democrat). Lincoln wrote: "There have been men who have proposed to me to return to slavery the black warriors of Port Hudson & Olustee to their masters to conciliate the South. I should be damned in time & in eternity for so doing."[29] The illustrious Major Martin R. Delany, who was commissioned under Lincoln's orders, represents one "black warrior." Often cited as an early "father" of "Black Nationalism," Delany is remembered for his powerful intellect, courage, and fierce pride in being African. In fact, Delany's friend Frederick Douglass is remembered for having quipped, "I thank God for making me a man simply; but Delany always thanks him for making him a black man."[30] Delany met with the President at the White House in 1863, and referred to Lincoln as "an able and master spirit…Serious with sadness, and pleasant withal."[31] For his part, Lincoln spoke of Delany in a correspondence dated Feb. 8, 1865, as a "most extraordinary and intelligent black man."[32] In fact, Lincoln was more impressed with Delany's character as a military leader than he was Douglass.' Recognizing that racism was deeply entrenched within the minds and hearts of most "white" Americans, Delany had advocated for the colonization of African-Americans. But this was only *one* option, if greater socio-political equality was not federally supported, and if the likelihood of racial violence seemed eminent. In fact, Delany and Lincoln essentially shared the same view.

Then there was Elizabeth Keckley, an African American seamstress who'd worked for the Lincoln's for four years and later went on to write a book about her life. Keckley referred to Lincoln as "Honest to the very core himself, and frank as a child."[33] She also commented upon Lincoln's bi-partisan appreciation for brave men, regardless of whether they were foes or not."[34] In her 1868 book, Keckley also offers an important perspective regarding the mindset of many Civil War-era blacks. What she tells us confirms the brilliant work done more than 100 years later by "black psychologists" like Dr. Na'im Akbar, regarding the residual damage done to African minds as a consequence of enslavement. Keckley discussed the destructive impact of slavery upon the co-opted African mind. Keckley said that amongst many Blacks "dependence had become a part of their second nature" and "poverty" was the result.[35] Such damaged minds were undoubtedly observed by Mr. Lincoln as well.

In assessing the deeper meaning and political

[25] Ibid, 650.
[26] (Fehrenbacher and Fehrenbacher. ed., 145.
[27] Frederick Douglass, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (London: Christian Age Office, 1882), 349-50.
[28] Goodwin, 650.
[29] Ibid, 651.
[30] Frank Rollins [Frances E. Rollins Whipper], *Life and Public Services of Martin R. Delany* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1868)
[31] Ibid.
[32] West Virginia University Library website www.libraries.wvu.edu/delany
[33] Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind The Scenes Or Thirty Years A Slave and Four Years In The White House* (New York: G.W. Carleton & Co., 1868), 128.
[34] Ibid, 136.
[35] Ibid, 140.

strategy within Lincoln's famed "Gettysburg Address," Lincoln scholar Gabor S. Boritt writes:

> "Lincoln needed the masses in the middle. Equating his use of Jefferson's words with the rights of black people was only one possible interpretation. Many did not understand the president's words in those terms. Equality could carry civil, economic, social, or racial connotations. To middle-of-the-road folk, the liberty he spoke about could be the white man's liberty. To think that way, they had to sidestep the full meaning of the Emancipation Proclamation; but people are always good at fuzzy thinking. They also had to by-pass Lincoln's tendency, at his best, to think in terms of all humanity, to speak in universal terms."[36]

Still, Bennett believes that "racism" was Lincoln's most deeply held belief, "the center and circumference of his being."[37] The "Great Emancipator" was according to Bennett, "one of the major supporters of slavery in the United States" and was "in and of himself, and in his objective being, an oppressor."[38] Historian Eric Foner characterizes Bennett's conclusions as wholly untrue and "totally unfounded," and I agree with him. Foner also asks why Bennett didn't address the 1981 work of LaWanda Cox *Lincoln and Black Freedom*, which offers several profound examples of Lincoln's support for African-Americans and the Freedman.

In truth, Lincoln was neither an Abolitionist nor a Radical Republican Congressman representing a state. He was burdened with the challenge of representing all the States. Had his words or actions shown him to have been either of these perceived "extremes," he would have never been elected President. Lincoln had to be seen as either falling somewhere between the cracks…more compromising. So in concluding this brief essay, the question is whether Lincoln, upon attaining the Executive Office, used his "powers" to legally initiate Emancipation and to improve the political and social lives of Africans within an overtly anti-black country. I think that he did. I am also convinced that Lincoln was far more ethical, than the vast majority of "whites" of his day. Had he gone much farther, he most certainly would not have been elected; and the alternatives of John Breckinridge, John Bell or Stephen Douglas, were exceedingly less concerned than Lincoln with emancipating enslaved Africans.

In addition, my review of informed African American contemporaries like Keckley, Delany and Frederick Douglass, all confirm Lincoln's personal commitment to ending slavery, and to promoting as much sustainable racial equity in his life-time as possible. As it stands, the assassination attempts and Booth's ultimate success, confirm how dangerous Lincoln was perceived to be in the minds of the most overt "white supremacists" of his day. Let us not forget that Lincoln was the first U.S. President to be assassinated, and it was because of the popular belief that he was personally committed to dismantling "white supremacy."

So, should Africalogical scholars appropriate and "locate" Lincoln, as a genuine hero in the canon of African *American* history? I would say yes. However, I realize that some caveats are necessary. It should always be said that Lincoln was part of a collective effort involving many players, not the least of which were the 180,000 "Colored Troops" which fought for and served the cause of African American freedom. Therefore, he was not "The *Great* Emancipator," as this implies autocracy and despotism. Lincoln was nothing if not obsessed with upholding "The People's" Constitution. Perhaps a better "tag" would be "The Emancipation President," much as "LBJ"[39] has often been called the "Civil Rights President." Whereas Johnson's Civil Rights actions reinforced Dr. King, SNCC, and

[36] Gabor S. Boritt, *The Gettysburg Gospel: The Lincoln Speech That Nobody Knows* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 117.
[37] Bennett, 76.
[38] Ibid, 251.

[39] Lyndon Baines Johnson.

the SCLC; Lincoln had been reinforced by Douglass, Radical Abolitionists, "Colored Troops," and "white" Unionists. The idea is that these were all co-operative efforts which required a supportive Executive to legally reinforce "The People." Consequently, to condemn Lincoln for not being a Charles Sumner, Thaddeus Stevens, or a Frederick Douglass, is a patently unjust and unethical comparison. Lincoln was *the President* of a fragmented nation that was primarily hostile towards its African sons and daughters. Changing this nightmarish reality required patience and political skill previously unseen within this nation, Lincoln had that skill.

Judging and locating Lincoln fairly requires the proper context. As Asante says, what constitutes "good" requires us to look at the particular "historical conditions" and "cultural" context. The late Africa centered historian C.T. Keto, also wrote that Africentric scholars must create "a self affirming criterion of values" which "*embodies a practical concern for the positive welfare of Africans and all of humanity*."[40] Therefore, any attempt to deny Lincoln's factually demonstrative acts of support for African people, would clearly be at odds with African ideals/values. We must be able to affirm the courageous *agency* of Africans during the Civil War–era, and still give honor to Lincoln's admirable character and outstanding contributions to African freedom. This is especially true in the U.S. as it represents what Keto called a "zone of confluence," where distinct cultures, experiences and peoples have come together.[41] This necessitates consideration for all perspectives, as we determine what was/is "good" for African people(s). Let us remember that the 180,000 "Colored" Troops, still needed the 2.1 million "white" troops of the Union, and only *President* Lincoln could deliver their services. He achieved this via his personal convictions, emphasis upon law and the democratic process, and "common man" appeal. Ultimately, even his critic Douglass recognized this.

A quote from Frederick Douglass'1876 memorial speech appears in the conclusion of Bennett's work. Bennett uses the speech to conclude that Lincoln was no better than any other "white supremacist" of his time. But Douglass' words were evidently taken out of context and don't illustrate what Douglass *ultimately thought* of Lincoln. In fact, within that candid speech Douglass affirmed that in spite of their tactical differences, he never doubted Lincoln's personal hatred of slavery. Douglass said:

> "Under his wise and beneficent rule…and by *measures approved and vigorously pressed by him*, we saw that the handwriting of ages, in the form of prejudice and proscription, was rapidly fading away from the face of our whole country; under his rule, and in due time, about as soon after all *as the country could tolerate the strange spectacle, we saw our brave sons and brothers laying off the rags of bondage, and being clothed all over in the blue uniforms of the soldiers of the United States*; under his rule we saw two hundred thousand of our dark and dusky people responding to the call of Abraham Lincoln…with muskets on their shoulders,…" [42][emphasis mine]

Douglass reminded his audience that it was also Lincoln who recognized "*the independence of the black republic of Haiti, the special object of slave-holding aversion and horror… and her minister, a colored gentleman, duly received here in the city of Washington.*"[43] "And in the fullness of time," declared Douglass, Lincoln would pen the "immortal paper" which made

[40] C.T. Keto, *Vision, Identity and Time: The Afrocentric Paradigm and the Study of the Past* (Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing (Keto 1995)Co., 1995), 118.
[41] Ibid, 57.

[42] "Oration in Memory of Abraham Lincoln: Delivered at the Unveiling of the Freedmen's Monument in Memory of Abraham Lincoln." Lincoln Park, Washington, D.C., April 14, 1876. Frederick Douglass. www.Teachingamericanhistory.org.
[43] Ibid.

"slavery forever impossible in the United States…Though we waited long, we saw all this and more."[44]

In fact, Douglass' entire speech qualifies what he meant when he said Lincoln was "in his interests, in his associations, in his habits of thought, and in his prejudices… a white man…entirely devoted to the welfare of the white man." Douglass said:

> "Looking back to his times …His great mission was to accomplish two things: first, to save his country from dismemberment and ruin; and, second, to free his country from the great crime of slavery. To do one or the other, or both, he must have the earnest sympathy and the powerful cooperation of his loyal fellow-countrymen. Without this primary and essential condition to success his efforts must have been vain and utterly fruitless. *Had he put the abolition of slavery before the salvation of the Union, he would have inevitably driven from him a powerful class of the American people and rendered resistance to rebellion impossible. Viewed from the genuine abolition ground, Mr. Lincoln seemed tardy, cold, dull, and indifferent; but measuring him by the sentiment of his country, a sentiment he was bound as a statesman to consult, he was swift, zealous, radical, and determined.*"[45][emphasis mine]

So where is Lincoln located? I again defer to the words of Douglass to help illustrate my assertion that Africans should honor Lincoln's memory. Douglass:

> "In doing honor to the memory of our friend and liberator, we have been doing highest honors to ourselves and those who come after us; we have been fastening ourselves to a name and fame imperishable and immortal; we have also been defending ourselves from a blighting scandal. When now it shall be said that the colored man is soulless, that he has no appreciation of benefits or benefactors; when the foul reproach of ingratitude is hurled at us, and it is attempted to scourge us beyond the range of human brotherhood, we may calmly point to the monument we have this day erected to the memory of Abraham Lincoln."[47]]

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[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

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The Fugitive Slave Law

Federal legislation enacted by Congress that mandated states to which escaped slaves fled were obligated to return them to their masters upon their discovery and subjected persons who helped runaway slaves to criminal sanctions.

The first Fugitive Slave Act was enacted by Congress in 1793 but as the northern states abolished slavery, the act was rarely enforced. The southern states bitterly resented the northern attitude toward slavery, which was ultimately demonstrated by the existence of the Underground Railroad, an arrangement by which abolitionists helped runaway slaves obtain freedom.

To placate the South, the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 (9 Stat. 462) was enacted by Congress as part of the Compromise of 1850. It imposed a duty on all citizens to assist federal marshals to enforce the law or be prosecuted for their failure to do so. The act also required that when a slave was captured, he or she was to be brought before a federal court or commissioner, but the slave would not be tried by a jury nor would his or her testimony be given much weight. The statements of the slave's alleged owner were the main evidence, and the alleged owner was not even required to appear in court.

Northern reaction against the Fugitive Slave Act was strong, and many states enacted laws that nullified its effect, making it worthless. In cases where the law was enforced, threats or acts of mob violence often required the dispatch of federal troops. Persons convicted of violating the act were often heavily fined, imprisoned, or both. The refusal of northern states to enforce the Fugitive Slave Act was alleged by South Carolina as one reason for its secession from the Union prior to the onset of the Civil War.

The acts of 1793 and 1850 remained legally operative until their repeal by Congress on June 28, 1864 (13 Stat. 200).

"The People's Contest"
A Portion of Abraham Lincoln's Speech before the U.S. Congress
July 4, 1861

…and this issue embraces more than the fate of these United States. It presents to the whole family of man, the question, whether a constitutional republic, or a democracy---a government of the people, by the same people---can, or cannot, maintain its territorial integrity, against its own domestic foes. It presents the question, whether discontented individuals, too few in numbers to control administration, according to organic law, in any case, can always, upon the pretences made in this case, or on any other pretences, or arbitrarily, without any pretence, break up their Government, and thus practically put an end to free government upon the earth. It forces us to ask: "Is there, in all republics, this inherent, and fatal weakness?'' "Must a government, of necessity, be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?

Unquestionably the States have the powers, and rights, reserved to them in, and by the National Constitution; but among these, surely, are not included all conceivable powers, however mischievous, or destructive; but, at most, such only, as were known in the world, at the time, as governmental powers; and certainly, a power to destroy the government itself, had never been known as a governmental---as a merely administrative power. This relative matter of National power, and State rights, as a principle, is no other than the principle of generality, and locality. Whatever concerns the whole, should be confided to the whole---to the general government; while, whatever concerns only the State, should be left exclusively, to the State. This is all there is of original principle about it. Whether the National Constitution, in defining boundaries between the two, has applied the principle with exact accuracy, is not to be questioned. We are all bound by that defining, without question.This is essentially a People's contest. On the side of the Union, it is a struggle for maintaining in the world, that form, and substance of government, whose leading object is, to elevate the condition of men---to lift artificial weights from all shoulders---to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all---to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life. Yielding to partial, and temporary departures, from necessity, this is the leading object of the government for whose existence we contend.

I am most happy to believe that the plain people understand, and appreciate this. It is worthy of note, that while in this, the government's hour of trial, large numbers of those in the Army and Navy, who have been favored with the offices, have resigned, and proved false to the hand which had pampered them, not one common soldier, or common sailor is known to have deserted his flag.

Great honor is due to those officers who remain true, despite the example of their treacherous associates; but the greatest honor, and most important fact of all, is the unanimous firmness of the common soldiers, and common sailors. To the last man, so far as known, they have successfully resisted the traitorous efforts of those, whose commands, but an hour before, they obeyed as absolute law. This is the patriotic instinct of the plain people. They understand, without an argument, that destroying the government, which was made by Washington, means no good to them.

Our popular government has often been called an experiment. Two points in it, our people have already settled---the successful establishing, and the successful administering of it. One still remains---its successful maintenance against a formidable [internal] attempt to overthrow it. It is now for them to demonstrate to the world, that those who can fairly carry an election, can also suppress a rebellion---that ballots are the

rightful, and peaceful, successors of bullets; and that when ballots have fairly, and constitutionally, decided, there can be no successful appeal, back to bullets; that there can be no successful appeal, except to ballots themselves, at succeeding elections. Such will be a great lesson of peace; teaching men that what they cannot take by an election, neither can they take it by a war---teaching all, the folly of being the beginners of a war.

Lest there be some uneasiness in the minds of candid men, as to what is to be the course of the government, towards the Southern States, after the rebellion shall have been suppressed, the Executive deems it proper to say, it will be his purpose then, as ever, to be guided by the Constitution, and the laws; and that he probably will have no different understanding of the powers, and duties of the Federal government, relatively to the rights of the States, and the people, under the Constitution, than that expressed in the inaugural address.

He desires to preserve the government, that it may be administered for all, as it was administered by the men who made it. Loyal citizens everywhere, have the right to claim this of their government; and the government has no right to withhold, or neglect it. It is not perceived that, in giving it, there is any coercion, any conquest, or any subjugation, in any just sense of those terms.

The Constitution provides, and all the States have accepted the provision, that "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a republican form of government.'' But, if a State may lawfully go out of the Union, having done so, it may also discard the republican form of government; so that to prevent its going out, is an indispensable means, to the end, of maintaining the guaranty mentioned; and when an end is lawful and obligatory, the indispensable means to it, are also lawful, and obligatory.

It was with the deepest regret that the Executive found the duty of employing the war-power, in defence of the government, forced upon him. He could but perform this duty, or surrender the existence of the government. No compromise, by public servants, could, in this case, be a cure; not that compromises are not often proper, but that no popular government can long survive a marked precedent, that those who carry an election, can only save the government from immediate destruction, by giving up the main point, upon which the people gave the election. The people themselves, and not their servants, can safely reverse their own deliberate decisions. As a private citizen, the Executive could not have consented that these institutions shall perish; much less could he, in betrayal of so vast, and so sacred a trust, as these free people had confided to him. He felt that he had no moral right to shrink; nor even to count the chances of his own life, in what might follow. In full view of his great responsibility, he has, so far, done what he has deemed his duty. You will now, according to your own judgment, perform yours. He sincerely hopes that your views, and your action, may so accord with his, as to assure all faithful citizens, who have been disturbed in their rights, of a certain, and speedy restoration to them, under the Constitution, and the laws. And having thus chosen our course, without guile, and with pure purpose, let us renew our trust in God, and go forward without fear, and with manly hearts.

Chapter 9
Lincoln's Constitutionalism

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On July 4, 1861, President Abraham Lincoln in his special message to Congress asked, "Is there in all republics, this inherent and fatal weakness?" "Must a government, of necessity be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?" The answers to these rhetorical questions constitute the topic of this essay -- the constitutionalism

Lincoln's constitutionalism is a topic that engaged persons at the time of his presidency, engaged the first wave of professional scholars of the late nineteenth century, and has engaged people ever since. What these scholars have noticed is that starting really with the 1858 Senate debates between Lincoln and Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas, charging one's opponent with arguing "unconstitutionally" became a tool of debate and slander. Both candidates leveled the big gun of "unconstitutionality" at the other. The charge of unconstitutionality next arose against President Lincoln not with the problem in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina in April 1861, but rather from the bench of the United States Supreme Court. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, slavery's defender and a vehemently anti-Lincoln and the Republican Party person, held in *Ex parte Merryman* (1861) that Lincoln's suspension of habeas corpus was wrong and "unconstitutional."[3] While Taney did not label Lincoln a tyrant, Taney's language encouraged seceded southerners and the Democrat Party to label Lincoln and his administration's actions tyrannous and Lincoln a tyrant for allegedly acting outside constitutional channels.

Denouncing Lincoln for every action he took in defense of the Union and in promoting the war to (Hyman 1973) (Wiecek 1982)preserve the nation, members of the Democrat Party denounced his actions as "unconstitutional" and Democrats described Lincoln as a "tyrant." As a Democrat spokesman during the war, recognizing the usefulness of the label of "unconstitutional" as a political tool, stated "The most notable way of impeding [the Republicans] is to knock them down with `the Constitution´ every time they rise to the surface and begin to swim out."[4] At the time, the usefulness of this political technique was well understood and applied to Lincoln by his political opponents with a heavy hand.

In large, and at the time of influential scholarship of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's, the first wave of Civil War era scholars (pro-southern all) followed the war-time Democrat Party lead in labeling Lincoln a tyrant and claiming that all his actions were at least questionable, but more likely unconstitutional. In 1926, James G. Randall published his magnum opus, *Constitutional Problems under Lincoln*, arguing that if Lincoln was a dictator, a tyrant, then he was a

[3] *Ex parte Merryman*, 17 Fed. Cas. 144, Case #9, 487 (1861).

[4] Hyman, *A More Perfect Union*, 78. See also, 88-89.

"benevolent dictator."[5] Unlike other dictators Lincoln had used his power in behalf of democracy, not to overthrow it argued Randall. Unfortunately, in the 1930s and the 1940s, with the rise of true dictators such as Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini, even Randall became disgusted with the lumping of Lincoln with European dictators in the same breadth and paragraphs. In the 1951 edition of his work, Randall clarified saying, "That Lincoln was a strong executive does not signify that he was a dictator. . . . Since the word 'dictator' suggests Hitler or other totalitarian rulers the contrast between their hideous methods and those of Lincoln is so evidenced that it needs no comment."[6]

After World War II, with the rise of the sensitivity to how governments treated groups of hated minorities, such as Japanese Americans, the rise of jurisprudence of individual and group rights' consciousness in the federal courts and with the rise of the "New Left" in the academy a new charge against Lincoln arose. Scholars accused Lincoln of being tardy in moving on civil rights for African-Americans and being insufficiently concerned about civil liberties issues. Not only was he a tyrant, but, these scholars argued, Lincoln was a particularly intolerant one as well. Constitutional historians in the academy interested in and concerned with engaging Lincoln and the policies of his administration became marginalized from the 1960s to the present. Current constitutional scholars studied groups of people, particularly groups who had been marginalized, the political or social majorities, not individuals and especially not dead white presidents. As a result, Lincoln the anti-constitutionalist and insensitive tyrant held sway in scholarly literature.[7]

Yet, the charge of dictatorship or Lincoln as tyrant collapses when scholars confront Lincoln within the historical context of his time. First, and most obviously, the fact that Lincoln and his administration allowed his loud and voracious critics to frequently denounce the president as a tyrant refutes the charge of tyranny. Had Lincoln been the tyrant his opponents claimed, he could have filled the jails of the country with his accusers. Almost every Democrat in the North indicted him and some breached decency and even the law in their anti-Lincoln enthusiasm. For example, in 1864, a Wisconsin Democrat editor wrote, "The man who votes for Lincoln is a traitor because Lincoln is a traitor and a murderer. And if he is elected to misgovern for another four years, we trust some bold hand will pierce his heart with a dagger point for the public good."[8] The editor was not arrested, nor was the newspaper suppressed. Furthermore, no election, at any level of the United States polity from the humblest village office, to county, city, state government, House of Representatives, the United States Senate, or presidency was cancelled by the federal government or within any governmental agency. In contrast, Confederate authorities forbid elections in areas of the South with Union sentiments such as eastern Tennessee, western North Carolina, and central Texas. Indeed, in the November 1864 general election, over 80% of the eligible voters in the North and Midwest voted. Given a choice between George B. McClellan and the Democrat Party who accused Lincoln of being a tyrant and acting unconstitutionally and the "tyrant" himself, Lincoln, the voters in the Union chose the tyrant by the largest margin since Andrew Jackson's

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[5] James G. Randall, *Constitutional Problems Under Lincoln* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951), xxix-xxv.

[6] Ibid, 47.

[7] A whole literature of anti-Lincoln work exists. Noted Yale Historian David Blight is at work on a monograph-length work assessing and analyzing this long and deep body of work. For a sampling of the persistence of Lincoln-as-tyrant arguments see the work of (DeRosa, The Politics of Dissolution: The Quest for a National Identity & and the American Civil War 1998), *The Confederate Constitution of 1861: An Inquiry into American Constitutionalism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991) and *The Politics of Dissolution: The Quest for a National Identity & and the American Civil War* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998); and (Paludan 1996) *Our Secret Constitution: How Lincoln Redefined Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[8] Quoted in, Phillip Shaw Paludan, *A People's Contest: The Union and Civil War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 233.

second election.

Further, even if a tyrant, Lincoln was a temporary tyrant. In the summer of 1864, because of calendared elections, Lincoln told others he assumed that he would turn over power to McClelland after the November 1864 elections – only Union military fortunes shifted. General William T. Sherman captured Atlanta in the West and in the East General Ulysses S. Grant's Overland Campaign had driven the Confederate Army back toward Richmond and Petersburg, Virginia, and Lincoln received re-election. On numerous occasions, Lincoln stated he exercised his war authority only over the course of the war and once the war ended, he would operate in more traditional ways – by deferring to Congress for national policies and deferring to the states for local domestic policies.

To be balanced, it is important to point out that Lincoln's record is not entirely clean. The War Department did suppress some Democratic newspapers. Some Democrat Party speakers went to jail; the federal postal service and the War Department intercepted private letters, opened them, and read them for the military and political intelligence they contained. Military commissions met and tried a handful of civilians. But the numbers of people jailed for political reasons (as opposed to guerrillas, irregular forces, and flat-out bandits[9]) were small, and as Yogi Berra might have said, no one went to jail for saying nothing. In the best and more thorough study of military arrests of civilians, historian Mark Neely found that most of the people arrested were not anti-federal government orators or editors. Most arrests occurred in Border States or areas newly liberated by the Union Army and the people arrested continued their opposition to federal authority by their violent actions such as shooting at Union troops. Other groups of people arrested by the United States government were persons who cheated soldiers or the Army by selling them shoddy goods, smuggling goods from the South, or physically resisted draft registration.[10]

Part of what moderns need to recall is what noted constitutional historians Daniel Farber and Harold M. Hyman have, that is the institutional context in which Lincoln worked. The weak state of the national government and its legal force meant that military arrests and trials were required by the pathetic state of the federal government's legal apparatus. None of the modern legal bureaucracy existed such as the Justice Department or the Federal Bureau of Investigation. At Lincoln's disposal were 81 federal district attorneys for the entire country (and one federal marshal with arresting powers to assist each district attorney). Thus, Lincoln had to rely on other federal departments, his generals, and cabinet members for carrying out his policies. Thus, Lincoln was in no position to act as a dictator even if he had wanted to do so, he lacked the institutional structures necessary to consolidate power in his hands – an end he never considered.[11]

Nevertheless, everyone agrees that Lincoln possessed an expansive view of his powers under the Constitution. The relevant question then becomes, how expansive. James Randall provides a useful discussion by noting the difference between the powers of Congress in Article One of the Constitution and Executive power in Article Two. While Congress has enumerated lawmaking powers, the "legislative powers herein granted," the president may exercise "executive power" with no definition or explanation of what those powers may be, unlike the listed powers of Congress. Furthermore, the presidential oath of office requires the president "to preserve, protect, and defend" the Constitution of the United States, and again the broad sweeping language is brought to mind.

[9] See Clay Mountcastle, *Punitive War: Confederate Guerrillas and Union Reprisals* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009) for the best interpretation of guerrilla activities and Union reactions to date.

[10] Mark E. Neeley, Jr., *The Fate of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln and Civil Liberties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), Chapter 6, and Phillip Shaw Paludan, *The Presidency of Abraham Lincoln* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 71-79.

[11] Farber, 144-46; Hyman, 99-123.

Additionally, the constitutional clause making the president the commander-in-chief requires him "to take care that the laws be faithfully executed."[12] Here again is a broad vague clause granting the president discretionary judgment. This constitutional flexibility allowed Lincoln to claim broad powers for his office in crisis times.

Lincoln acted quickly and decisively, and primarily alone, for 80 days at the start of the military conflict in the late spring and early summer of 1861. It was a time of crisis when, for a time, the Constitution's three branches of government collapsed into one. Three days after the firing on Ft. Sumter, Lincoln called for Congress to meet in special session. But it was a special session that would be held, symbolically, on July 4, 1861. Meanwhile, Lincoln set the country on the way to war. On April 15, he called out the state militia – 75,000 from every state in the Union, North and South, as legally and constitutionally authorized under the Militia Act of 1790.

But to pursue the war, Lincoln went further, and acted more controversially. On April 19, he ordered a blockade of rebel ports – an action which by traditional international law rules required a declaration of war. With Congress out of session and not due back until July, Lincoln seized the political and the military initiative to deal with what the Constitution and Lincoln described as a "domestic insurrection." On April 20, Lincoln ordered his Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase of Ohio, to spend money on the nation's defense even to hire private contractors although the Constitution requires that money bills be started by the House of Representatives and approved by Congress. Two weeks later Lincoln issued a call for volunteers to enlarge the ground and naval forces of the United States; again, the Constitution states that Congress can control such increases, but Congress was not in session and Lincoln had to face the immediate crisis in front of him. On April 7, Lincoln told the commanding General of the Union armies, Winfield Scott, that he might suspend the writ of habeas corpus if militarily necessary to carry on operations. An act the Constitution states that Congress has the power to suspend, not the military or the president; again, the congressmen and senators were all at home, not in Washington trying to hold the Union together.

Finally, on July 4, 1861, Congress gathered in special session and Lincoln provided his constitutional argument for his bold and independent actions. Lincoln's thesis in this under-appreciated speech stated -- in times of crisis, the historical context broadens the president's power and allows him to be innovative. Unlike the previous president, James Buchanan, who could find no power in the same 1787 Constitution or the presidential oath, to protect and defend the Constitution, the Union, and constitutional self-government, read in the Constitution only negatives and a lack of power to act against alleged secession. On the contrary, Lincoln examined the same document and found it a document of positives and powers. His actions, Lincoln explained to Congress, "whether strictly legal or not, were ventured upon under what appeared to be public demand and a public necessity; trusting then as now that Congress would readily ratify them. It is believed that nothing has been done beyond the constitutional competency of Congress."[13] In crisis time, then, the President might execute a law before Congress passed it, if the President believed that Congress would act in the same manner later when in session. On the specific issue of habeas corpus, Lincoln famously said in this July 4 speech, speaking in rhetorical questions, "are all the laws but one to go unexecuted and the government itself go to pieces lest the one be violated? . . . in such cases, would not the official oath be violated if the government should be overthrown?" In both word and deed, then, the president exercised extraordinary, yet not unlimited, powers during time of war both as president and as commander-in-chief exercising military power.

University of California, Berkeley law professor Daniel Farber has provided a recent and

[12] United States Constitution, Art. 1 and Art. 2.

[13] Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 8 Vols. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953-1955), 4: 426.

generally balanced assessment of Lincoln's 1861 actions. He stated, "On the most important items – calling the militia, deploying the military, and imposing a blockade – Lincoln clearly acted within constitutional bounds." Yet, when Lincoln expanded the military without congressional approval and when he authorized Secretary of Treasury Chase to pay private persons for early war expenses without congressional approval, Lincoln stretched pass previous constitutional appropriateness. In Lincoln's defense, in July and August 1861, Congress approved every single one of Lincoln's actions by passing appropriate legislation and, at that time, no one in Congress, raised questions about his expanding the military or paying private persons from public funds without congressional approval. Those criticism arose, but not until 1863 and 1864 in preparation for the 1864 general elections. Congress's actions suggest that a good deal of congressional support existed for Lincoln's actions in crisis times. Overall, as Farber states, "the Union marched to [civil] war in general compliance with the Constitution."[14]

Another test of the allegation that Lincoln acted unconstitutionally would be the reaction of the federal courts. Then like now, the federal courts, including but not only the United States Supreme Court, jealously guard their power of review of the actions of the other branches of the federal government, the federal judiciary take their constitutional role of overseeing the Constitution seriously. The courts had opportunities to check a runaway president if they perceived one – and they did not. Two examples might be useful. In the 1863 Prize Cases,[15] a majority of the justices of the United States Supreme Court upheld President Abraham Lincoln's declaration of a blockade around the seceded states even though Congress had not authorized the blockade. Associate Justice Robert C. Grier wrote the opinion supporting Lincoln's theory of the war as a "domestic insurrection" and as such, the president could take action to deal with the insurrection such as establish a naval blockade. In this fashion, the United States could fight the war without granting the so-called Confederacy existence as a separate and legitimate country. In this case, the United States Supreme Court supported Lincoln's belief that in crisis times the president could take action if he believed that Congress would approve the action at a later date; thus, the president had acted constitutionally as Lincoln had previously argued in his July 4, 1861 speech to Congress.

After the war, in the important and under-appreciated 1869 decision of *Texas* v. *White*,[16] the United States Supreme Court adopted the position that President Lincoln held regarding the fundamental question about the nature of the United States Union. Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase held that "The Constitution, in all its provisions, looks to an indestructible Union, composed of indestructible States." In this fashion, the Supreme Court raised to constitutional authority the Lincoln administration's earlier political position that the Civil War was a domestic insurrection only, and that secession was the essence of anarchy as Lincoln had argued in his first inaugural of March 4, 1861. Thus the so-called "seceded" states had in fact never been out of the Union. Therefore, Lincoln's actions as President and as Commander-in-Chief had been within and conformed to all constitutional boundaries.

To modern eyes and scholars, it is not that Lincoln defied the Constitution or stretched the powers of the presidency, but rather how respectful Lincoln proved to be of constitutional limitations on the extent of presidential power. Most obviously, Lincoln placed himself within constitutional limitations. Lincoln never asserted the international law rule that *inter armes silent legis*; in times of war, the laws are silent. Lincoln understood that there were constitutional boundaries, that problems existed, and that he as president had to confront those boundaries and work through and within those constitutional problems.

Lincoln was a lawyer through and through, and he knew the importance of claiming the

[14] Farber, 143.
[15] *Prize Cases*, 2 Black (67 U.S.) 635 (1863).
[16] *Texas* v. *White*, 7 Wallace (74 U.S.) 700 (1869).

Constitution in times of war.[17] He justified his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in the July 4 speech to Congress; he argued the unconstitutionality of secession in his inaugural speech in the July 4 message to Congress. He wrote an extensive defense of conscription; thinking like a lawyer was a profound part of his makeup. One scholar used the on-line collection of the Lincoln papers and found that Lincoln used the word "Constitution" 1263 times in correspondence during the presidency and the word "law" 1323. In contrast, he used the words "liberty" 259 times, "democracy" 138 times, and "equality" 155 times.[18]

Of course, the most controversial of his acts as president was the January 1, 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. With that presidential order, Lincoln added a second war goal to the national cause – not just the preservation of the Union that the Founders had established, but the emancipation of four million people held in state-defined slavery should Union arms be ultimately successful. Conservative critics at the time assailed Lincoln for the Emancipation Proclamation for stirring up a servile war, encouraging the amalgamation of the races, and, of course, violating the Constitution. One opponent declared that the Proclamation "undoubtedly one of the most startling exercises of one-man power which the history of human government free or despotic has ever witnessed."[19] From Lincoln's left came the charge that Lincoln had done nothing but free slaves where he had no authority and left those slaves he could affect still in slavery and thus denying his rhetoric of equality.

The Proclamation is a lawyer-like document and is not a sweeping emotional document; it is a lawyer's brief. As Lincoln scholar Allen Guelzo has argued, the Proclamation is written in dry legal language because Lincoln was performing an act under the Constitution. By his Proclamation, Lincoln potentially changed the legal status (and by extension the social status) of the entire slave population of the United States. As Guelzo put the issue, "It is one of the greatest American historical oddities that the document Lincoln labored so studiously to keep within the bounds of the Constitution should be the very document his critics exhibit as proof that Lincoln had no regard for the Constitution."[20]

When Chase pressured Lincoln to extend the Proclamation to cover occupied territories not covered by the January 1 Proclamation, Lincoln responded, "The original Proclamation has no constitution or legal justification except as a military measure." Thus, military necessity did not extend to occupied areas that were exempt for the Proclamation. "If," Lincoln asked Chase rhetorically, he acted on purely moral grounds, "would I thus not give up all footing upon the Constitution or law? Would I not thus be in the boundless field of absolutism?"[21] The next year, after Congress had started its work and arguments on what would in time become the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution to make permanent what Lincoln's Proclamation had established as a military measure, Lincoln hesitated in accepting the idea of an amendment to end slavery as the proper means for ending slavery. Lincoln believed, like many in the North and Midwest at the time, that the Constitution as it existed constituted the most secure foundation for American liberty and thus an amendment was redundant. In time, Lincoln did come around to the idea of a constitutional amendment explicitly ending slavery and he lived to see the proposed amendment pass Congress and be sent to the states for ratification, although the states did not ratify the amendment until December 1865 after Lincoln's death.[22]

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[17] Frank Williams, *Judging Lincoln* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002).
[18] Phillip Shaw Paludan, "'Dictator Lincoln': Surveying Lincoln and the Constitution," *Organization of American Historians Magazine of History* 21 (January 2007): 11.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 198.
[21] Basler, 4: 428.
[22] For the best book on the Thirteenth Amendment see, Michael Vorenberg, *Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment* (New York: Cambridge University Press,

Daniel Farber affirms that Lincoln was well within his constitutional rights in issuing the Proclamation. Under the war powers, then and now, combatants have the right to destroy and/or confiscate the property of the enemy. Necessity was the ultimate factor determining when such acts could be performed. In justifying emancipation, Lincoln made strong argument in favor of the necessity of doing so. Lincoln did not argue that "necessity knows no law," but rather the necessity of the act was the crucial part of what made it legal.[23]

Of course constitutional enlargement in crisis times does not disprove the charge of dictatorship. But it does show Lincoln's constitutional concerns and it allows moderns to set a standard to judge his action. Scholarly examination of the use of Lincoln's war powers have resulted in supporting Lincoln's public policies. As distinguished professor of Constitution History at American University Herman Belz has argued, "A sound Constitution makes necessary power available in time of emergency; if it does not and the Constitution is simply set aside, its legitimacy and effectiveness as a political law for peacetime government will be eroded. . . . there are times when the rule of law is threatened by further adherence to the rule of law. In those situations not only is decisive action by a single individual to be risked, it is required."[24]

Lincoln's respect for the constitutional order is also reflected by his respect for the traditional federal Union, a point emphasized by Harold M. Hyman and his students. They stress the continuing respect for states and state power even during a war that crushed the idea of "state sovereignty" and established a singular nation.[25] Large majorities in Congress defeated proposals to territorialize the conquered South into smaller states or different states, both during and after the war. Lincoln himself held a traditional view of the Union as a union of States and it was that Union he was trying to restore (and eventually the United States Supreme Court upheld that view in *Texas* v. *White*). To illustrate this respect, contrast the fact that Lincoln asked the Border States to end slavery within their borders – respecting the states right to determine such issues – even while he was using his war powers to end slavery in the still rebellious states of Dixie. The principle achievement for American nationalism under Lincoln's leadership, Fehrenbacher says, "was the negative one of arresting a drift toward decentralization that had become a plunge into disintegration."[26] The contrast between that disintegration and a secure postwar nationalism had misled historians to overemphasize the degree of Lincoln's nationalism and commitment to constitutional government.

Implicit in the discussion of Lincoln's powers as president is the question of his constitutional philosophy. If Lincoln was a dictator, then clearly he had either no respect for the Constitution or he interpreted the document in a manner which made it so flexible, that it became whatever he wished it to be. But Lincoln clearly had enough respect for the Constitution that he cited it often and followed its channels of political power. His success in saving the Union and freeing four million people from bondage provides an endorsement for a flexible Constitution, a "living" Constitution responsive to the needs of the people as they faced crises beyond the vision of the Founding Fathers. Thus, it is not surprising that Lincoln and the actions of his administration constitute a significant part of the discussion in modern arguments about how free presidents and federal

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2001).

[23] Farber, 154-55.

[24] Herman Belz, "Abraham Lincoln and American Constitutionalism," in *Abraham Lincoln, Constitutionalism and Equal Rights in the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 92.

[25] See Michael Les Benedict, *A Compromise of Principle: Congressional Republicans and Reconstruction, 1863-1869* (New York: Norton, 1974); Donald Nieman, *To Set the Law in Motion: The Freedman's Bureau and the Legal Rights of Blacks, 1865-1868* (Millwood, NY: KTO Press, 1979); P. S. Paludan, *A Covenant with Death: The Constitution, Law, and Equality in the Civil War Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975).

[26] Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Lincoln in Text and Context* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 116-19.

judges are in interpreting the Constitution.

Conservative constitutional critics at the time and since have deplored Lincoln's constitutional flexibility. In 1970, Willmore Kendall claimed that Lincoln had transformed the Constitution from a document in which states created a national government and deserved deference into a new nation, not Union, which rested on the ideal of equality. As Herman Belz has described this criticism, "according to Kendall, Lincoln placed the United States on the road to centralized egalitarianism by making equality a supreme commitment and the standard of judgment in American politics. Lincoln did this by assigning the Declaration of Independence constitutional status, undermining the tradition of community self-government under majority rule and legislative supremacy."[27] In this new nation, national power might hurdle constitutional restraints to spread egalitarianism.

On the other hand, progressive constitutional critics have applauded the very constitutional flexibility conservatives dislike. The best example of this position is University of Chicago law professor George Fletcher's 2001 book, *Our Secret Constitution: How Lincoln Redefined American Democracy*. Fletcher argued for a present-minded, early twenty-first century definition of equality that included not only equality before the law, but something vaguely labeled economic justice. In this fashion, according to Fletcher, Lincoln helped to create a Constitution that for the first time promised equality for all, in all ways – total justice. Fletcher's argument tells readers more about how twenty-first century academics and law professors envision equality, rather than how nineteenth century persons and especially Lincoln thought about and defined equality. Fletcher's work is a lawyer's brief advocating modern equality by claiming that a nineteenth century president had established it which is interesting but irrelevant to how Lincoln envisioned constitutional presidential powers.

This point brings this analysis back to where it started. On July 4, 1861, President Abraham Lincoln in his special message to Congress asked, "Is there in all republics, this inherent and fatal weakness? "Must a government, of necessity be too strong for the liberties of its own people, or too weak to maintain its own existence?" The Civil War, General Ulysses S. Grant, and the Union armies ultimately answered both questions in the negative. During crises times and during military conflicts answers are not always clear; yet, the impassioned debate that raged in and out of Congress, in the states, in the localities, and in the national media demonstrated the vitality of the constitutional process during the era of Abraham Lincoln. It helped that with his unique character, his powerful commitment to equality before the law, and his commitment to the rule of law, and to constitutional limits that Kentucky-born, Indiana-raised, Illinoisan-lawyer Lincoln was president. At times perhaps he reached too far and got out ahead of Congress and the people, and Lincoln's men may have excused his actions too much. But Lincoln's own depth and complexity of personality and constitutional philosophy makes the on-going work of scholars on the crisis of the Union, the politics and constitutional heritage of the era of the Civil War, even more important and, I trust, worthwhile.

[27] Herman Belz, "Lincoln and the Constitution: The Dictatorship Question Reconsidered," in *Abraham Lincoln, Constitutionalism, and Equal Rights in the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 24. See, Willmore Kendall and George Carrey, *The Basic Symbols of the American Political Tradition* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 85-94.

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Part IV:

Kentucky and the Civil War

"...that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Abraham Lincoln
Gettysburg Address, 1864

Representatives of the USCT 12th Heavy Artillery stationed at Camp Nelson, Kentucky, commanded by Lt. Hunn.

South Carolina Declaration of the Causes of Secession

Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union

The people of the State of South Carolina, in Convention assembled, on the 26th day of April, A.D., 1852, declared that the frequent violations of the Constitution of the United States, by the Federal Government, and its encroachments upon the reserved rights of the States, fully justified this State in then withdrawing from the Federal Union; but in deference to the opinions and wishes of the other slaveholding States, she forbore at that time to exercise this right. Since that time, these encroachments have continued to increase, and further forbearance ceases to be a virtue.

And now the State of South Carolina having resumed her separate and equal place among nations, deems it due to herself, to the remaining United States of America, and to the nations of the world, that she should declare the immediate causes which have led to this act.

In the year 1765, that portion of the British Empire embracing Great Britain, undertook to make laws for the government of that portion composed of the thirteen American Colonies. A struggle for the right of self-government ensued, which resulted, on the 4th of July, 1776, in a Declaration, by the Colonies, "that they are, and of right ought to be, FREE AND INDEPENDENT STATES; and that, as free and independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do."

They further solemnly declared that whenever any "form of government becomes destructive of the ends for which it was established, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government." Deeming the Government of Great Britain to have become destructive of these ends, they declared that the Colonies "are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

In pursuance of this Declaration of Independence, each of the thirteen States proceeded to exercise its separate sovereignty; adopted for itself a Constitution, and appointed officers for the administration of government in all its departments-- Legislative, Executive and Judicial. For purposes of defense, they united their arms and their counsels; and, in 1778, they entered into a League known as the Articles of Confederation, whereby they agreed to entrust the administration of their external relations to a common agent, known as the Congress of the United States, expressly declaring, in the first Article "that each State retains its sovereignty, freedom and independence, and every power, jurisdiction and right which is not, by this Confederation, expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled."

Under this Confederation the war of the Revolution was carried on, and on the 3rd of September, 1783, the contest ended, and a definite Treaty was signed by Great Britain, in which she acknowledged the independence of the Colonies in the following terms: "ARTICLE 1-- His Britannic Majesty acknowledges the said United States, viz: New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, to be FREE, SOVEREIGN AND INDEPENDENT STATES; that he treats with them as such; and for himself, his heirs and successors, relinquishes all claims to the government, propriety and territorial rights of the same and every part thereof."

Thus were established the two great principles asserted by the Colonies, namely: the right of a State to govern itself; and the right of a people to abolish a Government when it becomes destructive of the ends for which it was instituted. And concurrent with the establishment of these principles, was the fact, that each Colony became and was recognized by the mother Country a FREE, SOVEREIGN AND INDEPENDENT STATE.

In 1787, Deputies were appointed by the States to revise the Articles of Confederation, and on 17th September, 1787, these Deputies recommended for the adoption of the States, the Articles of Union, known as the Constitution of the United States.

The parties to whom this Constitution was submitted, were the several sovereign States; they were to agree or disagree, and when nine of them agreed the compact was to take effect among those concurring; and the General Government, as the common agent, was then invested with their authority.

If only nine of the thirteen States had concurred, the other four would have remained as they then were-- separate, sovereign States, independent of any of the provisions of the Constitution. In fact, two of the States did not accede to the Constitution until long after it had gone into operation among the other eleven; and during that interval, they each exercised the functions of an independent nation.

By this Constitution, certain duties were imposed upon the several States, and the exercise of certain of their powers was restrained, which necessarily implied their continued existence as sovereign States. But to remove all doubt, an amendment was added, which declared that the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States, respectively, or to the people. On the 23d May , 1788, South Carolina, by a Convention of her People, passed an Ordinance assenting to this Constitution, and afterwards altered her own Constitution, to conform herself to the obligations she had undertaken.

Thus was established, by compact between the States, a Government with definite objects and powers, limited to the express words of the grant. This limitation left the whole remaining mass of power subject to the clause reserving it to the States or to the people, and rendered unnecessary any specification of reserved rights.

We hold that the Government thus established is subject to the two great principles asserted in the Declaration of Independence; and we hold further, that the mode of its formation subjects it to a third fundamental principle, namely: the law of compact. We maintain that in every compact between two or more parties, the obligation is mutual; that the failure of one of the contracting parties to perform a material part of the agreement, entirely releases the obligation of the other; and that where no arbiter is provided, each party is remitted to his own judgment to determine the fact of failure, with all its consequences.

In the present case, that fact is established with certainty. We assert that fourteen of the States have deliberately refused, for years past, to fulfill their constitutional obligations, and we refer to their own Statutes for the proof.

The Constitution of the United States, in its fourth Article, provides as follows: "No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up, on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due."

This stipulation was so material to the compact, that without it that compact would not have been made. The greater number of the contracting parties held slaves, and they had previously evinced their estimate of the value of such a stipulation by making it a condition in the Ordinance for the government of the territory ceded by Virginia, which now composes the States north of the Ohio River.

The same article of the Constitution stipulates also for rendition by the several States of fugitives from justice from the other States.

The General Government, as the common agent, passed laws to carry into effect these stipulations of the States. For many years these laws were executed. But an increasing hostility on the part of the non-slaveholding States to the institution of slavery, has led to a disregard of their obligations, and the laws of the General Government have ceased to effect the objects of the Constitution. The States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, have enacted laws which either nullify the Acts of Congress or render useless any attempt to execute them. In many of these States the fugitive is discharged from service or labor claimed, and in none of them has the State Government complied with the stipulation made in the Constitution. The State of New Jersey, at an early day, passed a law in conformity with her constitutional obligation; but the current of anti-slavery feeling has led her more recently to enact laws which render inoperative the remedies provided by her own law and by the laws of Congress. In the State of New York even the right of transit for a slave has been denied by her tribunals; and the States of Ohio and Iowa have refused to surrender to justice fugitives charged with murder, and with inciting servile insurrection in the State of Virginia. Thus the constituted compact has been deliberately broken and disregarded by the non-slaveholding States, and the consequence follows that South Carolina is released from her obligation.

The ends for which the Constitution was framed are declared by itself to be "to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."

These ends it endeavored to accomplish by a Federal Government, in which each State was recognized as an equal, and had separate control over its own institutions. The right of property in slaves was recognized by giving to free persons distinct political rights, by giving them the right to represent, and burdening them with direct taxes for three-fifths of their slaves; by authorizing the importation of slaves for twenty years; and by stipulating for the rendition of fugitives from labor.

We affirm that these ends for which this Government was instituted have been defeated, and the Government itself has been made destructive of them by the action of the non-slaveholding States. Those States have assume the right of deciding upon the propriety of our domestic institutions; and have denied the rights of property established in fifteen of the States and recognized by the Constitution; they have denounced as sinful the institution of slavery; they have permitted open establishment among them of societies, whose avowed object is to disturb the peace and to eloign the property of the citizens of other States. They have encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain, have been incited by emissaries, books and pictures to servile insurrection.

For twenty-five years this agitation has been steadily increasing, until it has now secured to its aid the power of the common Government. Observing the *forms* [emphasis in the original] of the Constitution, a sectional party has found within that Article establishing the Executive Department, the means of subverting the Constitution itself. A geographical line has been drawn across the Union, and all the States north of that line have united in the election of a man to the high office of President of the United States, whose opinions and purposes are hostile to slavery. He is to be entrusted with the administration of the common Government, because he has declared that that "Government cannot endure permanently half slave, half free," and that the public mind must rest in the belief that slavery is in the course of ultimate extinction.

This sectional combination for the submersion of the Constitution, has been aided in some of the States by elevating to citizenship, persons who, by the supreme law of the land, are incapable of becoming citizens; and their votes have been used to inaugurate a new policy, hostile to the South, and destructive of its beliefs and safety.

On the 4th day of March next, this party will take possession of the Government. It has announced that the South shall be excluded from the common territory, that the judicial tribunals shall be made sectional, and that a war must be waged against slavery until it shall cease throughout the United States.

The guaranties of the Constitution will then no longer exist; the equal rights of the States will be lost. The slaveholding States will no longer have the power of self-government, or self-protection, and the Federal Government will have become their enemy.

Sectional interest and animosity will deepen the irritation, and all hope of remedy is rendered vain, by the fact that public opinion at the North has invested a great political error with the sanction of more erroneous religious belief.

We, therefore, the People of South Carolina, by our delegates in Convention assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, have solemnly declared that the Union heretofore existing between this State and the other States of North America, is dissolved, and that the State of South Carolina has resumed her position among the nations of the world, as a separate and independent State; with full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do.

Adopted December 24, 1860

Chapter 10
James Fisher Robinson
The Struggle for Kentucky's Loyalty during the Civil War

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Dr. Taul serves as Archivist for Campbellsville University, Campbellsville, Kentucky. He received his Ph.D. in American History from the University of Kentucky and a Master of Arts in American Studies from Baylor University. He has written articles and made presentations about antebellum Kentucky, Appalachia, and Jesse Stuart. An earlier version of this essay about James Fisher Robinson was delivered in lecture form before the Scott County Historical Society.

When James F. Robinson assumed the duties of governor of Kentucky on 18 August 1862, the Commonwealth faced perilous times. The nation was "deeply convulsed by the existing rebellion"[1] and Kentucky stood in the maelstrom's center. Robinson's predecessor, Beriah Magoffin, who openly sympathized with the Southern cause, had been forced to resign by a Unionist controlled legislature. Confederate General John Hunt Morgan had completed his first raid into the state a month before. A few days prior to Robinson taking the oath, General Edmund Kirby-Smith triggered a full scale Confederate invasion of Kentucky. The year that Robinson served as governor was a precarious struggle to keep Kentucky in the Union.

Among his first actions as "Chief Magistrate,"[2] Robinson wrote Abraham Lincoln to assure the president of Kentucky's and his loyalty to the Union and to the cause of defeating the "traitors who planned the [Union's] destruction." Robinson emphatically told Lincoln that he had been "Loyal and true to the Government from the beginning of this mad, reckless and treasonable attempt to overturn it, I desire now to assure you of my hearty cooperation with you in your praiseworthy and patriotic efforts to preserve it, unimpaired, . . ."[3]

Robinson was desperate. He needed military aid immediately from "the common Government." He reported that Kentucky had been "invaded at different points by large bodies of the so-called Confederate forces . . . ," and the state had been left in a condition "of almost total unpreparedness." By this time, more than thirty thousand Kentuckians had responded to Lincoln's call for volunteers to suppress the rebellion. He pleaded with Lincoln to fill the gap caused by the absence of so many "brave and chivalric citizens"[4] fighting for the Union outside of its borders.

Lincoln was more inclined to commit resources to Kentucky after Robinson's accession. The Commonwealth's loyalty was especially suspected prior to August 1862, and had caused the president to respond cautiously. Kentucky was key to saving the Union. It was poised

[1] J.F. Robinson, "Message," January 8, 1863, Kentucky, Senate, *Journal, 1861-1863* (Frankfort, KY: Yeoman Office, 1861), 709.
[2] J.F. Robinson to Abraham Lincoln, August 18, 1862, *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress*, Manuscript Division (Washington, D.C.: American Memory Project, [2000-02]), http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/alhtml/alhome.html, accessed January 7, 2010.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.

strategically between the Union and the Confederacy. In 1860, Kentucky ranked ninth in population, seventh in the value of farms, and fifth in the value of livestock. Its diversified agriculture produced large quantities of tobacco, corn, wheat, hemp, and flax. Its manufacturing was less important, but respectable in contributing to the state and nation's wealth.
If the Confederacy succeeded in controlling the state militarily, the South would gain a defensible line along the Ohio River. From this position Confederate armies could launch a drive to the Great Lakes. If the drive was successful, the Union would be split in two. If Kentucky joined the southern cause, then Missouri and Maryland would probably follow. Lincoln clearly recognized this early in the conflict when he said, "to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game."[5] The hurdles to save the Union would be insurmountable.

Lincoln knew that Kentucky could commit to either side. Kentuckians were aware of the differences that divided families, such as the Breckinridges, Clays, and Crittendens as well as lesser known families. They were divided in their sentiments toward the political issues that defied solution. They had strong familial, cultural, institutional, and economic ties to their southern neighbors. The people who settled the state came principally from Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland. Slavery, an institution that bound Kentuckians to the South, had been declining in percentage in previous decades, but the numbers constituted 19.5 percent of the population in 1860. Trade also bound Kentucky to the South. Since settlement days, Kentuckians had sent their surplus produce south down the Mississippi River to New Orleans.

Nationalism and new commercial outlets in the North tugged at Kentuckians' attachments in the other direction. The advent of railroads had established new commercial affiliations with the North. Kentuckians also had demonstrated strong allegiances to the Union. Since 1792, when the Commonwealth entered the Union, Kentuckians had elected politicians who were strong nationalists, of which Henry Clay was the most persuasive voice. They had additionally made major contributions in political leadership, men, and materiel to the second war with Great Britain and to the American-Mexican War.[6]

Magoffin, inaugurated governor in 1859, reflected the political conundrum that Kentuckians faced. Majority sentiment opposed secession, but it was more resistant to coercing secessionists. Magoffin believed in slavery and in a state's right to secede, and he thought southern rights to hold slaves had been violated. He did not think, however, that Lincoln's election warranted the drastic step of secession. Magoffin proposed, as an alternative to his fellow southern governors, a series of measures that would ensure slavery where it existed, enforce the Fugitive Slave Law, and re-draw the Missouri Compromise line along the 37th parallel. Some States' Rights Kentuckians favored this plan while Unionist Kentuckians supported Senator John J. Crittenden's compromise, which went even further than Magoffin's. Crittenden proposed several constitutional amendments that forbade the abolition of slavery on federal land in slaveholding states, compensated owners of runaway slaves, restored the Missouri Compromise line of 36°30', protected slavery in the District of Columbia, and prohibited Congress from interfering with the interstate transportation of slaves.[7]

Southern Democrats, allied with former presidential candidate John C. Breckinridge, wanted compromise within the Union, but they wanted a convention called to decide the state's

[5] Abraham Lincoln to Orville H. Browning, 22 September 1861, Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953-55), 4:532; Lowell H. Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1975), 2-3.

[6] Harrison, Civil *War in Kentucky*, 1-3.

[7] Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 186; "Crittenden Compromise," in *The Kentucky Encyclopedia* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1992).

policy. Magoffin led the effort for the call, but Unionist leaders were resolved to thwart it. In a special session, legislators refused to call a convention, but it appointed six delegates to the Peace Convention which met in Washington in February 1861. The legislators demanded that the South end its secession movement, and that the North give up all idea of coercion.[8]

After the surrender of Fort Sumter, Magoffin rejected both Lincoln's and Jefferson Davis' requests for troops. In a telegram to President Lincoln, Magoffin declared that Kentucky would not furnish troops "for the wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern States." Leaders of the State Union Committee and likely a majority of Kentuckians supported the governor's de facto policy of neutrality. Union leaders opposed any use of force to subdue the southern states. They were fearful of invasion from Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. But neutrality did not work in favor of the States' Rights Party. Some of their leaders wanted a convention called with the hope of pushing Kentucky toward secession.[9]

Magoffin called a special session of the legislature to meet in early May 1861 for the purpose of deciding the Commonwealth's policy. He still hoped to convince the legislature to approve the call for a sovereignty convention. Barring that, he thought even a neutral Kentucky should arm itself. Early in the session, an informal conference of party leaders, composed of three representatives from the Union Party and three from the States' Rights Party, met to formulate a plan. Crittenden was among the Union Party envoys and Breckinridge and Magoffin were a part of the States' Rights delegation. They rejected Breckinridge's proposal for a sovereignty convention. They did agree, however, upon armed neutrality. Fearing that Magoffin, who had the constitutional power over the State Guard, would not be impartial, the Unionists insisted that arming of the Guard and Militia should be directed by a five-member military commission. The sextet agreed that Inspector General Simon Bolivar Buckner should be on the commission, with each party selecting two members. This scheme was scuttled when the States' Rights Party named the governor as one of its choices to the commission. The Unionists would not accept him.[10]

Magoffin's earlier policy of neutrality was approved by the General Assembly on 20 May, and he issued a proclamation warning both Federal and Confederate governments to stay out of Kentucky and forbidding citizens to demonstrate any hostility against either side. But the governor's political position deteriorated after the August elections of 1861. The Unionist Party won two-thirds of both legislative houses. The neutrality policy quickly became untenable because of both the Unionist victory and the violation of it by Union and Confederate armies. Neutrality collapsed in mid-September 1861 when the legislature instructed the governor to order the expulsion of the invading Confederate troops, but not the Union forces who entered in response. Magoffin vetoed the legislation, but was overridden; yet he issued the order to implement it. This became the pattern for the remainder of his time in office. He vetoed legislation he thought wrong, and when the legislature overrode the veto, he proceeded to implement the measures anyway.

Despite his southern sympathies, he denounced formation of the provisional Confederate government by Southern sympathizers. That was not enough, however, to relieve pressure by the Unionist majority in the legislature intent upon forcing his resignation.[11] Magoffin had been constantly threatened with "impeachment, arrest,

[8] Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 1997), 187; Allan Nevins, *The War for the Union, vol. 1, The Improvised War, 1861-1862* (New York: Scribners, 1959), 129-31.
[9] Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 187, 188; Lowell H. Harrison, "Magoffin, Beriah," in *Kentucky Encyclopedia.*

[10] Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 188; Lewis Collins and Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 2 vols. (Covington: privately printed, 1874; reprint, Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 1966), I: 89-90.
[11] Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193; Harrison, "Magoffin."

even assassination." He had stayed with the hope of protecting the constitutional rights of the Southern Rights party against what he considered the excesses of the Unionists. Magoffin finally told Unionist legislative leaders that he would resign only if he could "be assured that my successor would be a conservative, just man, of high position and character, and that his policy would be conciliatory and impartial towards all law-abiding citizens, however they may differ in opinion . . . and the subordination of the military to the civil power be insisted. . . ."[12] The only senator that met those qualifications was State Senator Robinson.

There was only one barrier to this condition. Robinson was not in line for succession. He was not speaker of the state senate. Ironically, Robinson had been elected to that post at the beginning of the 1861 session, but resigned two days later. Senator John F. Fisk filled the chair usually occupied by the lieutenant governor, which was vacant because Lt. Governor Linn Boyd had died soon after his election in 1859. Fisk was unacceptable to the governor. To maneuver Robinson into the speaker's seat, Fisk resigned on 16 August 1862, and Robinson was chosen unanimously to replace him. On the same day, Magoffin submitted his resignation, effective 18 August. Fisk won re-election after Robinson became governor.[13]

Robinson was well known among political leaders, but he had little experience in elective office. His first elected office, at age fifty, was as a state senator in 1851, representing his native Scott County as a Henry Clay Whig. He sought the senate seat again ten years later, when he was again elected as a Democrat. In the years prior to 1851, he was a Whig activist in Scott County, often offering his home at Cardome as a place for meetings. By the time Robinson entered the state political arena, he had built a reputation, through his law practice, his farming and banking enterprises, and his leadership in community affairs, as a man of integrity, of fairness, of prudent judgment, and of moderate conservative principles. [14]

Robinson differed from Magoffin only in his views toward the Union. He was a slave owner, while Magoffin accepted the existence and supported the legal recognition of slavery. Both were lawyers. Both were from the Bluegrass Region. Magoffin was a States' Rights Democrat. Robinson was a Unionist Democrat. He favored the status quo ante. He wanted the "'Union as it was and the Constitution as it is....'"[15] Slavery was a state issue, not a federal one. Robinson believed strongly in the Union, but he also believed just as intensely in slavery. Like other Unionists, he was convinced that Kentucky's interests could be advanced through the Union. Before he had been elected to his second term in the state senate, Robinson had been elected in 1861 as a delegate to the Border Slave State convention on the Union ticket. Magoffin had recommended that the legislature call the convention for the purpose of declaring neutrality and refusing to raise troops against the seceding states. Only Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee sent delegates to the failed convention.

The predicaments Robinson inherited seemed insurmountable. Kentuckians remained divided in their loyalties. The Confederate invasion, started by Kirby-Smith, became full scale with the addition of Braxton Bragg's forces and other bands of irregulars. As Confederate forces quickly advanced toward the Ohio River from the southeast and southwest, panic swept such river towns as Louisville, Covington, Cincinnati, and Newport. Robinson ordered the removal of state government to Louisville just before Confederates captured the capital. Frankfort was the only capital of a loyal state captured by southern forces during the war, but the Confederates only held it briefly. As Confederate Governor Richard Hawes was being

[12] Beriah Magoffin to Gen. W.A. Dudley, 10 August 1862, Kentucky, Senate, *Journal, 1861-63*, 624, 625.
[13] Kentucky, Senate, *Journal*, *1861-1863*, 621-22, 623-24.

[14] Lowell H. Harrison, "Robinson, James Fisher," *Kentucky Encyclopedia*.
[15] *Lexington Observer and Reporter*, 7 January 1863; quoted in Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 179; Collins and Collins, *History of Kentucky*, I:86, 87, 89, 91-92.

sworn in, Union forces began bombarding the city from the north. The Confederate forces, and the Confederate provisional government, quickly left. After the Battle of Perryville in early October 1862, the Confederacy abandoned the state.[16]

Maintaining cooperative relations with the Lincoln administration was Robinson's most arduous challenge. In his thirteen months as governor, Robinson pled constantly for men, money, and materiel to defend the state, but he also complained about frequent interference by federal troops in Kentucky's civil affairs. Federal officials treated Kentucky as if it was a disloyal state. Two days prior to the Battle at Perryville, Robinson wrote Lincoln that Kentucky had already "witnessed great injury to the Union cause by an indiscreet and unjust system of arrests. . . ."[17] Arrests were made summarily under imposed martial law and the suspension of habeas corpus, and farms were destroyed, provisions seized, forage collected, and commodities impounded. "Why is it, that all supplies are bought and paid for in Ohio, the government coming as any purchaser while the same things are unceremoniously seized in Kentucky?"[18] These problems would be corrected, Robinson wrote, if federal military authorities adhered to the proper jurisdictions assigned to the United States and state governments by their constitutions and laws. "We venture to suggest that all offenders taken in arms, their aiders and abettors, within the military lines should be dealt with and punished by the military authorities - all others by the Civil."[19]

The interference with Kentucky's slave property by federal authorities was the most grievous outrage for many. Regiments composed of northern men protected runaway slaves from any attempts by local officials to reclaim property for their owners. Robinson protested Brigadier General Absalom Baird's intervention to prevent the sale of slave property in Nicholasville, Kentucky, on Court Day, in November 1862. The president tried to entice Kentuckians to free their slaves by offering $300 for each one emancipated, but the Kentucky legislature soundly rejected it. Kentuckians had become weary of federal schemes to free the slaves when the most stunning news came on 22 September 1862. Lincoln had issued his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Kentuckians were furious. Though it did not directly affect them, as a loyal state, it did suggest that slavery had now become a war aim. In late December Robinson, along with Adjutant General John William Finnell, tried in vain to persuade Lincoln, in person, to withdraw the proclamation, arguing that it was unconstitutional and detrimental to the Union cause in Kentucky, but Lincoln would not budge.[20]

The Kentucky legislature was scheduled to convene 8 January 1863. Rumors were circulating that if Lincoln proceeded with issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, the Kentucky legislature would vote for secession and that Robinson would support the action in his State of the State message. In addition, other rumors claimed that a majority on the Court of Appeals was disloyal, and it would reverse all decisions made against rebels by loyal inferior courts. Lincoln approved preemptive measures recommended by Gen. H.G. Wright to deploy several northern regiments near Frankfort, but

[16] John David Smith, "James F. Robinson," in *Kentucky's Governors,* updated edition, ed. Lowell H. Harrison (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2004), 90; Harrison and Klotter, *New History of Kentucky*, 198-202.

[17] J.F. Robinson to Abraham Lincoln, 6 October 1862, *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress*, accessed 7 January 2010.

[18] Robinson, "Message," 8 January 1863, Kentucky, Senate, *Journal,* 718.

[19] J.F. Robinson to Abraham Lincoln, 6 October 1862, *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress*, accessed 7 January 2010.

[20] Robinson, "Message," 8 January 1863, Kentucky, Senate, *Journal,* 721; Gen. A. Baird to Lt. T.G. Beaham, Asst. Adj. Gen., Hdqtr., Army of Kentucky, 18 Nov. 1862, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* 128 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), ser. I, vol. 20, part 2, 68-69,; E. Merton Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1926), 158-60.

forbade the arrests of legislators for disloyal speeches or the arrest of reputed dissident judges. These reports once again made Lincoln anxious about authorizing the raising of 20,000 additional volunteers to combat guerillas, brigands, and others wreaking havoc in the state. "[T]he changed conduct towards me of some of her members of Congress, and the omenous [*sic*] out-givings as to what the Governor and Legislature of Kentucky intend doing, admonish me to consider whether any additional arms I may send there, are not to be turned against the government."[21]

In his message to the legislature, Robinson condemned the proclamation as dangerous and called for legislators to promptly reject it. He attacked it from several angles, but his fundamental problem with it was the Proclamation's threat to constitutional liberties and the institution of slavery. Lincoln's assertion "that *military necessity* is not to be measured by *Constitutional* limits, but must be the judge of the extent of its powers" was a new "political heresy" that threatened republican government. It did not matter that Lincoln limited his "operative edict" only to those states in rebellion; it was an unconstitutional interference with the indisputable prerogatives of a State to control its own polity. The only purpose of the war, Robinson said, was to defeat the rebellion and restore "the ancient limits of the Nation." If the Union was going to be saved, it had to be within the limits of the Constitution. If "military necessity" is not limited by the constitution, then "we are no longer a free people." The civil authority had become subjected to the "sword."[22]

Lincoln's Proclamation threatened the institution of slavery, which was protected by the constitutions of Kentucky and the United States. Despite this grave threat, Robinson did not call for secession or the recall of Kentuckians from Union armies, thus avoiding the profound fears of federal officials. He said that Kentucky must "not abate one jot or tittle of her opposition to Secession or to Abolition. . . ."[23] In the spirit of the Kentucky Resolutions of 1798 and 1799, Robinson advised legislators to lodge their protest against the Proclamation and declare the Proclamation null and void in Kentucky.

Robinson voiced the frustration and anger that Kentuckians had toward the Lincoln administration. Few could be found to support Lincoln. Emotions were high. When both houses of the General Assembly began considering how to respond, resolutions with vitriolic language were considered. Some called for soldiers to come home, but the series of resolutions passed on 2 March 1863 incorporated the many grievances that Kentucky had against Lincoln. A distinction was made between the constituted government and the existing administration. Kentucky had the right to differ with the administration of the government, and it pronounced the Emancipation Proclamation as "unwise, unconstitutional, and void."[24] Once the rebellion had been quelled, Kentucky would welcome the return of the seceded states and would work cooperatively to secure their rights and interests.

Kentucky gripped the institution of slavery even tighter after the emancipation's declaration. It ignored the proclamation, except to enact legislation nullifying its implementation. Slaves continued to be sold, although prices were depressed because of disruptions caused by the war. Union military authorities continued to free slaves that entered their lines. Many Kentucky slaves became upset when they found out that the proclamation did not apply to them. Slaves freed as the Union armies marched southward were arrested as they drifted into Kentucky. The legislature had passed legislation that the fleeing

[21] Correspondence between Maj. Gen. H.G. Wright and Maj. Gen. Halleck, 30-31 Dec. 1862, *Official Records*, ser. I, vol. 20, part 2, 287, 282, 308; Abraham Lincoln to Green Adams, 7 January 1863, *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress*, accessed 7 January 2010.

[22] Robinson, "Message," 8 January 1863, Kentucky, Senate, *Journal,* 722, 720, 721, 724, 723.

[23] Ibid, 725.

[24] Kentucky, General Assembly, *Acts, 1861, 1862, 1863*, (Frankfort, KY: John B. Major and W.E. Hughes, Public Printers, 1861, 1862, and 1863), 392; Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 162.

emancipated slaves were to be imprisoned and dealt with as runaways. Advertisements were placed in Kentucky newspapers for owners in seceded states to come claim their property. If a slave had been sold by the state for jailer's fees and then confiscated by military authorities, a refund was made. By the time Robinson ended his term in September, the state had collected over $3,000 from the sale of unclaimed runaway slaves.[25]

Robinson chose not to seek election for a full term as governor in August 1863. Robinson's leadership was critical, in his transitional role, for advancing the Union cause in Kentucky at the pivotal year in the Civil War. Despite the repeated intrusions by the Lincoln administration upon Kentucky's sovereignty and upon its institution of slavery, Robinson, along with other Unionists, continued to believe that the federal Constitution, "faithfully administered, constituted her best safeguard for her slaves and every other species of property, . . ."[26] A distinction was always made between the government as established by the constitution and its administration. Unionist Kentuckians believed that once the Union was restored and Lincoln was out of the way, then the old political order would be restored. States would regain their sovereign rights, slavery would be protected, and the military would be subordinate to civil authority. Robinson was a most vigorous advocate for these interests with the Lincoln administration and with his fellow citizens.[27] He handed his successor, Thomas E. Bramlette, a state firmly in the Union camp.

Robinson continued his efforts to protect the interests of slave owners when he resumed his state senate seat on 9 December 1863. He chaired the Judiciary Committee, which worked on runaway slave legislation, and he sat on the Federal Relations Committee. Both committees were among the most influential during the war. He worked against Lincoln's re-election in 1864, speaking out against the Emancipation Proclamation, and sponsored legislation to ratify the thirteenth amendment to the federal constitution on condition that former slave owners be compensated for loss of property.[28]

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[25] Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, 164.

[26] Robinson, "Message," Kentucky, Senate, *Journal*, 720.

[27] Smith, "James F. Robinson," 92.

[28] Kentucky, Senate, 9 December 1863, *Journal, 1863-64*, (Frankfort, KY: Commonwealth Office, 1863), 24, 27; Smith, "James F. Robinson," 92; Levi O. Todd to Abraham Lincoln, 12 September 1864, *Abraham Lincoln Papers at the Library of Congress*, accessed 1 February 2010; Kentucky, General Assembly, "Minority Report of the Committee Appointed on the Proposed Amendment of the United States Constitution," *Legislative Documents, Nos. 10-26, 1863-64*, ([Frankfort, KY]: n.p., [1865]), Doc. 22.

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Chapter 11
Camp Nelson: Civil War Emancipation Center for Kentucky

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When people ask me what Camp Nelson was or is, I simply give this quote from an anonymous African-American soldier,

> "See how much better off we are now than we was four years ago. It used to be five hundred miles to get to Canada from Lexington, but now it is only eighteen miles! Camp Nelson is now our Canada."[1]

While this statement does not give the whole story of Camp Nelson as a U.S. Army supply depot, hospital, and recruitment camp, located in Jessamine County, it does focus on the camps' most significant story; that is its role in the destruction of slavery in Kentucky. It was the state's, and one of the nation's, largest recruitment and training centers for African-American soldiers and the state's largest refugee center for African-American women and children, who were all attempting to escape slavery. The emancipation of the men, women, and children did not come without a struggle, however. Following the lead of the Rev. John G. Fee, missionary to the soldiers and refugees and founder of Berea College, I will refer to these struggles as "the Battles of Camp Nelson". These battles make Camp Nelson "Hallowed Ground" for Kentucky and the Nation, as they were battles for freedom and human rights.

The First Battle

The first battle began on May 23, 1864 when 250, escaped slaves entered Camp Nelson, Kentucky to enlist into the United States Army. Initially, white officers refused to enlist these men; they turned them over to the U.S. Sanitary Commission, and requested instructions from higher command.[2] As the last state in the Nation to allow the enlistment of African-American soldiers, Kentucky permitted only free blacks and enslaved men with their owner's permission to enlist. As former slave Peter Bruner recalled,

> "When I had run off before and wanted to go in the army and fight they said that they did not want any darkies, that this was a white man's war."[3]

[1] Joseph Simpson, Letter to James H. Tuke and Frederick Seebehom, Friends Central Committee for the Relief of Emancipated Negroes, London, England, July 1, 1865.

[2] Col. A. H. Clark, Letter to Captain, May 27, 1864 (National Archives, RG 393, Vol. 107, Washington), 42-43; Thomas Butler, Reports of Mr. Butler, *The U.S. Sanitary Commission in the Valley of the Mississippi During the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1866*, edited by John S. Newberry (Cleveland: Fairbanks, Benedict and Co., 1871), 519.

[3] Peter Bruner, *A Slave's Adventure Toward Freedom* (Oxford, Ohio: Miami University, 1919), 22.

This policy had been in place since February 1864 and although individuals had tried to enlist earlier at Camp Nelson, this policy was now being severely challenged by the sheer numbers of enslaved men (without permission) wanting to join. Within a few days this number reached 400.[4] A frustrated Col. Andrew H. Clark, commander of Camp Nelson, wrote that "Unless the Recruiting business is better managed it will cost the Government a great deal of money and very few Negroes will be recruited."[5]

A week later Col. Clark began enlisting African-American men at Camp Nelson, who by early June had reached 1500 men. On June 13, 1864 the army officially removed the earlier restrictions. Upon enlistment these former slaves were emancipated and eventually over 5700 men joined the army and were freed at Camp Nelson, making it the third largest recruitment camp for African-American soldiers (known as U.S. Colored Troops) in the Nation. Eight USCT regiments were organized at Camp Nelson and five others were stationed there.[6]

At Camp Nelson, most USCT got their first taste of freedom, although tempered by army life. Sergeant Elijah P. Marrs of the 12th U. S. Colored Heavy Artillery made an explicit comparison between slavery and army life:

> "I can stand this, said I, 'this is better than slavery, though I do march in line at the tap of a drum.' I felt freedom in my bones, and when I saw the American eagle with outspread wings, upon the American flag, with the motto E Pluribus Unum, the thought came to me, 'Give me liberty or give me death.' Then all fear banished. I had quit thinking as a child and had commenced to think as a man"[7]

And Marrs continued,

> "While I felt myself a free man and an U.S. soldier, still must I move at the command of a white man, and I said to myself, 'Is my condition any better now than before I entered the army?' But the idea would come to me that I was a soldier fighting for my freedom, and this thought filled my heart with joy. I thought too, that the time will come when no man can say to me, Come and go, and I be forced to obey."[8]

What this opportunity meant to these soldiers and former slaves was perhaps best stated by Corp. George Thomas, also of the 12th,

> "I enlisted in the 12th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery in the Fall of 1864, and my only sorrow is that I did not enlist sooner…I see, as it were, a nation born in a day- men and women coming forth from slavery's dark dungeons to the noonday sunshine of the greatest of God's gifts- Liberty."[9]

Camp Nelson's USCT saw action in the major battles of Saltville, Marion, Petersburg, and

[4] Clark, Letter to Captain, 42-43.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Butler, *Reports*, 519; Frederick H. A. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion: Compiled and Arranged from Official Records* (Des Moines, Iowa: Dyer Publishing Company, 1908); William Gladstone, *United States Colored Troops: 1863-1867* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1990); Richard Sears, *Camp Nelson, Kentucky: A Civil War History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), xxxviii-xxxix.

[7] Elijah P. Marrs, *Life and History of the Reverend Elijah P. Marrs* (Louisville: Bradley and Gilbert,1885), 22.
[8] Ibid, 25.
[9] Corporal George Thomas, Letter in *Weekly Anglo-African*, August 12, 1865, in Edwin S. Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men: Letters from African-American Soldiers in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 188-190.

Richmond, Virginia as well as numerous skirmishes in Kentucky. These men also performed critical duty guarding Kentucky's forts, depots, and transportation routes. By the end of the war nearly 24,000 Kentucky African-American men had joined the army, the second largest number of any state.[10] The African-American soldiers won a clear, although not easy, victory in this "First Battle of Camp Nelson". This victory began the destruction of slavery in Kentucky.

The Second Battle

The second battle was more complex and drawn out. This struggle involved enslaved African-American women and children, most of whom were the wives and children of the enlisting soldiers, versus the U.S. Army. The women and children came to Camp Nelson seeking freedom, escape from their owners, and to create a place for themselves in the landscape of Camp Nelson. This created an even greater dilemma for the army, since it had no facilities or a policy to deal with refugees. In loyal Kentucky, they were not "Contraband of War" as they were in Confederate states, and unlike the men upon enlistment, they were not emancipated and hence still legally enslaved.

Initially the army did not have a clear policy for these refugee women and children and allowed them to establish their own encampments and even live in tents with their soldier husbands/fathers.[11] By late May, the army began ordering that "the negro women here without authority will be arrested and sent beyond the lines."[12] The army did not want the women and children in camp, and classified these Camp Nelson refugee women by such derogatory terms as "lewd," possibly as a pretext for ejecting the women and children who actively sought their own freedom by coming to the camp and engaging in whatever kinds of labor they could.[13] Colonel Clark was caught in the paradox of Civil War Kentucky; a slave state in a war, at least after the Emancipation Proclamation, to end slavery.

By July 1864, orders originating with Brigadier General Lorenzo Thomas, who was in charge of African-American recruitment in the Mississippi Valley, and carried out by district commander Brigadier General Speed Fry clarified that only women "in Government employ" were allowed to stay in camp.[14] All others were ordered or escorted back "home" to slavery, where according to the army "Under state law their respective masters are bound to take care of them."[15] But the second battle was not over as the women and children kept returning to Camp Nelson, and the ejection order had to be reissued at least seven times between July and November 1864, when a more dramatic ejection occurred.[16] As the Rev. John G. Fee stated on September 22,

> "For months the officials have tried the experiment of sending the women and children out of camp. Like flies they soon come back..."[17]

[10] Ira Berlin, J.P. Reidy and L. Rowland, *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, Series II, The Black Military Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 12.

[11] Pvt. John Higgins, Testimony to Cap. E.B.W. Restieaux, November 28, 1864 (National Archives, Military Records, RG 92, Entry 225, Box 720, Washington, D.C.); W. Stephen McBride, *African-American Women, Power, and Freedom in the Contested Landscape of Camp Nelson, Kentucky* (in *Archaeology and Preservation of Gendered Landscapes*, edited by Sherene Baugher and Suzanne M. Spencer-Wood, New York: Springer Publications, 2010).

[12] Col. Andrew H. Clark, Letter to Major, January 23, 1864 (National Archives, Military Records, RG 383, Part 4, Entry 902, Washington, D.C.), 8.

[13] Lt. George A. Hannaford, Letter to Lt. John McQueen, June 17, 1864 (National Archives, Military Records, RG 393, Press Copies, Vol. 107:234, Washington, D.C.).

[14] Lt. George A. Hannaford, Order from Brig. Genl. S.S. Fry, July 3, 1864 (National Archives, Military Records, RG 393, Press Copies, Vol. 107:354, Washington, D.C.).

[15] Brig. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas, Order No. 24, July 6, 1864 (National Archives, Military Records, RG 92, Entry 225, Box 720, Washington, D.C.).

[16] Sears, *Camp Nelson*, 64-136.

[17] Rev. John G. Fee, Letter to Brother Strieby, September 22, 1864 (American Missionary

Exactly how the women and children were able to remain or return to camp is unclear, but there is mention of the women bribing guards and it is probable that the women and sympathetic officers and employees used the "government employ" exception to stay in camp. Only two legitimate employment opportunities are mentioned in the documents; washerwomen and cooks. Documents do not list any African-American employees at this time, but they were likely operating independently as entrepreneurs.[18]

Archaeological excavations at a refugee encampment site within Camp Nelson strongly support laundry as a major activity performed by the women.[19] The large quantity and variety of buttons, eyelets, and seed beads, as well as a sad iron found, indicate that the women did laundry at their hut sites for men and women, civilians and soldiers, including officers and enlisted men. At Camp Nelson, the demand for washerwomen made these women indispensable and gave them a legitimate reason for staying in camp. It also gave them the power to create and economically support their own homes and community.

Unfortunately this adaptation, by itself, could not overcome the politics and legal situation of Kentucky. On November 22-25, 1864, District Commander Brig. Gen. Speed Fry, (a native Kentuckian himself) succumbed to pressure from the Army and slave owners, and expelled all of the 400 enslaved women and children from Camp Nelson. Fry utilized armed white troops to forcibly load the women and children onto wagons and escort them out of camp. Following the ejection, white soldiers destroyed and burned the refugee cabins, which is also evidenced archaeologically.[20]

This ejection, which occurred during a period of frigid weather, caused the death of 102 refugees from exposure and disease. The harshness of this action created an uproar that the women's allies, particularly Captain Theron Hall and Rev. John Fee, used to reach the ear of high ranking Washington officials and the northern public.[21] Ultimately, these actions were reversed and army policy amended so that refugees were resettled in a newly constructed "Home for Colored Refugees" within Camp Nelson.

The final outcome of the November expulsion was the passage of the March 3, 1865 Congressional act that freed the wives and children of the USCT. While similar legislation had been introduced numerous times before, it took the Camp Nelson expulsion tragedy to finally get it passed.[22] So, by March 1865 the "Second Battle of Camp Nelson" was a victory for the African-American refugees: they gained their freedom and created a home for themselves within Camp Nelson, although at a high cost.

Following the passage of this law, Sergeant Marrs noted,

> "Thousands of people are coming in [to Camp Nelson] from all directions, seeking their freedom. It was equal to the forum at Rome. All they had to do was get there and they were free."[23]

Association Archives, No. 44038, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky).

[18] Brig. Gen. Speed S. Fry, Orders, August 24, 1864 (National Archives, Military Records, RG 393, General Orders, Vol. 111/256:79, Washington, D.C.).; Brig. Gen. Speed S. Fry, General Orders No. 4, July 12, 1864 (National Archives, Military Records, RG 393, General Orders, Vol. 111/256:54, Washington, D.C.); Capt. Theron E. Hall, list of persons and articles employed at Camp Nelson, Kentucky, June 1863-October 1864 (National Archives, Military Records, RG 92, Entry 238, Washington, D.C.).; Rev. Abisha Scofield, Testimony to Capt. E.B.W. Restieaux, December 16, 1864 (National Archives, Military Records, RG 92, Entry 225, Box 720, Washington, D.C.).

[19] McBride, *African-American Women*.

[20] Sears, *Camp Nelson*, 135-140.

[21] Ibid, 60-138.

[22] Amy Murrell Taylor, How a Cold Snap in Kentucky Led to Freedom for Thousands: An Environmental Story of Emancipation. Manuscript in possession of the author, 2009.

[23] Marrs, 65.

The Third Battle

The third battle revolved around the "Home for Colored Refugees", involved two stages, and pitted former ally and abolitionist Capt. Theron E. Hall and the army against the refugees and the Rev. John G. Fee. The initial battle was over the type of housing and food available at the "Home", with Hall and the army wanting to place the refugees (whom they referred to as "inmates") in barracks and feed them army rations in a mess hall. Fee and the refugees wanted to live as family units in individual houses and prepare their own food. Eventually a compromise was reached with the refugees being housed in duplex cottages (one family in each half), but they were still to be fed in the mess house. Family level cooking was apparently just too disorderly for the army to tolerate.[24]

As the number of refugees increased to over 3000 people, some refugees had to build their own cabins, with chimneys, and cooked their own food the way they were used to. As a result of cooking their food and having better ventilation in these cabins, the families in the cabins were much healthier, according to a U. S. Sanitary Commission report, than those in the cottages.[25]

The "Home" battle entered its second stage after the Civil War, when it was taken over by the Freedmen's Bureau. The ultimate goal of the Freedmen's Bureau was to break up the "Home" and resettle the refugees as farm laborers in the Midwest and surprisingly, in the Lower South. This resettlement was bitterly fought by Rev. Fee, Rev. Abisha Scofield, and the refugees, many of whom wanted to stay until their husband returned.[26] Although some refugees were resettled, this battle was eventually won and the "Home" continued, first being operated by the American Missionary Association, then by families, eventually becoming the community of Ariel (now Hall) which still exists today.[27]

Conclusion: The Fourth Battle

What I like to call the "Fourth Battle of Camp Nelson" is continuing today. This is the effort to create a park at Camp Nelson to tell the story of these women and children and the African-American soldiers. At present we seem to be winning this battle, as a county park, covering 500 acres, and a museum have been created. But how to effectively interpret and convey this story is an ongoing battle. The creation of the park is a great victory for a site that was forgotten, perhaps purposefully, by at least the white population of Kentucky. In fact, until the recent creation of Camp Nelson Civil War Heritage Park, the only reminders that anything happened at Camp Nelson were the Camp Nelson National Cemetery and the "Camp Nelson" historical highway marker that memorialized Gen. William "Bull" Nelson, for whom the camp was named. No mention was made of the struggle for freedom for thousands of enslaved African-Americans on this marker (put up in the 1970s). Fortunately, this maker is now gone and has been replaced by one that focuses on and celebrates the site's African-American history. Hopefully, continued research, preservation, and interpretation will make Camp Nelson and its "battles" a place of history – for Kentucky and the nation.

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[25] Andrew, Letter to Dr. Elisha Harris.

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Chapter 12
Lincoln's Generals in Kentucky

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Dr. Apple is history professor emeritus at Georgetown College, retiring after thirty-six years of teaching. Trained as a French Revolution and Napoleonic scholar, during his career, Dr. Apple developed a zeal for gender and family studies, with his focus centered on the Henry Clay family in Kentucky. Through access to Clay family papers, Apple developed his book, *Cautious Rebel: A Biography of Susan Clay Sawitzky*, one of his many publications on aspects of the Clay family and Kentucky history.

United States President, Abraham Lincoln spent nearly as much time in the office of the Commander-in-Chief, Winfield Scott, as he did his own. Much has been made of the influence of William Seward, Secretary of State and the man who, according to many others, should have been President. To some, Lincoln seemed equally dependent upon his generals. As late as February 15, 1864, Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, wrote in his monumental diary that Lincoln consulted his Generals as frequently as he did Seward and, consequently, Winfield Scott, George McClellan and Henry W. Halleck had exercised more influence than they should have and often in the wrong direction.

Like the team of rivals he chose as a cabinet, the wily Lincoln may have been keeping his friends close and the not-so-friendly closer. A century and a half after his scant four years in office it is difficult to consider Abraham Lincoln as anything but one of the most intelligent, determined, and successful presidents in our history. But in 1860-61, Lincoln was a dark-horse candidate of an upstart party elected because the Democrats split their votes. The Republican Party had no base in the capital city and the government bureaucracy was staffed largely by democrats who may have been pro-Union but certainly believed themselves better prepared to run the government than the newly elected party. Even within Lincoln's own party Seward, Chase, Bates, and probably others believed themselves more effective leaders than the gawky, poorly dressed, gaunt westerner with little political experience and no *savoir faire*. Admittedly some changed their minds about Lincoln in time, but men like Salmon Chase and General George McClellan continued to believe themselves superior to the President.

The army presented Lincoln with a particularly difficult situation. He could not, of course, reunite the nation without the military. Moreover, he learned very quickly that they were poorly trained for modern warfare, and that some of his generals held sympathies for the South and for their former colleagues in arms now leading the rebellion. The results could have been catastrophic. Fortunately, Union incompetence was matched only by Confederate bungling. It has been said that one of the great advantages of the Union was that over one hundred sixty West Point trained generals fought for the Confederacy. More significantly, the military had been a closed society educated since the War of 1812 with experience only against Native Americans and the non-army of Mexico in 1848. They were also protective of their territory and hesitant to fight their former colleagues. Many were not anti-slavery. As late as September 1862, according to Gideon Welles, the President told the cabinet that a member of Henry Halleck's staff told him the army had not intended to capture or destroy the rebel army at Antietam for that would give the Union the advantage and lead to the abolition of slavery. The army officers merely wanted to exhaust

both sides then broker a compromise saving slavery that they would enforce. The report may not have been true but Lincoln appeared to believe it, and it would explain a problem that continually frustrated the president. How could he get the armies, superior to the confederate army by virtually any measure, to move against the enemy? McClelland, Meade, and Halleck trained their troops, collected supplies, and consistently asked for more of both before taking the field. They allowed Lee to slip away at Antietam, Gettysburg, and several other occasions that could have changed the nature of the war. Lincoln frequently expressed his frustration and longed to find a general who would fight, but in the early years of the war, he moved cautiously, asking for advice, playing student to his military teachers, until he had gained enough support to stand on his own.

With one major exception, Lincoln had better luck with his generals in Kentucky. The exception was Don Carlos Buell, another cautious and methodical officer who was suspected of having southern sympathies. While he saved Louisville from Braxton Bragg in 1862, many military historians have questioned his failure to pursue Bragg more vigorously after the Battle of Perryville. Once again, it was a case of letting the enemy escape to regroup and fight another day, prolonging a bloody war.

In Kentucky, Lincoln needed leadership for more than battlefield command. A border state, dissension and disagreement threatened Kentucky's loyalty to the Union. The often cited quip attributed to Lincoln that he hoped to have God on his side but had to have Kentucky may be an exaggeration, but the state was clearly important to the Union effort. Its border, the Ohio River, was critical geographically to the defense of the north. Its population was also more important to the Union than it would be now and the supplies that could be used by Union forces and by rebels were a more significant percentage of the totals than would be the case today. Lincoln needed not only generals who could fight, but those who could help hold the state within the Union.

Lincoln found in Kentucky the aggressive and creative leadership he craved. Early in the war he was drawn to General Robert Anderson, the "hero" of Fort Sumter. Born in Louisville, Anderson was pro-slavery, but he was highly respected in the army. In command of Union troops in South Carolina in 1861, he realized his vulnerable position at Fort Moultrie and moved his headquarters to Fort Sumter. His small force withstood thirty-four hours of bombardment, but even in defeat he maintained the dignity of his army and the Union. His men marched out of the fort with their arms and their colors. His gallantry galvanized northern support for the war, and Lincoln immediately promoted him to Brigadier General. It was the kind of association Lincoln desperately needed. His trust in the Kentucky officer became apparent when he sent him to his home state to orchestrate the effort to keep Kentucky in the Union. Retiring in 1863 because of illness, Anderson had helped Lincoln in two significant ways. Early on in the war, any person or thing viewed positively and associated with the president was a boon, and keeping Kentucky in the Union was important even if the state's loyalty was lukewarm. Public relations were as important in Kentucky early in the war as battlefield leadership.

Lincoln also found aggressive leadership in William "Bull" Nelson. Born near Maysville, the three hundred pound Nelson began his military career in the navy, but his service to Lincoln was the arming of Union men and recruitment of volunteers in his home state. On May 20, 1861, Beriah Magoffin, Kentucky's pro-southern governor, declared the state's "neutrality." Lowell Harrison, a respected state historian, states that "few Kentuckians with political acumen could have expected neutrality to continue permanently." Lincoln was certainly not one of them. In April 1861, the President sent Nelson into Kentucky to secretly recruit for the Union army. Nelson was also instrumental in securing and distributing 5000 "Lincoln guns" to arm Kentucky Union men. Initially, most of the recruitment of Kentucky volunteers occurred just north of the Ohio River, but in August, 1861, Kentucky returned a large majority of Unionists to the legislature, and Nelson took advantage of the sentiment to create Camp Dick Robinson in Garrard County. When he began

openly to recruit Kentuckians, the state's political leaders protested. When Senator J.J. Crittenden, who had sons serving as generals in both the Confederate and Union armies, complained, Nelson allegedly responded: "That a camp of loyal Union men, native Kentuckians, should assemble in camp under the flag of the Union and upon their native soil should be a cause of apprehension is something I do not clearly understand." Camp Dick Robinson would become not only a major base for recruiting, but a haven for Kentucky slaves who quickly disproved the myth that they were satisfied with their lot and wanted only to remain on the farms of their dear old masters. Nelson participated in Henry Halleck's snail-like advance on Corinth and Buell's equally lethargic assault of Chattanooga. He was badly defeated by Kirby Smith at Richmond, Kentucky in August 1862 though not for lack of energy. A month later he was murdered by General Jefferson C. Davis, U.S.A. robbing Lincoln of both a Public Relations general and an aggressive battlefield commander.

Other battlefield commanders first came to Lincoln's attention when they fought in Kentucky. Serving under Henry Halleck, Ulysses S. Grant suggested an assault upon the South by advancing up the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers. Halleck was a spit and polish officer who reacted negatively when he met the unkempt Grant despite the fact that he had considered such a plan himself. When Confederate General Gideon Pillow led his forces into western Kentucky in late August 1861, Grant responded by seizing Paducah, Kentucky. He then moved on to Forts Donnelson and Henry, but he had thwarted a rebel advance through the western part of the state. Grant was part of a western coalition of generals who would eventually win the war. General William T. Sherman replaced Anderson as Union commander in Kentucky. Taking a more realistic view of what was needed to win the war, his commanding officers scoffed and spread the word that he was crazy. As happens frequently in the army, when his prophecy proved to be accurate, those superiors held him responsible for their failure. Nevertheless, Sherman and Grant recognized that a victory would require a harsh, even brutal response to what Sherman called treason. Both men would slowly rise in favor, but it was a difficult journey through army politics that extended beyond the boundaries of Kentucky.

One of the most unsung Generals who fought in Kentucky was George Henry Thomas. A Virginian by birth, he had served in the regular army under Albert Sidney Johnston and Robert E. Lee. Against charges of being pro-secessionists and disavowed by his family, Thomas stayed with the Union. He defeated Felix Zollicoffer at Mill Springs in 1862 and participated in the Battle of Perryville. Known as the "Sledge of Nashville" for his service in central Tennessee, Thomas proved to be a quiet, steady, and dependable officer in an army composed of far too many political generals.

Lincoln needed another type of aggressive leadership in Kentucky. Generals Jeremiah Boyle, Stephen Gano Burbridge, and John M. Palmer served as commanding generals of the District of Kentucky from May 1862 through the end of the war. Their task was perhaps the most important but also the most difficult, and there were no honors to be won for them. The Confederates were driven out of Kentucky by the end of 1862 except for John Hunt Morgan's raids, but their task was to limit the support Kentuckians might give to the confederacy. The three men were all natives of Kentucky. Jerry Boyle was born in Mercer County. Burbridge and Palmer were born in Scott County. (Opposed to slavery, Palmer's family moved to Illinois when he was a boy.) Being native to the state did not lessen the contempt citizens of the state expressed toward them. Boyle and Burbridge owned slaves, but that did not translate into understanding of the pro-slavery attitudes of Kentuckians. Burbridge was so despised that he could not live in the state after the war. Like Humphrey Marshall in earlier times, Kentuckians stood in line to fight a duel with him. His brother was killed solely because he was the brother of Stephen Gano Burbridge.
How much of Kentucky's hatred for the three men they earned by their actions and how much resulted from the pro-southern and/or racist attitudes of Kentuckians is difficult to determine.

Clearly, the military commanders paid little attention to the constitutional rights of the citizens. The record of the military in Kentucky provides clear evidence for caution when giving military personnel too much authority over civilians.

Brigadier General Jeremiah Tilford Boyle became military commander of what would later be called the District of Kentucky on May 27, 1862. Intent upon stopping guerrilla activities and suppressing Confederate support, his tactics violated civil rights to the point that he alienated all but the most ardent Unionists. Boyle clearly made no distinction between support of the southern cause and sympathy to it. His order of June 1, 1862 declared that when property of loyal citizens was damaged by guerillas, the disloyal of the neighborhood would be held responsible and pay compensation. He also required a loyalty oath and denial of any sympathy toward the south under oath. An ambitious man, Boyle placed himself on the ballot and implied that a vote for his opponent would be considered an act of disloyalty to the Union. In January 1864, he was relieved of command at the request of many Union sympathizers in the state. Boyle's enthusiasm for the Union cause certainly led him to ignore rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Freedom of speech, press, and assembly were clearly violated, but in time of war that is not unusual. Lincoln justified such action, suggesting that the edifice of law could not be destroyed to protect a single principle of it. During Boyle's tenure, Lincoln rescinded the right of habeas corpus in Kentucky. Constitutional protection of judicial rights, i.e., habeas corpus, trial by jury, and the legitimacy of military tribunals, came under tremendous strain during the Civil War.

Kentucky loved to hate no man more than Stephen Gano Burbridge. Named military commander of the District of Kentucky in 1864, he quickly gained the nickname "Butcher Burbridge" because of his efforts to bring order to the state and to force support of the Union. He arrested people who voiced their hostility to the Emancipation Proclamation, including Richard Jacob, a Union officer from one of the leading families of Louisville. Similarly, he sought to stifle opposition to Lincoln's re-election. He strongly supported an edict of July 2, 1864 giving military courts jurisdiction over those arrested as guerillas and instituted a retaliatory policy that authorized the execution of four guerilla prisoners for each Union man killed. Later proponents of the lost cause mythology claimed he executed legitimate confederate soldiers, but little evidence exists to prove it. (One Confederate soldier had been sentenced to death by a Confederate military tribunal before Burbridge had him shot but he became something of a hero to the lost cause.) Later in July 1864, he decreed that any Confederate sympathizer within five miles of a guerilla raid would be subject to arrest. In October, he ordered the Union military to take no more guerilla prisoners. Burbridge angered Kentuckians further when he interfered with the sale of pork in what became known as the Great Hog Swindle. The army needed to purchase pork to feed the troops and the growing number of blacks at Union army camps within the state. The Cincinnati hog market paid higher prices than the army, but Burbidge refused to let Kentuckians cross the Ohio to sell for higher prices. Restricting economic opportunity seemed to anger Kentuckians as much as limiting political expression.

Governor Thomas Bramlette and other Union leaders eventually convinced Lincoln to remove Burbridge. Again, however, Burbridge's actions and the way they were received raise many interesting points of interpretation. Granted, Burbridge was by nature an extremely rigid man. He earned the ire of many of his fellow officers when he reported them to their superiors for failing to maintain discipline as required by military regulations. He was a "by-the-book" commander, and the military, backed by Abraham Lincoln, had decided to crack down on dissenters. As early as April 1863, the military adopted the Lieber Code, a policy devised by Francis Lieber and approved by Secretary of War Stanton and the President, suggesting a much stronger response to civilian opposition. The President declared martial law and suspended appeal to the writ of habeas corpus in the state. Burbridge also acted under the orders of General William T. Sherman. In short,

Burbridge appears to have been doing what his superiors demanded. Even though Lincoln removed him, he seemed to be trying again to appease Kentuckians rather than voicing an objection to the methods of Burbridge.

There is also the question of the methods a commanding general can use to restore peace in an area that has fallen into patterns of anarchy. Guerillas roamed the state at will. Court houses had been burned, limiting the exercise of the judicial branch of government, and the war became an excuse for retaliation, family feuds, and other acts of violence. How authorities restore peace under such conditions may be as much an issue today in areas of unrest as they were in the Kentucky that Burbridge commanded.

Finally, though Boyle and Burbridge certainly violated some constitutional rights, Kentuckians, particularly after the passage of the Emancipation Proclamation, grew increasingly bitter toward the Union. One suspects the military commanders could have done little to maintain order and please a large percentage of the state's population. At the outset of the war, Kentuckians were pro-Union but they were not anti-slavery. Any weakening of the peculiar institution increased the ire of Kentuckians. They protested when slaves flocked to Camp Dick Robinson. They fumed when Union armies proved hesitant to return runaway slaves. They opposed emancipation even though the measure did not apply to Kentucky.

Burbridge provided one other important service to Lincoln and infuriated Kentuckians in the process. When the President called for the enlistment of black troops, Burbridge embraced the policy enthusiastically. He took personal responsibility for recruitment of blacks against the advice of his friends and moved quickly to get all-black units into the field. Burbridge's greatest service to the Union may have been the enlistment of over 20,000 Kentucky African-Americans as soldiers in the Union army. In total numbers Kentucky ranked second only to Louisiana. Kentuckians reacted with unbelievable hostility. Indeed, any increase in the role of African-Americans aroused Kentuckians to white-hot hostility. John M. Palmer experienced a similar response when he issued blacks the infamous Palmer Passes, which merely allowed African-Americans the freedom to freely cross the state's border at Cincinnati.

Lincoln, then, found generals in Kentucky as anxious for victory as he was. Grant, Sherman, Thomas and Burbridge pursued the enemy aggressively and effectively whenever they fought. They seemed to understand better than most that the war would be long and brutal. Another reason Kentuckians may have despised Burbridge is because he pursued the beloved John Hunt Morgan, Kentucky's version of the gallant cavalier officer, with such vigor, leading to the disintegration of Morgan's force. Anderson proved to be a valuable public relations factor in the border state as did Union generals such as Thomas Crittenden who showed that even Kentucky's leading family's were not solidly southern. The roles of Boyle, Burbridge, and Palmer are more difficult to assess. Perhaps overly aggressive, they angered many Kentuckians. However, the interpretation of their service has yet to be fully disentangled from the mythology of the lost cause. Kentucky supplied roughly 90,000 troops to the Union compared to approximately 40,000 men to the Confederacy. From a strategic concern, it was important to keep the state in the Union, and that was accomplished largely by military action. Though seriously divided in sentiment, the state remained in Lincoln's camp until its disaffection was militarily inconsequential. While Lincoln had to deal with the complaints of Kentuckians about disrespect for their neutrality, violations of constitutional rights, and "atrocious" acts that elevated the status of African–Americans, he found in Kentucky the kind of leadership he wanted and the military leaders key to victory in 1865.

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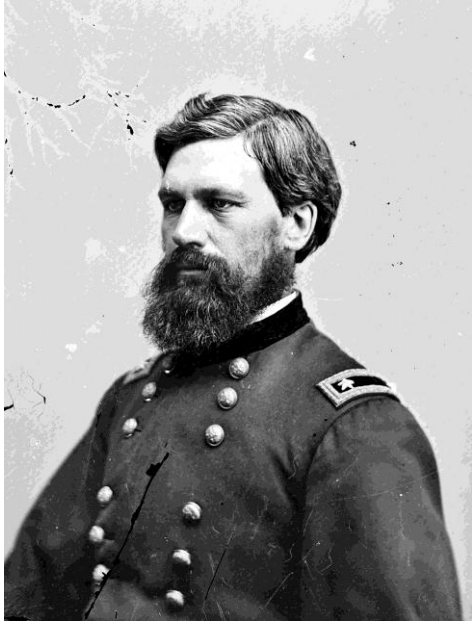

Major General Oliver Otis Howard, Director of the Freedman's Bureau and founder of Howard and Lincoln Memorial Universities.
Matthew Brady photo, courtesy National Archives.

Major General Oliver Otis Howard was born November 8, 1830, Leeds, Maine and died October 26, 1909, Burlington, Vermont at the age of 78. Howard received six Medal of Honor citations, was the founder of Howard University in Washington, D.C. to benefit newly freed African American slaves and Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tennessee to benefit residents of Appalachia. Howard served as Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau at Abraham Lincoln's request from May 1865 to July 1874.

Lincoln Memorial University

Lincoln Memorial University was founded in 1897 by General O.O. Howard at the direct request of President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's vision of a university for the people of an isolated Appalachian region and Howard's ability to gain tremendous public support for the school led to the creation of Lincoln Institute that has served the Appalachian region and the world for 108 years.

Chapter 13
Conclusion:
African Americans and the Civil War: "'63 is the Jubilee"

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On September 22, 1862 from Soldier's Rest, the presidential retreat on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., Abraham Lincoln issued his intent to sign an Emancipation Proclamation freeing an estimated four million enslaved African Americans in rebelling states effective January 1, 1863, twenty months after Confederate forces fired upon Fort Sumter, South Carolina to begin the Civil War. Lincoln's presidential action riveted the nation, caused endless political debate, and generated public outcry as to whether or not the President of the United States had within his legal authority, the right to issue such a wide-ranging and all encompassing edict. Prior to the "War of the Rebellion," several national scholars, elected and lay politicians supported the argument that the American Constitution was a "proslavery" document, one such supporter was former President, John Quincy Adams. On March 3, 1820, three days before the *Missouri Enabling Act* went into effect, then Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, conceded this point, noting regrettably that the American Constitution indeed afforded southern states and southern slaveholders constitutional protection to determine whether to end or retain slavery within their individual states.[1] Today's constitutional historians and lawmakers generally agree Lincoln possessed little to no legal or constitutional authority to free slaves in southern states. Those same constitutional historians and lawmakers also agree the president of the United States possesses not only the legal and constitutional authority, but an inherent presidential responsibility to protect the Union, punish sedition, and quell open rebellion. An avenue of opportunity to defend the Union was afforded Lincoln when Confederate forces fired upon Fort Sumter April 14, 1861. For African Americans, the constant political debate and public wrangling as to whether the war began to preserve the Union or protect states' rights, were all moot. For them, the first shots fired in the Civil War January 1, 1863 following President Lincoln's signature on the Emancipation Proclamation, signaled the nation's official declaration of war on the institution of American slavery and the cause célèbre for the war.

African Americans received news of Lincoln's impending signature on the Emancipation Proclamation with both joy and deep reservation. Understanding the tremendous political and economic power of the American "slaveocracy" in the North and South, at no time did African Americans assume Lincoln's final signature on the enacting legislation assured. To

[1] Charles Francis Adams, ed. *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of his Diary from 1795-1848*, Vol. V, Philadelphia, 1885:4-12.

the delight of black abolitionists, the president's announced intent to emancipate slaves provided evidence of their well-established, secretive, and pervasive information network for all Americans when news of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation spread rapidly throughout the South. The effectiveness of black abolitionist communication, particularly among their enslaved southern brethren, was called to the attention of the nation in a September 29, 1862 *New York Times* article, which stated "there is a far more rapid and secret diffusing of intelligence and news throughout the plantations than was ever dreamed of in the North." The fast and widespread dissemination of information among southern slaves surprised even the North's staunchest white abolitionists. In Kentucky, news spread so rapidly popular newspapers, including *The Louisville Journal*, requested Kentucky's profuse African American clergy urge the enslaved to remain with their masters and to educate them that Lincoln's proposed legislation did not change their legal status in Kentucky as chattel property nor lessen the punishment for escaping and recalcitrant slaves. In Kentucky as throughout the South, as well as in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Massachusetts, the heart of America's most aggressive free black antislavery populations, African Americans composed art, poetry, and music, to honor the day's hoped for event; citizens scheduled "watch night" vigils, prayer meetings, and community action programs in breathless anticipation and preparation of Lincoln's signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, or his betrayal.

Presbyterian minister Reverend Henry Highland Garnet (1815-1882) pastor of Shiloh Presbyterian Church of NY

Encouraged by other black abolitionists to await the January 1 effective date prior to scheduling any celebratory events, Henry Highland Garnet was unable to "quench the spirit" of freedom or contain the jubilation pervading his soul. The product of parents who escaped to freedom on the Underground Railroad from Maryland to New York, Garnet served as pastor of the Fifteenth Street Presbyterian Church in New York from 1864 to 1866. Garnet became one of the first black leaders in the nation to openly celebrate Lincoln's "intent" to issue the Emancipation Proclamation in advance of the president's signature on the authorizing legislation. On September 29, 1862, Garnet organized a celebratory community meeting at Shiloh Presbyterian Church at the corner of Prince and Hammond Streets in New York City, a church founded by Samuel Cornish as New York's First Colored Presbyterian Church in 1822 and where Garnet served as the congregation's third pastor.

From its founding, the church's pastors, members, and the church building itself served as important participants and a location on the Underground Railroad. Acknowledged as a renowned orator, abolitionist worker, and Presbyterian minister, Garnet spent over twenty-five years of his life advocating African Americans undertake aggressive political and social action to end slavery on their own, becoming the first African American to address the U.S. House of Representatives. Baptized into the Presbyterian Church by Theodore S. Wright, Wright also directed Garnet to the Presbyterian ministry. Though Garnet began his ministerial career as a moderate abolitionist promoting the doctrine of "moral suasion," his sentiments quickly changed to "liberation theology" and the implementation of more aggressive forms of social protest involving boycotts of cotton, sugar, and rice as well as a call for African American men to rise up in open rebellion against slave owners.[2] Lincoln's "coming

[2] Leon Litwack and August Meier, eds. *Black Leaders in the Nineteenth Century.* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988); Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*. (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1989), 163; and Henry Highland Garnet,

Lewis Hayden (1811-1889), escaped Lexington, KY slave, abolitionist, military organizer, UGR conductor, Massachusetts legislator.

around" to Garnet's way of thinking was no doubt great cause for celebration. As an advocate for the Union and the Civil War, Garnet used his impressive access to resources to aid in the organization of African American military units in support of Lincoln and the war effort.

More conservative black abolitionist leaders postponed celebrating the nation's upcoming momentous occasion to coincide events with those of millions of other Americans on New Year's Eve, 1862 and New Year's Day, 1863. The city of Boston, Massachusetts, the repatriated home to several escaped southern slaves who went on to become national leaders in the anti-slavery movement, hosted one such planned event. Boston was the adopted home of two escaped Kentucky slaves and Lincoln allies, Lewis Hayden and William Wells Brown. Heavily committed to the cause of recruiting black men to serve in the ranks of the Union Army, Lewis Hayden and William Wells Brown proved important for Lincoln's black military enlistment efforts. In addition, to the well-known recruiting success of the famed orator and abolitionists Frederick Douglass and Martin Delany, Hayden and Brown actively raised thousands of military recruits in the North as well as in the South, the location which held the bulk of America's black population and future military enlistees.

William Wells Brown (1816-1884), escaped Lexington, KY slave, author, playwright, UGR conductor, military organizer, abolitionist.

Brown and Hayden were members of the Boston Vigilance Committee and workers for the American Antislavery Society. Both men employed every means at their disposal to "incite servile insurrection" upon joining Lincoln's national black military recruiting efforts. Unlike Garnet and similar New York residents, Boston's black antislavery advocates cautiously scheduled "watch night" events for New Year's Eve and New Year's Day to await Lincoln's final signature. At the appointed time, Boston residents, which in all probability included the attendance of Lewis Hayden and his wife Harriet, gathered at Tremont Temple located at 88 Tremont Street to either celebrate or decry Lincoln's final definitive action.

The Tremont, a former community playhouse built in Greek Revival style in 1827, was renamed Tremont Temple by members of the Free Church Baptists in 1843 under the leadership of the African American Union Progressive Association. To defray the cost of the day's events, the Association's "Committee of Arrangements" charged ten cents per person to hear many of the nation's most knowledgeable antislavery and political leaders. A series of performances and presentations were scheduled with the intent of providing engaging

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An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America (Buffalo, NY, 1843).

activities the morning of New Year's Eve meant to carry through until well after midnight and into New Year's Day.

The Association's morning agenda included presentations by such well-known black abolitionists as William C. Nell. Nell, in addition to being a friend and associate of Lewis Hayden, was a Boston native, an abolitionist, historian, journalist, orator, and lawyer. As a child, Nell attended an African American grammar school and graduated from an interracial Massachusetts school. After studying law, Nell was dedicated to antislavery work, lecturing, organizing meetings, and assisting fugitive slaves. In 1842, he helped establish the Freedom Association, an organization of African Americans who provided escaped slaves with protection, food, clothing, and shelter. Nell joined the staff of William Lloyd Garrison's anti-slavery newspaper, the *Liberator*, in the early 1840s where he managed the paper's Negro Employment Office. In 1847, he moved to Rochester, New York where he worked with Frederick Douglass to publish the *North Star*.[3] Returning to Boston in 1852, Nell, Hayden, and other Boston abolitionists created the Boston Committee of Vigilance to assist and protect escaped slaves. So, it was not coincidental that one of Boston's newest residents and one of Nell's longtime friends and associates, Lewis Hayden, was an escaped slave from Lexington, Kentucky.

Hayden reached Boston in 1844 via Ohio, Detroit, and Canada as an escapee on the Underground Railroad. The former property of Presbyterian minister Reverend Adam Rankin, Hayden was born the son of an enslaved mother and a free black father. Hayden's life was so eventful and so interesting, Harriet Beecher Stowe incorporated elements of his life into her heralded book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Hayden stated his mind turned toward thoughts of human equality and freedom early in life following a brief encounter with French General Lafayette during Lafayette's 1825 visit to Lexington at the conclusion of the French Revolution. After racing to the edge of Lexington to catch a glimpse of the famous General, Hayden stated he perched on a fence to observe the general's passing carriage. From his open carriage, the General spotted Hayden perched on a nearby fence, whereupon he lifted his hat, and offered Hayden a deep bow. Hayden stated this simple act of respect deeply affected him and remained a treasured memory his entire life.[4] Following a life of slavery, escape and anti-slavery activism, Hayden's dream and commitment to universal black freedom was actualized two weeks after Confederate soldiers fired upon Fort Sumter, signaling the beginning of the Civil War.

Taking advantage of a twenty year friendship with Massachusetts' Governor John A. Andrew and Lincoln's intent and final signature on the Emancipation Proclamation, Hayden wasted no time in calling upon Andrew, his old friend and fellow abolitionist, to request his assistance in forming an African American military unit to join in the national war effort. Hayden's efforts resulted in the formation of the famed 54th Massachusetts Regiment. As a free man, Hayden immediately began encouraging military preparedness, recruitment and enlistment among Boston's African American men.

Another featured Tremont Temple presenter was Hayden's fellow Kentuckian and abolitionist partner, William Wells Brown. Brown had also escaped to freedom on the Underground Railroad to Canada from slavery in Lexington, Kentucky ten years earlier, in 1834. In addition to serving as a Kentucky boatman on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, where he actively aided slave escapes, Brown also worked in the printing office of Illinois abolitionist Elijah P. Lovejoy. In 1843, Brown became a traveling lecturer for the American Antislavery Society gaining renown as a much sought after public

[3] "William Cooper Nell (1816 - 1874)," in *Boston African-American National Historic Site*, National Park Service, (2002); William C. Nell, "The Triumph of Equal School Rights in Boston," in Philip S. Foner and Robert James Branham (eds.), *Lift Every Voice: African American Oratory, 1787-1900* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1998).

[4] "Death of Lewis Hayden," *New York Age*, April 13, 1889.

speaker. As a testament to Brown's intellectual and persuasive oratory skills on behalf of freedom and human rights, the American Peace Society selected him their representative to the 1849 International Peace Congress in Paris. Brown remained three years in Europe where he studied medicine, became active in the temperance, woman's suffrage, and prison reform movements before returning to America. Brown's first play, *The Escape,* or a *Leap for Freedom,* was published in 1858.[5] Following Brown's sterling oratory at Tremont Temple, the afternoon session began, led by Dr. J. B. Smith and Reverend James Freeman Clark, included the collection of funds to aid newly freed slaves, and closed with a stirring presentation by famed orator and abolitionist Frederick Douglass. As one of only three white attendees at the Tremont Temple "watch night" event, Fanny Garrison Villard (1844-1928),[6] recounted the evening's experience in the following manner:

"The solemnity and intense excitement of the occasion were indescribably thrilling, and I almost felt as if I could hear the heart-beats of those present, as well as my own. The black preacher said, in substance, 'The President of the United States has promised that if the Confederates do not lay down their arms he would free all the slaves tomorrow. They have not laid down their arms, and tomorrow will bring freedom of the oppressed slaves. But we all know that the powers of darkness are with the President, trying to make him break his word, but we must watch and see that he does not break his word.' [The minister then exclaimed to great applause] "The old serpent is abroad and he will be here at midnight in all his power. But don't be alarmed, our prayers will prevail and God Almighty's New Year will make the United States a true land of freedom!'"[7]

News of a signed Emancipation Proclamation reached Tremont Temple amid great cheers and much trepidation near the end of New Year's Day. Judge Thomas Russell retrieved news of the president's signature from the wire and immediately rushed it to a highly charged and apprehensive crowd, where he read the announcement aloud.[8]

Tremont Temple, Boston, Massachusetts, site of the city's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation celebration.

Launched by rousing events at Tremont Temple, black Massachusetts' military recruiting efforts proved more successful than those of other northern states. Anticipating the need for military volunteers, many northern governors attempted to form African American military units immediately following issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation with little success. No doubt, Hayden and Brown's organizing skills coupled with the aid of members of the Boston Vigilance Committee, and hundreds of other free blacks in Boston made the difference in petitioning Governor John A. Andrew for "the privilege of forming a part of the militia" and successfully organizing the nation's first officially recognized black military unit.

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[5] William Wells Brown, *From Fugitive Slave to Free Man: the Autobiographies of William Wells Brown,* (New York: Mentor Books, 1993).

[6] Villard, the wife of American journalist, owner of *The Nation* magazine, and president of Northern Pacific Railway Henry Villard, attended the evening events with her famous abolitionist father, William Lloyd Garrison a featured speaker and honored guest on the "watch night" program and her brother, William Lloyd Garrison, Jr. A lifelong pacifist, Villard was a founding member of the NAACP and a leading member of the American Woman Suffrage Association.

[7] The interview of Fanny Garrison Villard, "How Boston Received the Emancipation Proclamation," *Review of Reviews,* Boston:1913; http://antislavery.eserver.org/legacies/how-boston-received-the-emancipation-proclamation/garrisonvillard.html 2/14/2010

[8] *The Liberator,* January 2, 1863

Inspired by growing patriotic fervor and anticipating Abraham Lincoln's willingness and future action to enlist black men in Union forces, one hundred twenty-five African American men joined Nell, Brown, Hayden, and thousands of other black men across the nation in forming drill companies to prepare for immediate military service.[9] Brown and Hayden's lobbying efforts met with success when Andrew assured them he would make every effort to provide the men an opportunity to join the ranks of Union fighting forces. On January 1, 1863, Governor Andrew traveled to Washington, D.C. where he met with President Lincoln's Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton, presenting a draft of an order authorizing Andrew to raise "such corps of infantry for the volunteer service as he may find convenient, such volunteers to be enlisted for three years, or until sooner discharged." In what appeared to be an afterthought of his promise to Hayden, Andrew added the handwritten line "and may include persons of African descent, organized into separate corps,"[10] offering command of the new unit of free African American men to be known as the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment, to Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, a veteran of the Second Massachusetts Regiment and the son of prominent New York abolitionist, Francis Shaw.[11]

Andrews appointed George L. Stearns supervisor of Massachusetts' black enlistment efforts. In turn, Stearns enlisted the aid of well-known African American leaders as military recruiters including William Wells Brown and Lewis Hayden, both former "agents" of the American Anti-Slavery Society and members of the Boston Vigilance Committee. Both men quickly became successful recruiters for the newly commissioned Massachusetts unit, seeking volunteers among free blacks throughout the United States.[12] Agents appointed by Stearns were assigned certain sections of the country in which to recruit volunteers, employing exhortation, visitations to homes, barbershops and gathering spots of young African American men, the agent's traveled the country and Canada enlisting black men to fight and form the Massachusetts 54th. Their recruiting efforts were so successful, a companion unit, the Massachusetts 55th, was also formed commanded by another good friend of Hayden, Norwood Hallowell. In formation of the 55th Massachusetts, all comers free and enslaved were accepted, including many Kentuckians who arrived in Readville, Massachusetts too late to enlist in the 54th Massachusetts in response to the call for volunteers.[13] (See Tables 1 and 2)

By July 21, 1863, the ranks of the Massachusetts 55th were filled. The "spillover" of 980 African American men accepted as members of the Massachusetts 55th entered from every walk of life: 287 had been slaves, 693 were listed as "free men of color", 550 were listed as "pure blacks," and 430 were of "mixed blood." Nearly 500 could read, over 300 could read and write. Forty-six trades and occupations were represented, although farming, with 596 enlistees, overshadowed all other occupations. The birthplace of the 1354 members who formed the new regiment covered twenty-five states, the

[9] *The Liberator*, May 3, 1861.

[10] Albert Gallatin Browne, *Sketch of the Official Life of John A. Andrew*, New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1868, 103-4.

[11] Russell Duncan, ed. *Blue-Eyed Child of Fortune: The Civil War Letters of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 1-68; and Luis F. Emilio, *A Brave Black Regiment: The History of the 54th Massachusetts, 1863-1865*, Library of Congress, 1874.

[12] Joel Strangis, *Lewis Hayden and the War Against Slavery* (Connecticut: Linnet Books, 1999), 121; Luis F. Emilio, *A Brave Black Regiment*, 1874. Reprint (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 12-13.

[13] Emilio, lists eight Kentuckians who traveled to Boston to enlist in the Massachusetts 54th Regiment, 328-388. There is a great possibility many who enlisted from southern Ohio, eastern Indiana, Pennsylvania, and Canada were actually Kentucky escaped slaves, such as Addison White, who listed himself as a Mechanicsburg, Ohio resident, but was actually an escaped slave from Mason County, KY. Mechanicsburg, Ohio residents purchased White's freedom prior to the beginning of the Civil War. Information on 55th taken from Massachusetts Adjutant General's Office, *Massachusetts Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines in the Civil War, 8 Vols.* (Norwood, Mass: Norwood Press), Vol. 4:658-714.

District of Columbia, Canada, and Africa.[14]

Even though discussed at the national level in October 1862, federally sanctioned recruitment of black troops did not officially begin until the summer of 1863 outside the Commonwealth of Kentucky, enlisting young men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five, six months following enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation. Prior to issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, black military units had already organized for battle in the South: the 1st Kansas Volunteers organized by Col. James Williams during the summer of 1862; and the 1st South Carolina, a unit of contrabands organized by General Saxton in October that same year. How many black Kentuckians fled the state to enlist in these early units has not been examined.

National recruiting efforts initiated under the auspices of the Emancipation Proclamation utilized the Proclamation's enabling language that declared freed slaves "of suitable condition" would 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 services." Kentucky's decision to remain within the Union allowed the state to escape authorizing federal legislation ending ownership of African Americans as property and enabled the state to sustain enforcement of Kentucky slave codes throughout the Civil War. Kentucky's attempt to adhere to its slaveholding past did not prevent escaping slaves from enlisting at Union forts and encampments, however.[15]

Black Kentuckians denied an opportunity to enlist within their own state, fled to other states at the urging of black army recruiters with strong ties to the Ohio River Valley, like Lewis Hayden, William Wells Brown, John Mercer Langston (Oberlin, Ohio), John Parker (Ripley, Ohio), as well as to army recruiters in Columbus, Ohio, Evansville, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Gallatin, Clarksville, and Fort Donelson, Tennessee to enlist.[16] An estimated 436 Kentucky African Americans fled the state to enlist in the Union Navy.

President Lincoln assigned the task of black military recruitment in the South to General Lorenzo Thomas. To facilitate the president's request, Thomas appointed a special officer of black recruiting in the person of Brigadier General Augustus L. Chetlain of Galena, Illinois. Chetlain was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1824 and moved with his parents to Galena in 1826. He moved once again to Elyria, Ohio[17] in 1847 where he began his own family. At the beginning of the Civil War, Chetlain volunteered and helped organize the first company of volunteers from the Galena area. They fought at Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, and Shiloh, after which Chetlain was promoted from Captain to Colonel to Brigadier General by 1863. In 1865, he was promoted to Brevet Major General of U.S. Volunteers. Headquartered in Memphis, Tennessee and Louisville, Kentucky Chetlain quickly established a string of black recruiting stations in Chattanooga, Nashville, and Corinth, Tennessee as well as in Columbus, Central, and Eastern Kentucky.

Former slave, Ohio businessman, and Underground Railroad conductor from Ripley, Ohio John Parker, Ohio abolitionists John Jones, and Oberlin College law professor John Mercer Langston openly recruited blacks in Kentucky

[14] Quarles, 1989:185

[15] Marion Lucas, *History of Blacks in Kentucky, Vol. 1*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1992:148. The first escapees to federal lines for military enlistment is said to have occurred at Camp Nevin, Hart County, Kentucky in 1861. Escaped slaves were regarded as "contrabands" and fulfilled many of the same functions assigned to plantation slaves.

[16] Ibid, 1992:152.

[17] The City of Elyria, OH was a well-known stop on the Underground Railroad the home of conductors Wilson Bruce and Henry Evans, free black cabinetmaker and undertaker from North Carolina; attorney John Mercer Langston and his brother Charles who maintained an Underground Railroad Station at their home; and Robbins and Jabez Burrell, two founding members of Oberlin College who functioned as Underground Railroad station masters. Information taken from *Freedom Seekers: Ohio and the Underground Railroad*, Friends of Freedom Society Press: Columbus, 2004, 85-9.

and throughout the Ohio River Valley.[18] Parker alone is credited with recruiting hundreds of black Kentuckians for enlistment in the 27th Colored Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Between April 1 to December 24, 1863, Thomas reported Bureau recruiting results as having enlisted 20,830 black volunteers in the Mississippi River Valley: 825 in the cavalry; 4,517 in the artillery; 15,448 in the infantry.[19] Many black Kentuckians recruited by Pennsylvania army recruiters during this time went on to fill the ranks of the Massachusetts 54th and 55th Infantry.[20] Ironically, black troops organized outside Kentucky and African Americans who left the state to enlist, became the first black troops to see real military action against Confederates rather than fatigue duty Kentucky recruits were initially assigned to perform.

Realizing enlistment in the Union Army would quickly end control over their enslaved and free black populations, Kentucky slave owners fought black enlistment, many insisting upon compensation for slaves lost to military service and escape. Later than in other states, during June of 1864, Adjutant General Thomas was specifically charged with the federal responsibility of raising black military units in a resistant Kentucky. To this end, garrisoned military camps to protect and train black troops were established in Paducah, Owensboro, Bowling Green, Lebanon, Louisville, Covington, Camp Nelson and Louisa, Kentucky. Hundreds of slaves from Trimble to Bracken County traveled north to enlist at Covington, further east slaves enlisted at Maysville and Greenupsburg.[21] During this time, blacks absent from the control of slave masters and unfortunate enough to have remained in the state found themselves labeled fugitives. To move about the state, federal authorities issued "Palmer's Passes"[22] even after ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in December 1865. Kentucky slaves' eagerness to join the military ranks of the Union, demonstrated the falsehood of claims of black satisfaction as the property of benevolent white slave owners. Black Kentuckians joined Union forces in record numbers, an estimated 25,000, second only to Louisiana's 28,000 black recruits.

Despite the perception of the North as the home of liberal antislavery whites, many Northerners expressed great reserve surrounding black military enlistment. Though residents of Rhode Island were the first to attempt to organize an African American military unit, their ability to do so was delayed by white resistance until June, 1863, when the state raised the nation's first African American heavy artillery regiment in the North. Pennsylvania, the home of many early African American freedom firsts, lagged behind the efforts of New York and Massachusetts in black military recruiting. As one of Stearns army recruiters, Frederick Douglass was among the first to approach Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin regarding the use of African Americans in the military, a request that was promptly refused. New York, the state deemed the "Grand Central Station" of the Underground Railroad, also rejected the use of African Americans as soldiers, until persuaded differently following applied pressure from prominent New Yorkers including Horace Greeley, Peter Cooper, William Cullen Bryant, Parke Godwin, and Horace Bushnell. The 10,000 member regiment resulting from these efforts went on to comprise New York's "Grand Army of Liberation" led by John C. Frémont.[23]

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[18]"List of Black Recruiters," William A. Gladstone, *Men of Color (*Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1993), 202.

[19] Quarles, 1989:198.

[20] Gladstone, 1993:64.

[21] Lucas, 1992:154.

[22] Ibid, 178-79, Brigadier General John M. Palmer was given command of the Department of Kentucky at the end of the Civil War. Palmer entered the Union Army as a Colonel in the 14th Illinois Infantry. In an effort to aid Kentucky blacks still being held in slavery despite federal edicts, Palmer allowed federal troops to issue "free papers" or passes that allowed blacks to travel freely about the State and across the Ohio River.

[23]Charles Bracelen Flood, *Grant and Sherman: The Friendship that Won the Civil War,* Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, 2005:61-8. Viewed as "too radical," Lincoln and Frémont never jelled as friends. Lincoln removed Frémont from command in St. Louis where he was sent to head the recreated Mountain Department which consisted primarily of the former Department of Western Virginia.

While African Americans and many northerners embraced the Emancipation Proclamation as a cause for general national celebration, southerners viewed the Proclamation and its attendant support for black military enlistment, as further evidence of Lincoln's continuing assault on southern social and constitutional rights. In response to Lincoln's determination to deploy African American troops against a Confederate military, Jefferson Davis and his generals refused to recognize African Americans as soldiers, declaring them "slaves in arms" or as "slaves in armed rebellion." As such, Davis and his generals decreed "no quarter"[24] and a "take no prisoners" policy adopted to govern the treatment of African American soldiers captured on the battlefield or those who fought in opposition to Confederate troops. Davis ordered African American soldiers alive after battle dealt with in accordance with the laws of the southern states where they were captured, which often meant an immediate death sentence. Many African American soldiers died at the hands of Confederate troops rather than surrender their weapons or their military uniforms, both elements seen as an "offense to the southern view of the eternal fitness of things." Though African American men fought in every war and military engagement involving the American colonies and the United States prior to the Civil War, it was not until the Civil War they were officially recognized by the federal government as "soldiers."

The life work of Lewis Hayden, William Wells Brown, and countless other free and enslaved men, women and children, merged with nearly two centuries of single-minded national prayer, education, freedom seeking, and political action to deliver the final blow to southern slavery resulting in a Civil War victory. African Americans flocked to recruiting centers at Camp Nelson, Kentucky; New Orleans, Louisiana, and Readville, Massachusetts, as well as smaller recruiting stations in northern and southern states. In less than one year's time, the recruiting efforts of abolitionists Frederick Douglass, Lewis Hayden, Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Martin Delaney, William Wells Brown and countless others resulted in the enrollment of over 186,000 African American men into Union forces, comprising 163 military units serving in the Union Army and Navy. Kentucky's freed men and runaway slaves joined in the nation's fight, creating Kentucky's largest "above ground" escape corridor to freedom.

Joining the ranks of a small and elite number of African Americans to experience life as a former slave, an escapee on the Underground Railroad, an antislavery activist, a witness to the end of slavery, a national freedom fighter, and an American legislator, twenty-one years after escaping slavery, Kentuckian Lewis Hayden lived to see the dream of universal emancipation for African Americans, promised by Lincoln's issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, realized. Following close of the war, Hayden's life and dream of freedom came full circle when he became the first African American elected to the Massachusetts state legislature in 1873. Hayden was elected from Boston's Sixth Ward, the same African American ward that sealed John A. Andrew's election as governor.[25]

No doubt influenced by and drawing upon the literary work of his good friend and fellow abolitionist, William Nell, the publisher of *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution*, the first comprehensive work of African American history, Hayden's last official act as a state representative prior to his death Sunday morning, April 7, 1889 at his home at 66 Phillips Avenue in Boston, was the dedication of a monument to African American Revolutionary War soldier, Crispus Attucks.

Like so many black activists of his day, Lewis Hayden died in debt, with few accolades, and

[24] "No quarter," a military term indicating a victor show no clemency or mercy and refuse to spare a vanquished soldier's life in return for the soldier's unconditional surrender. *Article 23 of the IV Convention - The Laws and Customs of War on Land* of the Hague Conventions of 1907. To issue such a battlefield order has since been declared "especially forbidden" and is now considered a military war crime.

[25] Strangis 115-127.

even fewer assets left behind to care for the needs his aging widow, relying upon friends to secure Harriet Hayden's financial future. For her part, no doubt desiring to honor the life of her activist husband and their deceased son, Joseph, upon her death in 1893, Harriet Hayden bequeathed her remaining estate, valued between $4-5000 to Harvard College, to found a scholarship to benefit deserving African American medical students. Lewis and Harriet Hayden received news of their twenty-eight year old son's death during the summer of 1865. Joseph Hayden is believed to have died from lack of medical attention as a member of the Union Navy at the Battle of Mobile. Assistance for African American medical students from the Lewis and Harriet Hayden Fund continues today at Harvard University.

Faithfulness to his word makes Abraham Lincoln one of, if not *the* most significant American president. In less than twenty-four hours and with a few strokes of his pen, Abraham Lincoln transformed the rules of American society and citizenship from exclusive to inclusive, from slavery to freedom, from an ancient to modern society, launching the United States of America into a new era of democracy, expanded citizenship rights, freedoms, and "change."

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Known Kentucky Members of the 54th Massachusetts USCTs TABLE 1

LName	FName	City/County	State	Company	Job	Age	Marital Status	Service
Anderson	Lewis	Unknown	KY	F	Farmer	30	Single	Killed Fort Wagner
Brown	James	Bardstown	KY	F	Laborer	18	Married	GAR Post 50 Chicago
Burns	John	Bath	KY	C	Laborer	21		
Cass	Isaiah	Woodford	KY	C	Laborer	24	Single	Wounded Fort Wagner
Clark	Thomas	Frankfort	KY	G	Cook	27	Married	
Tyler	William H.	Henry	KY	G	Laborer	23	Single	Killed Fort Wagner
Underwood	William	Mason	KY	G	Druggist	25	Married	Killed Fort Wagner
White	*Addison*	*Maysville/ Mechanicsburg*	*KY/OH*	*E*	*Salt maker*	*41*	*Single*	*Discharged*

Overall 54th Massachusetts Record of Service for a total of 1354 volunteers – 11 resigned; 7 transferred; 17 promoted; 68 killed in action; 32 died of wounds; 19 died in captivity; 94 died of accident/disease; 57 missing; 158 discharged for disabilities; 855 discharged upon completion of their term of duty; 36 disserted. **Officers:** Col. Robert Gould Shaw; Major Edward N. Hallowell; Surgeon Lincoln R. Stone; Assistant Surgeon Charles B. Bridgham; Chaplain Samuel Harrison

Record of Service for Company C for a total of 121 men - 0 resigned/transferred/promoted; 4 killed in action; 4 died of wounds; 2 died in captivity; 6 died of accident/disease; 7 missing; 19 discharged for disabilities; 78 discharged upon completion of their term of duty; 1 disserted. **Officers:** 1st Lt. James W. Grace; 2nd Lt. Benjamin F. Dexter

Record of Service for Company E for a total of 123 men – 0 resigned/transferred/promoted; 1 killed in action; 3 died of wounds; 3 died in captivity; 13 died of accident/disease; 0 missing; 8 discharged for disabilities; 84 discharged upon completion of their term of duty; 6 disserted. **Officers:** 1st Lt. Luis F. Emilio; 2nd Lt. David Reid

Record of Service for Company F for a total of 121 men – 0 resigned/transferred; 3 promoted; 6 killed in action; 4 died of wounds; 0 died in captivity; 12 died of accident or disease; 2 missing; 5 discharged for disabilities; 86 discharged upon completion of their term of duty; 3 disserted. **Officers:** Captain Watson W. Bridge; 2nd Lt. Alexander Johnston

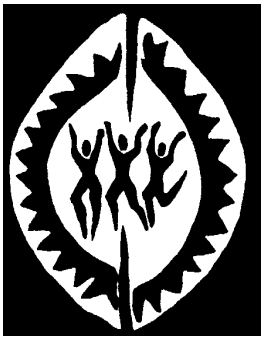
Record of Service for Company G for a total of 127 men – 0 resigned/transferred/promoted; 2 killed in action; 5 died of wounds; 0 died in captivity; 4 died of accident/disease; 7 missing; 22 discharged for disabilities; 80 discharged upon completion of their term of duty; 2 disserted. **Officers:** 1st Lt. Orin E. Smith; 2nd Lt. James A. Pratt

Known Kentucky Members of the 55th Massachusetts USCTs TABLE 2

LName	FName	CITY/COUNTY	State	Co.	Job	Age	Marital Status	Service Record
Baker	Wallace	Hopkinsville	KY	I	Farmer	19		
Brown	Frank	Eddyville	KY	D	Farmer	24		
Brown*	John	Not Given	KY	I	Farmer	24		
Burditt	Nelson	Lancaster	KY	I	Farmer	20		
Crockett	Richard	Caldwell County	KY	D	Farmer	39		
Davis*	William	Not Given	KY	D	Waiter	19		
Dunn	Stephen	Garrard County	KY	A	Farmer	30		
Frederick	Herb	Augusta	KY	E	Farmer	22		
Gayther	Benjamin	Columbia	KY	K	Bootmaker	28		
Grandison	John	Nicholasville	KY	F	Farmer	20		
Griffin	Benjamin	Lexington	KY	K	Farmer	21		
Harvey	Claudius	Lexington	KY	K	Confectioner	19		
Hines	John	Brandenburg	KY	A	Wagoner	35		
January	Samuel	Brighton	KY	K	Farmer	28		
Johnson	John	Nicholasville	KY	A	Farmer	23		
Kingston	John H.	Lexington	KY	G	Soldier	23		
Peril	Harrison	Mason County	KY	K	Farmer	22		
Redman	Joseph	Pike County	KY	K	Farmer	22		
Roberts	George	Bradfordsville	KY	I	Farmer	18		
Sampson	Goliath	Washington County	KY	A	Farmer	23		
Scott	Lewis	Orangeburg	KY	K	Farmer	19		
Shinall	David	Madison County	KY	A	Farmer	21		
Tutt	Willis	Cynthiana	KY	D	Farmer	38		
Wickliffe	Rowan	Louisville	KY	I	Boatman	20		
Wilson	Henry	Maysville	KY	K	Farmer	18		

54th and 55th Massachusetts troop information taken from Luis Emilio, *A Brave Black Regiment, 1-34, 327-89 and Military Records, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.*

*Transferred from the 54th to the 55th, former slave owner paid $325.



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