

Folks: This AV assignment on the U.S. Civil War (1861-1865) between the slave-holding Southern states (Confederate States of America or the “Confederacy”) and the United States (the “Union” or the “North”) comprises two parts, below. The first, an author interview, is audio-textual material from the [NPR](#) radio program *Fresh Air* on the long-lasting determinative consequences for this country of that horrendous historical event, and the role of African Americans in it. The second is a conjectural reading on how U.S. history would have turned out if—repeat, IF—President Abraham Lincoln had NOT issued the *Emancipation Proclamation* in the middle of the war (on January 1, 1863). A related question is, of course, what would have happened if the Confederacy had won the war? This is a question I want you to think about as you digest this assignment.

PART ONE

Read the transcript below **and/or** listen to the radio program here:

<http://www.npr.org/2013/01/08/168793872/the-fall-of-the-house-of-dixie-built-a-new-u-s>

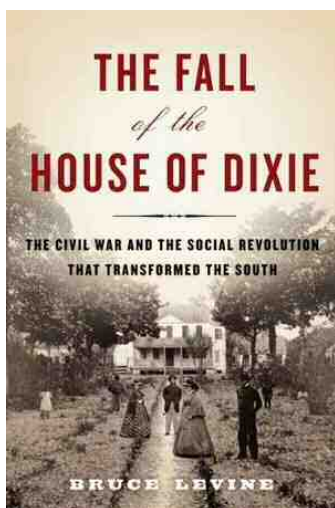
Make sure you also study the pictures in this assignment (see below).



'The Fall Of The House Of Dixie' Built A New U.S.

January 07, 2013 11:48 AM

[Fresh Air from WHYY](#)



[The Fall of the House of Dixie](#)

The Civil War and the Social Revolution That Transformed the South

by [Bruce Levine](#)

This month marks the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, which President Lincoln issued on Jan. 1, 1863, in the midst of the Civil War. The document declares that all those held as slaves within any state, or part of a state, in rebellion "shall be then, thenceforward and forever free."

Historian Bruce Levine explores the destruction of the old South and the reunified country that emerged from the Civil War in his new book, *The Fall of the House of Dixie*. He says one result of the document was a flood of black men from the South into the Union Army.

"The black population of the South had been raised on the notion that, among other things, black men could not, of course, be soldiers," Levine tells *Fresh Air's* Terry Gross, "that black men were not courageous, black men were not disciplined, black men could not act in response in large numbers to military commands, black men would flee at the first opportunity if faced with battle, and the idea that black

men in uniform could exist and ... offer them the opportunity to disprove these notions and ... more importantly, actively struggle to do away with slavery, was unbelievably attractive to huge numbers of black people."

As its ranks dwindled and in a last gasp, the Confederacy, too, had a plan to recruit black soldiers. In 1864, Confederate President Jefferson Davis approved a plan to recruit free blacks and slaves into the Confederate army. Quoting Frederick Douglass, Levine calls the logic behind the idea "a species of madness."

One factor that contributed to this madness, he says, "is the drumbeat of self-hypnosis" that told Confederates that "the slaves are loyal, the slaves embrace slavery, the slaves are contented in slavery, the slaves know that black people are inferior and need white people to ... oversee their lives. ... Black people will defend the South that has been good to them. There are, of course, by [then] very many white Southerners who know this is by no means true, but enough of them do believe it so that they're willing to give this a chance."

Considering what might have happened had there been no war at all, Levine thinks slavery could well have lasted into the 20th century, and that it was, in fact, the Confederacy that hastened slavery's end. "In taking what they assumed to be a defensive position in support of slavery," he says, "the leaders of the Confederacy ... radically hastened its eradication."



Bruce Levine, a professor of history at the University of Illinois, is also the author of *Confederate Emancipation* and an editor of the Civil War magazine *North and South*.

More on this book:

- [NPR reviews, interviews and more](#)
- [Read an excerpt](#)

Interview Highlights

On the black soldiers who fought for the Union, 80 percent of whom were from the South

"By the end of the Civil War, nearly 200,000 black men had served in either the Union army or the Union navy, and that alone was an enormous military assistance to the Union at a time when volunteering had fallen drastically and when there was a great deal of hostility to the draft. So these 200,000 men significantly contributed to giving the Union army the volume, the bulk, the size that they needed to cope with their Confederate opponents, and that gave the union the power, ultimately, to overwhelm the opposition."

On the response among blacks to Union recruiting efforts

MEN OF COLOR
To Arms! To Arms!
NOW OR NEVER
THREE YEARS' SERVICE!
AND JOIN IN FIGHTING THE
BATTLES OF LIBERTY AND THE UNION
OUR BROTHERS DISPLAYED AT
PORT HUDSON AND MILLIKEN'S BEND,
ARE FREEMEN LESS BRAVE THAN SLAVES
OUR LAST OPPORTUNITY HAS COME
MEN OF COLOR, BROTHERS AND FATHERS!
WE APPEAL TO YOU!
STRIKE NOW!

And you are henceforth and forever FREEMEN!

E. A. Bennett,	Rev. J. C. Johnson,	Frederick Douglass,	Rev. J. C. Johnson,	Edwin J. Davis,	James Newcomb,	David Colley,
Wm. W. Whipper,	John W. Price,	P. J. Armstrong,	David George,	John P. Bruce,	Rev. E. L. W. Jones,	J. C. W. Jones, Jr.,
Wm. W. Whipper,	Augustine Howard,	J. W. Simpson,	Robert W. Angus,	Robert James,	Edwin Black,	Rev. J. S. Campbell,
John Mackinnon,	Wm. H. Carter,	Rev. J. B. Young,	Henry M. Cooper,	Chas. C. Carter,	Rev. W. H. T. Carter,	Rev. W. J. Adams,
S. N. C. Carter,	Rev. Stephen Smith,	Wm. H. Carter,	Rev. J. B. Bruce,	Thos. J. Murray,	James H. Gordon,	J. P. Johnson,
A. W. Carter,	Rev. J. B. Bruce,	Wm. H. Carter,	Rev. J. B. Bruce,	J. B. C. Carter,	Samuel Carter,	Franklin T. Carter,
J. W. Carter,	Rev. J. B. Bruce,	Wm. H. Carter,	Rev. A. E. Stewart,	James A. Carter,	David H. Carter,	James A. Carter,
E. A. Bennett,	J. W. Carter,	Rev. J. B. Bruce,	Thomas J. Stewart,	Morris Hall,	Henry Hinton,	

U. S. Steam Power Book and Job Printing Establishment, Ledger Buildings, Third and Chestnut Streets, Philadelphia.

A Union army recruiting poster aimed at black men.

The Library Company of Philadelphia

"There were at least some slaves who still believed what others had been telling them during most of the war, namely ... 'This is a white man's war, stay out.' ... And others, because of having just been freed and finally given the opportunity to live the life of free men and women, didn't relish the prospect of immediately being separated from their families and possibly killed before they could realize the benefits of that freedom. But very, very large numbers responded very enthusiastically to the chance finally to, in great numbers, take organized collective action in pursuit of the freedom of their people."

On the radicalizing effect fighting in the South had on many Union soldiers

"Large numbers of Northern whites, who may previously have had no sympathy for blacks, are, by virtue of moving into ever more deeply the land of slavery, being confronted with the brutalities of slavery and being confronted with the fact that much pro-slavery propaganda that they have been hearing for decades by Northern allies of the slave owners are lies, and that this system is pretty horrible. And many of them start writing in letters home that, contrary to their original assumptions, they have now become, in effect, abolitionists and they will never tolerate slavery again."

On why Lincoln was so preoccupied with preserving the Union

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"For white men then, this is the cutting edge of progress. They believe what protects the rights that they have is the strength and unity of the country, and they fear that as sections of the country begin to withdraw from the union, the country will continue to fragment, that this will only be the beginning of the fracturing of the union. ... And so, instead of there being one ... more or less powerful country in North America — and south of Canada, that is, and north of Mexico — there might be two and maybe three and maybe four and so on, and that, in turn, might very well lead to the end of republican government in North America. And, again, we're talking about an era in which much of the world still thinks that republican, nonmonarchical, nonaristocratic government is doomed."

On the importance of Thaddeus Stevens and the radical Republicans in ending slavery

"[Stevens] was the foremost fighter against slavery and for racial equality in the Congress. He was the most important single figure, I would say. It's also true, and I think undersold in the film [*Lincoln*], that Stevens and the radicals were way ahead of Lincoln throughout the war on these questions, pointed the way forward for Lincoln, and without their pressure and without their agitation and without their constant demands, it's not at all clear Lincoln would have eventually moved in the same direction. They — and Stevens as an individual — are a very important part of the story of how slavery comes to an end."

[Read an excerpt of *The Fall of the House of Dixie*](#)

TRANSCRIPT

January 07, 2013 11:48 AM

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TERRY GROSS, HOST:

This is FRESH AIR. I'm Terry Gross. After seeing the film "Lincoln," I was especially interested in reading the new book by my guest Bruce Levine. It's about how the Civil War ended the institution of slavery, destroyed the world of the slaveholding elite and transformed the South, as well as American politics.

The book is called "The Fall of the House of Dixie." About one out of every three people in the South suddenly emerged from bondage into freedom, he writes, a change of such enormous significance and full of so many implications as almost to defy description. Levine's book is also the story of how Lincoln changed course during the war. He went to war to compel the slave states to return to the Union and promised not to interfere with slavery in the seceding states.

But as the war dragged on, he decided to weaken the South by stripping it of its slave labor. Levine is the J. G. Randall Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Illinois. He's an associated editor of the Civil War magazine North and South. This is his fourth book relating to the Civil War.

Bruce Levine, welcome to FRESH AIR. So let me just start by asking you what you thought of the movie "Lincoln."

BRUCE LEVINE: I had very mixed feelings about the film. On the one hand, it's a Civil War movie that very properly places slavery and the Republican Party's and Abraham Lincoln's determination to see slavery die at the center of the story, and that makes this an unusual Civil War film and a valuable Civil War film. And there are many things about the film that are very good and very strong and very commendable.

But on the other hand, I think it gives too little context about the story in which this tale actually unfolds. It leaves out key facts that explain the meaning of what we're seeing on the screen and how it is that these events took place: the prior course of the war; the important role especially that slaves and free blacks played in advancing the Union cause; the important role that they played in already breaking down slavery significantly long before the question of the 13th Amendment arose; and the growth of anti-slavery sentiment in the Union; and finally who initiated the idea of the 13th Amendment, which wasn't Abraham Lincoln.

GROSS: Who was it?

LEVINE: It was free blacks and the radical wing of the Republican Party, captured in the film by Tommy Lee Jones playing Thaddeus Stevens. These were the folks who, in 1863, and abolitionists, began to push very hard for amending the Constitution. And Lincoln was not on board until the summer of 1864.

GROSS: Well, you point out that when the Civil War started, President Lincoln had no intention of freeing the slaves. What did he want?

LEVINE: Lincoln wanted to bring the seceded states back into the Union as quickly and as peacefully as possible because he and his party had a plan to eventually, gradually, peacefully do away with slavery by legislative means. It was that intention, of course, that had led slave states to begin to secede, but neither Lincoln nor his party saw the resulting war as the instrument of abolition.

So what they hoped to do is find a way quickly to bring those states back in and then get on with the business of peacefully, gradually setting the stage for slavery's eventual extinction.

GROSS: So you're saying that Lincoln wanted to bring the states that had seceded back into the Union and then slowly back legislation that would end slavery?

LEVINE: Exactly.

GROSS: Lincoln's view of slavery evolved. What did he believe when he took office?

LEVINE: Well, Lincoln said he had believed since childhood, and I see no reason to doubt him, that this was an immoral institution, as well as a politically backward and economically stunting institution so that on all fronts it was objectionable. Lincoln believed, however, that previous constitutional provisions limited what either the people like him, people who opposed slavery, and the federal government as a whole could do about eliminating slavery within the states where it already existed.

They all, however, believed that slavery was a system that needed to expand in order to survive the way they say a shark needs to keep moving in order to breathe. So Lincoln and his party concluded in the mid-1850s that the way to eventually kill slavery constitutionally was

to prevent it from spreading any further, and so his party placed at the center of its platform the pledge to outlaw slavery in all the then-extensive federal territories.

GROSS: And of course the South didn't like that.

LEVINE: No, they certainly did not like that. The South agreed that this was a system that needed to expand, and so they saw the handwriting on the wall. They also assumed that the accession of a Republican president would pose all sorts of other dangers in addition to their system, that Republicans would start appearing in the South, that Lincoln would make appointments of Republicans to customs houses and post offices, that those would form the nuclei of Republican Parties within the slave states, that those parties would then begin to attract disaffected white supporters, that their electoral campaigns would encourage slaves to rebel.

And so they greeted the appearance of the Republican Party, much less Lincoln's eventual election to the presidency, as a mortal threat, most of them did in any case.

GROSS: Well, getting back to what Lincoln believed about slavery, there was a period when he thought that slavery should end, but the slaves should, like, leave after they were freed because there was no way that America would work with slaves freed and then trying to be equal in the United States. What did he think was not going to work about that? What were his doubts?

LEVINE: Well, Lincoln believed that whites would not tolerate the existence of free blacks in such substantial numbers in their midst. That was his fundamental - at least that was the view that he specifically articulated, that these people moreover were too different. Lincoln did not look upon Africans as legitimate members at that point of American society.

He sympathized with them. He was sorry that they had been dragged here, and their ancestors had been dragged here from Africa. He sympathized with their plight, but he did not believe the country could exist with substantial numbers of free blacks, whether citizens and equal or not, alongside whites. And so he until the middle of the war kept attempting to convince free blacks and newly freed blacks to voluntarily emigrate.

GROSS: To where?

LEVINE: Well, there were various ideas about where to do that, in parts of Central America, perhaps South America, the Caribbean, perhaps Africa. There was, as you probably know, already a state in Africa, Liberia, created earlier in the century by emancipated blacks, and that was another possible site.

GROSS: So what changed Lincoln's mind and led him to issue the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863?

LEVINE: Well, his fundamental plan about what to do about slavery changed in the same way that those of the rest of his party changed, and that was the discovery that bringing the slave states back into the Union was not going to be nearly as easy nor nearly as quick a proposition as they had initially hoped. The white South was much too united in support of the Confederacy, and they were far more effective militarily than, again, Lincoln and others had apparently anticipated.

So by the middle of 1862, it has become clear to Lincoln that this essential source of support to the Confederacy - and that's what the four million slaves were, they had been the chief labor force in peacetime, they were now an important source of military strength to the Confederacy in wartime in all sorts of ways, though not as soldiers, as some people have claimed - that this source of Confederate strength had to be removed and in fact turned to the service of the Union, and emancipation was the way to do that.

Lincoln, it should be said, though, didn't pioneer that idea. Republicans in Congress had begun doing that in the first year of the war.

GROSS: So what were the limits, geographically, of the Emancipation Proclamation? Who did it cover? Who did it not extend to?

LEVINE: It extended solely to those slaves living in parts of the Confederacy not yet then occupied by Union forces, which meant that it excluded sections of Louisiana. According to another agreement that Lincoln struck, it excluded Tennessee as a whole. But with those (technical difficulty) and one or two other places on the Atlantic Coast that Union forces had managed to control by then, it applied to the entirety of the Confederacy still in existence.

It did not apply to the slaves living in the four slave states that then remained within the Union.

GROSS: Why didn't it apply to the slave states that remained in the Union or to the areas where Union forces had already taken over?

LEVINE: Well, this was a war measure. It was a measure based upon what Lincoln thought of as his special powers as a commander of Union military forces during the war and therefore only could apply in active theaters of war. So places already pulled behind Union lines he considered no longer to be subject to an edict like that, and that was the advice he had been given.

He had also reached an agreement with forces in Tennessee, which was half-occupied by that point, not to apply the Emancipation Proclamation there for political reasons, to encourage the return of the rest of the state to Union control.

GROSS: So the emancipation was very bold. It was also a bit of a compromise.

LEVINE: Well, it was - I wouldn't say so much that it was a compromise but that it was not global, which is one of the things that eventually brought Lincoln to embrace the idea of the 13th Amendment that would abolish slavery throughout the United States.

GROSS: If you're just joining us, my guest is Bruce Levine. He's the author of the new book "The Fall of the House of Dixie: The Civil War and the Social Revolution That Transformed the South." Let's take a short break here. Then we'll talk some more. This is FRESH AIR.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

GROSS: If you're just joining us, my guest is Bruce Levine. He's the author of the new book "The Fall of the House of Dixie: The Civil War and the Social Revolution That Transformed the South."

So you were saying that President Lincoln didn't issue the Emancipation Proclamation until he was convinced that that was really going to help the war effort. Did it?

LEVINE: It certainly did, and we have much testimony to that effect. By the end of the Civil War, nearly 200,000 black men had served in either the Union Army or the Union Navy, and that alone was an enormous military assistance to the Union at a time when volunteering had fallen drastically and when there was a great deal of hostility to the draft.

So these 200,000 men significantly contributed to giving the Union armies the volume, the bulk, the size that they needed to cope with their Confederate opponents, and that gave the Union the power ultimately to overwhelm the opposition.

GROSS: And these - were these African-American men from the North or the South or both?

LEVINE: About 80 percent of them were from the South. Now yes, of course that leaves 20 percent from the North, and the well-known film "Glory" is about a unit primarily composed, in fact, the 54th Massachusetts, of Northern free blacks. But 80 percent of Union black soldiers had been slaves very shortly before being inducted into the war. So they're almost literally going straight from the fields into uniform.

GROSS: And joining the military for people who had been slaves was a step toward freedom, I mean literally. There was an act that was passed before the Emancipation Proclamation was issued that basically guaranteed slaves who ran away and entered the Union Army freedom.

LEVINE: That's right. By - there are two acts that the Republican-controlled Congress passed, in 1861 and then in 1862. They became known as the Confiscation Acts. And the first one in fact, the second one in law declared that any runaway slave reaching Union lines would become free.

GROSS: You reprint a fascinating recruitment poster courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia, and I just want to read some of this. So this is a recruiting poster for African-American men. And it says: Men of color, to arms, to arms. Now or never, three years' service. Fail now, and our race is doomed. Our last opportunity has come. Men of color, brothers and fathers, we appeal to you, strike now.

Can you talk about their recruitment effort?

LEVINE: Yes, people like Frederick Douglass, the ex-slave and by this point major figure in the abolitionist movement, people like the escaped slave Garland White and a number of other long or recently emancipated black men, and women for that matter, went through the North, attempting to recruit, and went through sections of the by then occupied portions of the Confederacy recruiting black men into the Union Army using the themes that you quoted from that poster.

GROSS: And how effective was that recruitment effort?

LEVINE: Well, it was quite effective. It was not universally effective because there were at least some slaves who still believed what others had been telling them during most of the war, namely, quote, "this is a white man's war, stay out," end-quote; and others because having just been freed and finally given the opportunity to live the life of free men and women didn't relish the prospect of immediately being separated from their families and possibly killed before they could realize the benefits of that freedom.

But very, very large numbers, as the figures I quoted earlier indicated, responded very enthusiastically to the chance, finally, to in great numbers take organized, collective action in pursuit of the freedom of their people.

GROSS: You write: Nothing would more radically subvert the Confederacy's slave economy than sending black soldiers into slave country. Why?

LEVINE: Well, the black population of the South had been raised, quite literally raised, on the notion that among other things black men could not, of course, be soldiers, that black men were not courageous, black men were not disciplined, black men could not act in response in large numbers to military commands, black men would flee at the first opportunity when faced with battle.

And the idea that black men in uniform could exist and could then come down and offer them the opportunity to disprove these notions, and again, more importantly, actively struggle to do away with slavery was unbelievably attractive to huge numbers of black people. Here was a chance, in other words, not only to obtain freedom but to participate in the fight for freedom and prove themselves in the process.

GROSS: What were the roles within the military that black men were and were not given?

LEVINE: Well, let's start with the not end. Black men were almost never permitted to become officers, and those few who by the end of the war did become officers were chaplains, not unit commanders. There were sergeants but no higher than sergeants, I believe, in even the black units raised in the Union Army.

Furthermore, at the beginning of the period of black enlistment, black soldiers were pretty largely relegated to labor tasks rather than active combat tasks and frequently simply to maintaining control of already conquered territory and Union installations while white soldiers were the ones placed at the front of battle, testifying to the fact that most whites in the North continued to believe that black men were incapable of being good soldiers in a combat situation. Black men had to prove that notion radically false before that policy could change.

GROSS: So what were the ways in which black soldiers were most able to disprove the myths of their inabilities?

LEVINE: Well, when you assign black soldiers the role, quote, "simply," end-quote, of holding down supply depots or even garrisons, you by no means guarantee that they won't find themselves nonetheless in a combat situation, and so it proved. In a number of cases, garrisons and depots like that were attacked by Confederate soldiers, and black Union soldiers responded and responded with a great deal of success and great courage and great obstinacy.

And word of those engagements spread through the ranks, and white officers frequently filed reports that said: contrary to my expectations, these soldiers have fought better and more courageously than most white soldiers under my command have previously.

Even Confederate officers filed reports like that to their superiors, saying that in such-and-such an engagement, the white soldiers fled, but the black Yankees stood their ground. So the word was getting not only back to the rest of the Union population but even to those sections of the Confederate population who were willing to take off their blinkers and face reality.

GROSS: Bruce Levine will be back in the second half of the show. His new book is called "The Fall of the House of Dixie." I'm Terry Gross, and this is FRESH AIR.

(SOUNDBITE OF MUSIC)

GROSS: This is FRESH AIR. I'm Terry Gross back with Bruce Levine, author of the new book, "The Fall of the House of Dixie: The Civil War and the Social Revolution That Transformed the South." When we left off, we were talking about how 200,000 black men joined the Union Army and Navy and helped the Union win the war.

So we've been talking about how the Union Army used black soldiers. And you write about how the South once considered conscripting slaves into the Confederate Army. What did they want the slaves to do in the army?

LEVINE: Well, first of all, they didn't want them in the army at all. That was a serious mistake made very early on the Confederate side. There were many, many more adult male whites living in the Union than living in the Confederacy and that meant, of course, that they would therefore, be much larger armies on the Union. One way of dealing with that for the Confederacy might have been to do what had been done many other times in history, to offer freedom to slaves if they would agree to join one's army. Although, some Confederate officers and civilians persistently suggested that from the beginning of the war, the Confederacy flatly refused to even consider the proposition for racist reasons and because they were fighting for slavery and they considered this to be a preposterous way to fight a war in defense, specifically, of slavery. But as Confederate fortunes waned, this idea came to the fore more and more persistently. And finally, basically within the last six months of the Confederacy's life, Jefferson Davis reverses course and begins to embrace the idea that this is the only way in which the Confederacy stands any chance of surviving. So this is the last-ditch act of desperation on the Confederacy's part.

GROSS: Why would Confederate leaders think that men who they had enslaved would be willing to fight and die to preserve their own enslavement?

LEVINE: Well, that's a really good question. And Frederick Douglass, after the war, calls it a species of madness. And there is, of course, something to that. Partly I think it is simply a reflection of the state of desperation. Anything is better than what we face because what we certainly face is defeat, so how much worse might this be? At least we can try it, I think is one strand of Confederate thinking. But another factor is the drumbeat of self-hypnosis that the Confederacy has been keeping up during the entirety of the war. A message contained in that self-hypnosis is the slaves are loyal. The slaves embrace slavery. The slaves are contented in slavery. The slaves know that black people are inferior and need white people to oversee their lives. Black people, therefore, are grateful for our care of them. Black people will defend the South that has been so good to them. There are, of course, by now very many white Southerners who know this is by no means true, but enough of them do believe it so that they're willing to give this a chance.

GROSS: And were there instances where the black soldiers turned against the plantation owners in the military?

LEVINE: Well, I think that's probably what would have occurred had this experiment been attempted earlier. But, in fact, only handfuls, relatively speaking, of black soldiers are ever raised on the Confederate side and they see nearly no combat at all. The only soldiers, to my knowledge, that are ever raised of this sort are raised within Richmond and Petersburg, they probably don't number more than 60 or so, despite the fact that there are, there's obviously a black population in that state radically bigger than that, and they see no combat and are not in fact, therefore in a position to turn their guns on their own officers, testifying to the fact that this was - the whole idea was an ultimate and complete failure.

GROSS: If you're just joining us, my guest is Bruce Levine. He's the author of the new book "The Fall of the House of Dixie: The Civil War and the Social Revolution That Transformed the South."

Let's take a short break here, then we'll talk some more. This is FRESH AIR.

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GROSS: If you're just joining us, my guest is Bruce Levine. We're talking about his new book "The Fall of the House of Dixie: The Civil War and the Social Revolution That Transformed the South." He's a professor of history at the University of Illinois.

You write one of the paradoxes of the Civil War is that the war actually ended slavery sooner than it would've ended had the Confederate states stayed in the Union.

LEVINE: Absolutely. There was a general assumption, North and South, that slavery would survive for a very long time, in 1860 there was that opinion. And absent of war, it very likely would have lasted - I think - another half century or more. So there very well might have been slavery still in the 20th century. Even the propositions that were on the table, in most cases, for the peaceful gradual end of slavery would still have maintained some people in slavery again, into the 20th century. So that in taking what they assumed to be a defensive position in support of slavery, the leaders of the Confederacy radically hastened its eradication.

GROSS: So what was it about the war that hastened the end of slavery?

LEVINE: Well, it's a number of factors. One is what Lincoln calls the friction and abrasion of war. Wherever Union armies went slaves took the opportunity to escape to their lines. Wherever Union armies approached, that is to say didn't quite reach a given plantation but slaves there heard that they were at least within running distance, slaves could use that fact to embolden themselves to resist the orders of their owners and even to begin stating conditions under which they would continue to labor on those plantations. And so Confederate plantation owners in those circumstances, whether they wished to are not, often found themselves having for the first time openly to bargain with people whom in law they legally controlled.

Something else that's happening is that large numbers of Northern whites, who may previously have had no sympathy for blacks, are by virtue of moving into ever more deeply the land of slavery, are being confronted with the brutalities of slavery and being confronted with the fact that much pro-slavery propaganda that they have been hearing for decades by Northern allies of the slave owners are lies and that this system is pretty horrible. And many of them start writing in letters home to their relatives that, contrary to their original assumptions, they have now become in effect abolitionists and they would never tolerate slavery again. And the Northern population, of course, is watching its relatives dying on battlefields trying to protect the Union against dissolution at the hands of slave owners and their rage at slavery is growing. And that includes people who in the North are as racist as they ever may have been but their fury at the rebels is leading them to support proposals that lead to emancipation.

And finally, there's the understanding that comes to grip an overwhelming proportion, I think, of the Union population that doing away with slavery now is, as I said earlier, the only way to win this war and to reconstitute the Union.

GROSS: So I'm going to ask a really stupid question that probably anybody who ever took an American history course, as I have, should not need to ask. But tell me more about why it was so important to the North to maintain the Union. If the South was doing something that the North was so horrified at - the institution of slavery - and the South wanted to pull away but there was still a lot of racism in the North, why did the North care so much about having the Southern states within the Union?

LEVINE: Well, I wouldn't exaggerate the extent to which people know the answer to this question. And I don't think it's a bad question at all, therefore.

GROSS: I'm so relieved to hear you say that.

(LAUGHTER)

LEVINE: We have to remember that the mid-19th century is a time when in the transatlantic world the norm is not republican, small R, government - that is living in a republic. The norm is still monarchies and aristocracies and societies in which non-aristocrats have relatively few rights and particularly little control over their government. So this is still an unusual, a very unusual place. Despite the existence of this horrible oppressive system of slavery, for white people, this is a remarkable outpost of freedom and, of course, especially for white men, since white women have considerably fewer rights than men. But for white men then, this is the cutting edge of progress. They believe that what protects the rights that they have is the strength and unity of the country. And they fear that as sections of the country begin to withdraw from the Union, the country will continue to fragment, that this will only be the beginning of the fracturing of the Union.

And, by the way, there's some reason to think in retrospect that they were right. There are, for example, individuals - including the mayor in New York City - who begin to talk actively about pulling New York out of the Union, because New York in that era has powerful economic ties to the slave South and making it a so-called free city on the model of such things in Europe. Sections of the lower Midwest display sympathy for the South. Sections of Midwestern states heavily populated by white migrants out of the South. And so instead of there being one powerful, more or less powerful country in North America, south of Canada that is, and north of Mexico, there might be two and maybe three and maybe four and so on, and that in turn might very well lead to the end of republican government in North America. And again, we're talking about an era in which much of the world still thinks that republican - non-monarchical, non-aristocratic - government is doomed. And that had been the opinion in Europe for many, many centuries based on looking at what had happened to ancient Greece and ancient Rome and various city-states thereafter.

So the idea that republics are stable is not very widespread. And indeed, large numbers of forces in monarchical Europe are rubbing their hands in positive anticipation of seeing this dangerous, provocative idea - large republic sustaining - itself finally crumbling.

GROSS: So, but how much of preserving the Union, as far as the North was concerned, was economic because it needed access to the South's cotton?

LEVINE: Well, that's a factor. Textile manufacturers in New England want that cotton and want easy access to cotton. Furthermore, farmers in the Midwest want easy and continuous access to the Mississippi River in order to sell things to Southerners and to export through the Port of New Orleans. But I think it's too easy to exaggerate the degree to which economic motives are driving the North. I think more powerful a motive is the desire to preserve the Union in order to preserve republican liberty.

GROSS: Are you shocked when you still see people flying the Confederate flag or when you see statehouses flying the Confederate flag?

LEVINE: Well, I'm no longer shocked because I've been exposed to it for so long and been arguing against it for so long. But I'm still deeply offended by its appearance, because it seems evident from history both distant and near, that more than nine times out of 10 those who are flying that flag are not doing it simply out of regional loyalty or some sort of misty nostalgia, but as a statement of political intent. Political intent that leaves no room for genuine racial equality.

GROSS: Do you think it's impossible to separate slavery and the Civil War?

LEVINE: I think so.

GROSS: Because I know some people say, oh no, we were fighting for a way of life. It's not about slavery. Of course the way of life was dependent on slavery.

LEVINE: Just what you said. It was impossible for most people to claim to be fighting simply for a way of life, to imagine that way of life without slavery at its center. And in fact, I think it's impossible for anybody to imagine that particular way of life without slavery at its center because that's exactly where it was.

GROSS: We started this interview talking about the movie "Lincoln." I just want to get back to that for a moment. One of the characters in the movie is Thaddeus Stevens, who's portrayed by Tommy Lee Jones, who's one of the radical Republicans who seeks the abolition of slavery.

How does the Tommy Lee Jones portrayal compare to what you know of (unintelligible) Stevens?

LEVINE: Well, that's an interesting question. One of the aspects of the portrayal is that he, in fact, has a black mistress, his housekeeper.

GROSS: Mm-hmm.

LEVINE: In fact, we don't really know that that's true. There were all sorts of allegations at the time made by members of the opposition party for whom having sexual relations with a black woman proved you immoral on the face of it. So those accusations were bandied about all the time.

GROSS: You think it might've been more of an attempt to smear him than anything else.

LEVINE: Exactly. Exactly. Which is not how Stevens would have viewed it, because Stevens was a genuine racial egalitarian. And that part of the depiction is true. So whether or not this particular aspect of his life accorded with the cinematic version, it certainly is true that he was remarkably egalitarian in racial terms. He was the foremost fighter against slavery and for racial equality in the Congress.

He was the most important single figure, I would say. It's also true, and I think undersold in the film, that Stevens and the radicals were way ahead of Lincoln throughout the war on these questions, pointed the way forward for Lincoln, and without their pressure and without their agitation and without their constant demands, it's not at all clear Lincoln would have eventually moved in the same direction.

They, and Stevens as an individual, are a very important part of the story of how slavery comes to an end.

GROSS: Well, Bruce Levine, thank you so much for talking with us.

LEVINE: Thank you very much for giving me the chance to be on your show.

GROSS: Bruce Levin is the author of the new book "The Fall of the House of Dixie." You can read an excerpt on our website, freshair.npr.org, where you can also see the poster we were talking about, recruiting black soldiers for the Union Army.

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African-American Faces Of The Civil War

by Claire O'Neill

November 16, 2012 1:38 PM

Source:

<http://www.npr.org/blogs/pictureshow/2012/11/16/163887404/african-american-faces-of-the-civil-war>



This rare portrait shows an identified Confederate noncommissioned officer, Sgt. Andrew Martin Chandler (left), and his named slave, Silas Chandler (right). It is the only Confederate photograph in the book by Rod Coddington, *African American Faces of the Civil War*. Born into slavery, Silas "was one of thousands of slaves who served as [body servants] during the war," writes Coddington.

The impulses to collect and to doodle have always been in Ron Coddington's blood. As a kid, it was baseball cards. As a teen, he took an interest in old flea market photos — and simultaneously became "obsessed," he says, "with learning to draw the human face."

[African American Faces of the Civil War](#)

An Album

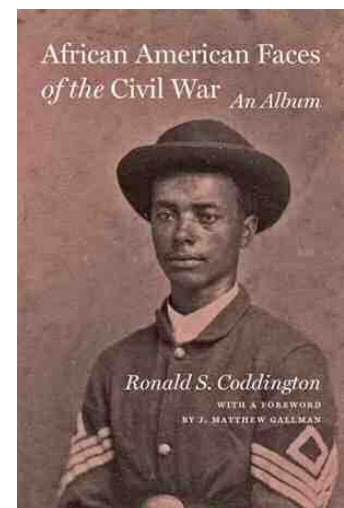
by [Ronald S. Coddington](#) and [J. Matthew Gallman](#)

More on this book:

- [NPR reviews, interviews and more](#)

That explains a lot. Coddington kicked off a career in journalism as an illustrator doing caricatures — eventually growing into the position of art director at *USA Today*. These days, he's the head of the data visualization and multimedia team at *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. And he's still collecting.

"I don't know what my problem is," he says with a laugh on the phone. "When I went to college, I didn't have a lot of belongings, but the one thing I brought in the front seat with me was a cigar



box with my collection in it."

These photos are called *cartes de visite*: little portrait cards that were easily reproduced and therefore immensely popular for decades — especially during the Civil War. And Coddington's obsessive collecting has yielded three books so far: *Faces of the Civil War*, *Confederates of the Civil War* and, most recently, *African American Faces of the Civil War*.

Finding these images is a major investigative undertaking. Because for Coddington, finding the photo isn't enough.

"It's more than just a face," he says.

The *story* is what's important — and those details are incredibly rare. So what makes Coddington's collection special are the biographical details that accompany the images. If you take the time to read their stories, the individuals spring to life — well after they've died.

The Picture Show asked Coddington to choose 10 highlights from his most recent book. But you can really dig into the rest of the collection [on this website](#).



“We Will Not Degrade the Name of an American Soldier”

On December 14, 1863, Sgt. Maj. James Trotter and the rest of the colored Fifty-fifth Massachusetts Infantry assembled for an announcement regarding their pay. The federal government would not be giving give them the promised soldier's salary of thirteen dollars per month but ten dollars a month, a sum paid to black freedmen who worked for the army as laborers and cooks. (1) The state of Massachusetts planned to make up the balance.

The regimental historian reported, “Several non-commissioned officers and privates expressed their views and those of their comrades, in a quiet and proper manner, the remarks of Sergt.-Major Trotter being especially good.” They declared that, on principle, they would accept no pay unless they were given the usual soldier's pay.

After an initially frustrating search for identifiable Civil War portraits, Coddington finally came across this image of William Wright of the 114th U.S. Colored Infantry. That find inspired his continued hunt for similar images.

Courtesy of Ron Coddington



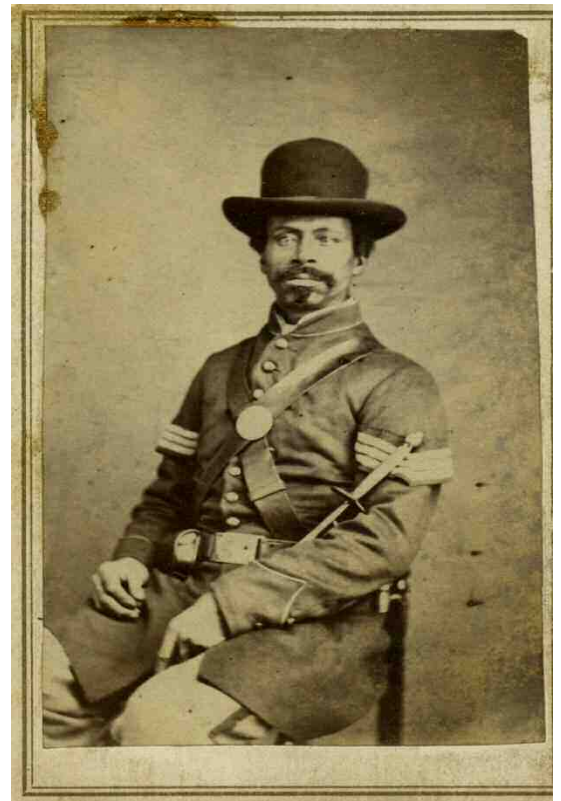


Corp. Wilson Weir was a slave when he joined the Union army at age 21. "My initial attraction to old photos was purely aesthetic, and this still continues to be the dominant motivating factor," writes Coddington. "This *carte de visite* meets and exceeds my criteria. ... He wears his hat at a jaunty angle, perhaps reflective of his character."

Collection of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University

Corp. Henry Gaither. "One of the few free men of color in this book when the war began, Gaither and his regiment, the 39th U.S. Colored Infantry, fought as hard as any white organization in the Union army," writes Coddington. "This is one of my favorite images in the book."

Collection of the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum



Folks: More pictures of all kinds of soldiers from the Civil War can be accessed here:

<http://facesofthecivilwar.blogspot.com/>

PART TWO

TOM WICKER

IF LINCOLN HAD NOT FREED THE SLAVES

The inevitable results of no
Emancipation Proclamation

Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of September 22, 1862, which declared slaves "forever free," is the supreme moral moment of American history. "Lincoln's political artistry," Tom Wicker writes here, "assured that the Proclamation . . . would be seen as a justified war measure, as well as a great humanitarian deed." When he proposed it to his Cabinet that July, he argued that the taking of the moral high ground "was absolutely essential to the salvation of the nation." Though the North had won big victories in the West, the Civil War closer to Washington seemed that summer to be turning in favor of the Confederates. They had stopped the Union in the outskirts of their capital, Richmond, won a heady triumph at the Second Manassas, and now Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was preparing to invade Maryland and Pennsylvania. It would make a scythelike swing that, if unchecked, might very well have ended in the capture of Baltimore and the isolation of Washington. Before he could issue his Proclamation, Lincoln badly needed a victory, any kind of victory. What he got on September 17 at Antietam—the famous bloodiest day in American history—was a tactically drawn battle but a strategic victory, a combination that the war produced again and again. Lee retired to Virginia, ending the invasion threat and buying precious time for Lincoln. Five days later the president made his announcement.

The Emancipation Proclamation was more than a visionary document; it was

a strategically astute move, something too often forgotten. It "made the war appear to be a Northern crusade against slavery," Wicker writes, and from that point on, the European recognition that the Confederacy so desperately sought would seem "an endorsement" of slavery. But what if the moment of victory (or the illusion of one) had not come in time? In Wicker's unhappy scenario, it is not improbable that the proclamation would have gone unissued and the war would have ended in a negotiated peace brokered by England and France. "Neither the moral question of slavery nor the political question of secession would have been resolved." Slavery might have survived for decades more. But beyond slavery, the consequences of an unresolved Civil War might have persisted into our own time. The counterfactual stakes of the Emancipation Proclamation could not have been more potentially damaging.

TOM WICKER is a former New York Times Washington bureau chief and a columnist for the newspaper. Among his many writings on the Civil War is the novel *Unto This Hour*.

SOURCE:

What If? 2. Ed. by Robert Cowley. New York, NY: Putnam: 2001



POLITICAL ANALYSTS, SOCIOLOGISTS, journalists, and historians agree that the "race problem" remains a virulent, underlying issue in American politics, local and national. How could it be otherwise? When black citizens retain a virtually genetic memory of centuries of enslavement, and when the fight against racial segregation, share-crop peonage, and voteless second-class status barely triumphed less than a half-century ago. When the "black ghetto" with its crime, poverty, unemployment, and hopelessness has become a permanent feature of urban life. When even middle-class blacks still suffer blatant discrimination in housing, health care, school and professional admissions, and a criminal justice system in which a black man is more than seven times as likely as a white to go to prison.

If black-white relations in America remain so largely tense and unsympathetic 137 years after Abraham Lincoln declared former slaves "forever free" and 135 years after Robert E. Lee surrendered the main Confederate army at Appomattox, who can say how hostile those relations might be had there been no Emancipation Proclamation, no "Great Emancipator," no successful war to end slavery, no constitutional amendments to give at least legal validity to the equality of all Americans of whatever skin color?

It seems altogether likely, if such were the case, that the "civil rights movement" of the fifties and sixties, coming earlier or later, would have been more violent and more violently resisted, that the "long hot summers" of black uprising that followed in the greatest American cities would have been even more destructive of life and property, and that our vast fortress prisons, in addition to giving "the impression of institutions for segregating the young black and Hispanic male underclass from society" (as the criminologist Norval Morris put it) would long ago have erupted in rage and resistance even more furious, on both sides, than was demonstrated at New York's Attica Correctional Facility in 1971.

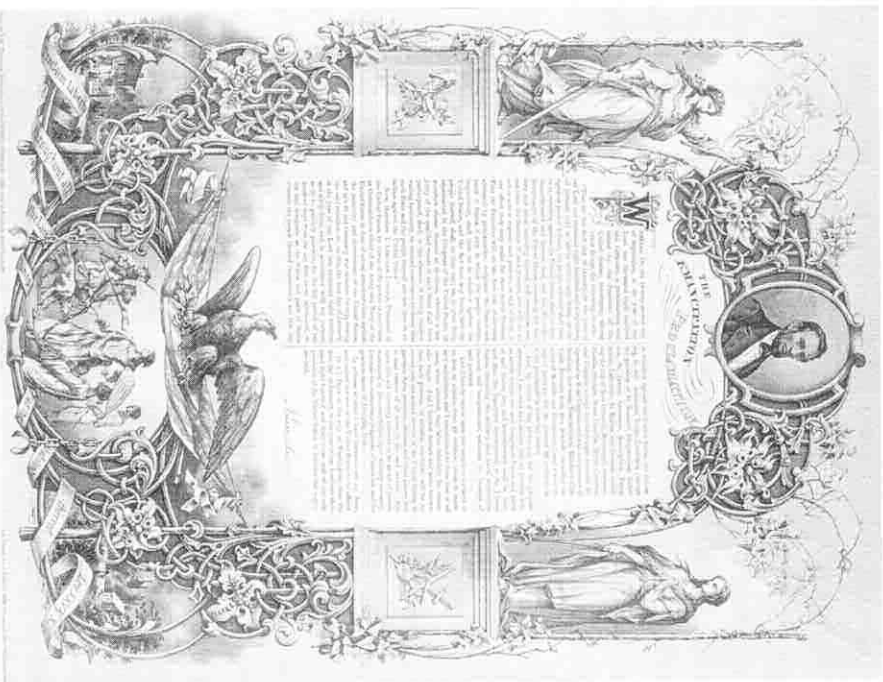
As for other vital developments in the nation's chronic racial problem—the desegregation of the armed forces in 1949, the Supreme Court's school desegregation ruling in 1954, or the monumental post-World War II migration of blacks out of the South and into cities whose faces and futures were changed forever—of these and other events it can only be said with any certainty that they would not have happened as they did, or when they did, or under the circumstances that actually prevailed, had not a savage and terrible war forced our greatest president to the most important act in American history.

Abraham Lincoln did not set out, however, to free the slaves by proclamation. Not that he favored human bondage: "As I would not be a slave," he said, in one of his precise formulations, "so I would not be a master. This is my idea of democracy." Nor did Lincoln lack human sympathy and understanding. "He treated me like a man," said the former slave Frederick Douglass, after a White House visit in 1863. "He did not let me feel for a moment that there was any difference in the color of our skins."

That was in keeping with Lincoln's deep sense of human brotherhood. But his attitude toward Douglass, an educated and accomplished black man, did not connote a belief in the genuine equality of what Lincoln often called "separate races." Blacks, "suffering the greatest wrong inflicted on any people," he told an audience of free black leaders, yet were "far removed from being placed on an equality" with whites. Not only had they been ill-treated but a broader difference than exists between almost any other two races "would always cause "a ban" even upon blacks freed from slavery and treated well by white people.

When he became president of the United States in 1861, Lincoln did favor emancipation—but gradual and compensated. In his Cooper Union speech of February 27, 1860, which greatly aided his presidential campaign, he had quoted Thomas Jefferson as having said:

It is still in our power to direct the process of emancipation and deportation, peaceably, and in such slow degrees, as that the evil will wear off insensibly; and their places be, *pari passu*, filled up by free



A CAUSE NOT LOST

This elaborately decorated version of Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation appeared not long after the Union president's order became official on January 1, 1863. Many regard the Proclamation as the supreme moral moment of U.S. history. Had it not been for a drawn battle, which Lincoln treated as the victory he sought, the opportunity might have been missed.

(Library of Congress)

white laborers. If, on the contrary, it [slavery] is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect.

But slavery was “forcing itself on,” even as Lincoln won the presidency; the Civil War began, and in his first years in office he seemed to be presid-

ing over a losing military effort. As late as his annual message to Congress of December 1862 (after the “preliminary” Emancipation Proclamation had been issued in September), the president proposed a constitutional amendment providing that states abolishing slavery *before the year 1900* would be compensated in U.S. bonds; that any slave earlier freed by presidential proclamation should be permanently free and his or her former owners compensated; and that Congress should have power to spend money for the colonization of blacks in a foreign land.

This proposal, subsumed in the freedom that followed Emancipation’s effective date of January 1, 1863, obviously came to naught. It nevertheless reflected Lincoln’s oft-stated conviction that the Constitution gave neither the president nor Congress the power to seize citizens’ property, including slaveholders’ bondmen; as well as his belief that whites and blacks could not live together amicably. Blacks, therefore, should be sent to Africa or elsewhere to rule themselves. (Neither Lincoln nor anyone else proposed that *whites* should emigrate and leave the territory of the United States to blacks.) This attitude toward black-white social and economic relations was shared by most nineteenth-century white Americans (and a century and a half later still influences admissions, housing, and criminal justice practices in a supposedly integrated nation).

Presidents are not kings, however, and events through the first seven-teen months of Lincoln’s presidency were driving him toward emancipation. (“I claim not to have controlled events but confess plainly that events have controlled me,” he later wrote in a wartime letter to Albert G. Hodges of Kentucky.) Not only were aggressive abolitionists, many of them influential Republican members of Congress, urging him to take action; the threat of European intervention on the side of the Confederacy was ever-present. The war itself was going badly enough that the president came to believe that he had to seek some more dramatic means of waging it, while still maintaining unity in the war effort.

On the other hand, an army faction around General George B. McClellan, and a substantial portion of Northern political opinion, resisted the idea of “revolutionary” warfare, as well as punitive measures against the “erring sisters” of the South. Emancipation, Lincoln himself feared, might

shatter the tenuous federal unity in waging the war. (The four vital "border states"—Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware—that remained loyal to the Union themselves sanctioned slavery, as did the District of Columbia. Abolition was a loud but not necessarily a majority sentiment in the Union of the 1860s.)

By July 13, 1862, with McClellan's Army of the Potomac newly turned back from the gates of Richmond, Lincoln told members of his Cabinet that he had "about come to the conclusion that it was a military necessity, absolutely essential to the salvation of the nation, that we must free the slaves or be ourselves subdued."

In the 1864 letter to Hodges, he elaborated on his view in 1862:

When [early in that year] I made earnest, and successive appeals to the border states to favor compensated emancipation, I believed the indispensable necessity for military emancipation, and arming the blacks would come, unless averted by that measure. They declined the proposition; and I was, in my best judgment, driven to the alternative of either surrendering the Union, and with it, the Constitution, or of laying strong hand upon the colored element. I chose the latter.

On July 22, 1862, Lincoln acted on that choice and read to the Cabinet a first draft of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. His mind was substantially made up, he said, but he delayed publication on Secretary of State William Seward's advice that the proclamation might seem a "cry of distress" if issued on top of federal military defeat in Virginia.

Even then, with the proclamation already drafted, but while Lincoln waited for a Union military victory to make it public, he told the nation in a masterfully phrased open letter to Horace Greeley, the editor of the *New*

York Tribune:

My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the

slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the union, and what I forbear, I forbear because I do *not* believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause.

Within days, still another Union defeat, this time virtually on the outskirts of Washington—the second battle of Bull Run—again delayed the proclamation. "The bottom is out of the tub!" Lincoln lamented, when he heard the news. But he had been persuaded by Seward to wait until Union war progress made the Emancipation Proclamation seem more effective, and the president more in command.

If such a moment had never come, it's at least conceivable that Lincoln might never have issued the great document—and in the autumn of 1862, with Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia moving into Maryland in their first invasion of the North, and another powerful Confederate army marching into Kentucky toward the Ohio River, many in both North and South doubted, with reason, that such a moment ever would arrive.

If it had not, owing to a continuing Confederate victory trend, the war might well have ended in a negotiated peace. That would have been, in effect, a Southern success, with slavery surviving much as it was before Fort Sumter. Something like Lincoln's proposed Constitutional Amendment of December 1862 eventually might have been adopted; as wartime animosities in the states of the former Confederacy gave way to peacetime calculations of interest. History and economics ultimately would have argued for compensated emancipation.

The subsequent history of the nation, of course, would have been quite different—disastrously so.

We can only speculate about that, however; because, in fact, the moment *did* come—a moment, at least, that Lincoln could treat as if it were the longed-for victory. On September 17, 1862, within weeks of the Greeley

letter, McClellan—briefly and reluctantly restored to command—fought the Battle of Antietam (called Sharpsburg in the South) just well enough to stop Lee and his invading army. McClellan was fatally afflicted, however, with what Lincoln in a cutting phrase called a case of “the slows”; so, unfortunately, the general and his army let the mauled and ragged Confederates escape back to Virginia.

Ever the adept politician, Lincoln nevertheless seized even this flawed moment. Five days after Antietam, the president called his Cabinet together again, read them a humorous passage from Artemus Ward, reminded them of the draft proclamation he had read aloud a few weeks earlier, and told them he did not wish their advice about “the main matter—for that I have determined for myself.” Then he read the proclamation again, this time intending it for publication.

So the deed was done and after the long months of hesitation, emancipation was proclaimed—hardly a moment too soon. In December at Fredricksburg, Virginia, federal forces, then under Ambrose Burnside, suffered probably the most devastating defeat of the war. Simultaneously, perhaps the most propitious *military* moment for British recognition of the Confederacy was at hand.

Such a perhaps fatal (for the Union) diplomatic act was prevented by Lincoln’s proclamation of September 22, 1862, to take effect on January 1, 1863. The Emancipation Proclamation precluded the possibility of European intervention because it made the war appear to be a Northern crusade against slavery (however tardily and reluctantly conducted). If a foreign nation had recognized and supported the Confederacy after emancipation, that nation’s action would have been seen throughout the world as an endorsement of chattel slavery.

Despite his earlier doubts about the constitutionality of compelled abolition, Lincoln justified his proclamation as a war measure falling within the emergency powers of the president—and a powerful war measure it turned out to be. Not only did emancipation prevent foreign intervention by proclaiming a crusade for human freedom; it undermined the Confederate home and military fronts with slave unrest, labor depletion, and military desertion, causing many rebel soldiers to recognize that they were

risking their lives and their families’ well-being in “a rich man’s war but a poor man’s fight.”

On the federal side, emancipation provided spiritual support for the cause of “Father Abraham,” who was beginning to be seen as a symbolic moral leader. It also tapped a new and welcome source of manpower—180,000 black troops serving in federal ranks by the end of the war in 1865. The document made Lincoln “the Great Emancipator” and ensured that his death would bring him the martyrdom and reverence he is accorded today, everywhere in the world—including the states of the old Confederacy.

Rightly so; for not only was the concept of emancipation morally and strategically powerful; but Lincoln’s political artistry assured that the proclamation really would be seen as a justified war measure, as well as a great humanitarian deed. His timing, in the wake of Antietam, gave the document plausibility. It signaled the end of slavery everywhere in the nation, though legally it freed slaves only in states and parts of states then in rebellion against the Union—not in any place (the District of Columbia, for instance) where Lincoln had the immediate power to strike off their bonds. Thus, whatever divisive effect a less considered, less well-timed proclamation might have had in the North was minimized. Even so, in the congressional elections of 1862, the Democrats made substantial gains.

The excess of the North’s manpower, industrial strength, and military might over those of the Confederacy, together with stronger Northern political institutions and Southern dissension, might well have brought eventual Union victory, even without emancipation, even after European intervention.

That argument, however, overlooks the real possibility that continued Confederate military success, even in defense, might have sapped Northern morale, destroyed Lincoln’s political support, and brought about his defeat in 1864 (when George B. McClellan was his Democratic opponent). In the long hindsight of history, it seems likely that the Northern public, tiring of an apparently unwinnable war, would have forced a negotiated peace at some point *before* those underlying Northern advantages could have had their likely effect.

Aside from what would have happened in the war itself had not Lincoln

freed the slaves as and when he did, the postwar and contemporary consequences are almost incalculable. What *would* have happened had the nation failed even in a great war to win the freedom of the black bondmen and women of the wartime and antebellum South? And had a compromise peace left the "peculiar institution" in place and its masters in their former seats of power?

A few likelihoods, approaching certainties, can be suggested: Slavery would have continued for a time in the old Confederate and border states, though the increasing pressures of world opinion and of an inefficient and wasteful labor system eventually would have brought about its end—probably gradually, and with compensation, as Lincoln and many other leaders of goodwill once had envisioned, but to which the South had preferred war. Had eleven undefeated Southern states returned to the Union, to Congress, and to American politics, neither the thirteenth Amendment, abolishing slavery, the fourteenth, guaranteeing equal protection of the laws, nor the fifteenth, establishing the right to vote to persons of color and to former slaves, would have been added to the Constitution—at least not for decades, perhaps never.

The so-called "reconstruction" of the Southern states that actually did take place after the historical Confederate defeat would not have been necessary or tolerated by an undefeated (counterhistorical) South. Freed Southern blacks would not have enjoyed the temporary political and other forms of power some gained in the "reconstruction" years after the war. Resentful Southern whites therefore would not have felt it necessary to form the original, terrorist Ku Klux Klan—with its hateful echoes into the present.

If these events, taken together, had *not* happened, the decades of hostility between Southern whites and blacks (repressed but real, on both sides) and segregation to which whites soon resorted, might have been avoided, or at least softened. So might the long years in which a "solid South" voted religiously Democratic, dominated Congress, and controlled—with the so-called "two-thirds rule"—party presidential nominations.

These would have been paltry gains compared to other, inevitable de-

velopments. Had gradual and compensated emancipation ultimately prevailed—perhaps by the end of the nineteenth-century, as Lincoln had proposed in December 1862—the system of "sharecropping" by which the white South maintained virtual peonage, and the "separate but equal" rule of law that enforced racial segregation, no doubt would have evolved anyway—later, perhaps, but otherwise about as it actually did.

These were responses not so much to the end of the Civil War as to the end of slavery. They also were effective Southern efforts—mostly winked at by the rest of the nation—to maintain white supremacy even after defeat in war and military emancipation. There's no reason to suppose that the white South would not have devised the same or equally clever means, or worse, to continue white supremacy, even after having consented—under economic pressure—to gradual and compensated emancipation.

The fact of black political, economic, and social freedom—no matter how achieved—would have been resented and feared by whites (as in many ways it is today), and would have demanded perhaps even more forceful responses from the fearful. Even as it was, between 1882 and 1900 there were at least 100 lynchings of blacks a year, and by 1968 more than 3,500 African-Americans had been lynched. And there's certainly no reason to suppose that other Americans would have protested anymore strongly than, historically, they did—at least until prompted by resisting blacks themselves, as in the actual civil rights movement.

No Emancipation Proclamation? A compromise peace with slavery surviving the Civil War? The nation would have been tenuously and unhappily reunited in those circumstances, but not on the basis of victor and vanquished—only in an apparent stalemate in which both sides had achieved their essential war aims: continued slavery for the Confederacy, a restored Union for the government at Washington.

Neither the moral question of slavery nor the political question of secession would have been resolved. Gradual and compensated emancipation might have drained some of the urgency from the former, but the strained theory of a right of secession might well have remained troublesome even today—far more so than in actual contemporary circumstances, when occasional secession threats sound more than a little empty (owing precisely

to that Union victory in 1865 to which the Emancipation Proclamation contributed so heavily).

Of all the consequences of a less salutary course of events in the 1860s—no compelled emancipation, no Union victory—the worst might well be the knowledge of the 12 percent of Americans who are black that their forebears were not freed from bondage by crusade, by the willingness of a generation “touched by fire” to sacrifice its lives and futures, by the greatness of a leader martyred not least for his proclamation of brotherhood. Instead they would live with the knowledge that the forces of bondage and oppression had prevailed—perhaps far into the twentieth century, if not permanently.

If black Americans could not take at least small satisfaction in what, in historical fact, *did* happen more than a century ago, what faith could they have in a nation to which their race was borne in chains? In a “democracy” that had failed, in its most fundamental test, to strike off those chains? In freedom itself, so long denied their ancestors, so boldly and belatedly won for themselves, from a reluctant and grudging majority?

In winning freedom for slaves more than a century ago, however, the nation finally accepted freedom for itself—though not without protest. In issuing the great proclamation, Lincoln responded not just to the pressures of his era but—as if to a vision—to the needs of later times, into the present and on into the future. His “justified war measure,” taken for reasons so compelling in 1862, is even more vital to Americans today. It strengthened the Union war effort as desired—but, more importantly, it began the “unfinished work” that Lincoln was to define at Gettysburg: a “new birth of freedom” in a nation “conceived in liberty” but not yet devoted to it.

For white and black alike, that is still what he termed it—“the great task remaining before us.”

ALISTAIR HORNE

FRANCE TURNS THE OTHER

CHEEK, JULY 1870

The needless war with Prussia

The unification of Germany in January 1871, at the end of the Franco-Prussian War, was a central event of the nineteenth century; it would be the defining one of the twentieth. Its poisoned fruit produced three world conflicts (if you count the Cold War), and all manner of attending horrors, from the Stalinist purges to the Holocaust. Unification may have been bound to happen—and could have occurred without especially dire consequences—but was achieved prematurely through the unexpected humiliation of France, which left a spreading taint of bitterness, a kind of historical oil spill. The French ambassador's July visit to the Prussian king William, taking the waters at Bad Ems, and the king's refusal to give in to his provocative demands, was the inconspicuous beginning of a crisis. The somewhat doctored account of the meeting, known as the Ems telegram, that Otto von Bismarck, the Prussian chancellor, sent out hardly seemed a pretext for armed confrontation. But it was a perceived affront that Napoléon III, the French emperor, could not afford to ignore: two days later, on July 15, France was at war with Prussia and its client states.

The cause of the Franco-Prussian War may have been feckless and French preparation to fight chaotic, their strategy inviting disaster; yet the odds were not totally against France. Its army, though outnumbered, was based on a solid core of professional soldiers, who relied on weapons—notably a breech-loading rifle and a primitive but effective hand-cranked machine gun—that were superior to those of the Prussians. The early battles were close (in one, the French inflicted