

Lincoln: *Inconsistencies in Racial Perspectives*

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Through the decades since the death of Abraham Lincoln on April 15, 1865, hundreds of books and articles have been written exploring every aspect of his life, both personal and political. Many were written by those who had known Lincoln during his life, but most have been written by historians attempting to explain his actions and decisions by studying his written words. Some, over the years have looked at Lincoln as a god-like figure, the great emancipator, preferring to explain away his human flaws. Others, especially beginning in the 1960s as the civil rights movement began, considered him to be racist and unworthy of the adulation previously showered upon him.

The inconsistency of Lincoln's views on race and slavery are shown throughout his political career through his own words, in written letters, and in public speeches. Historians have looked to his early life to, perhaps, find the root of his beliefs. Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809 in Hodgenville in Harden county Kentucky in a one room log cabin. (Cothran, ed. p.11) Farming was difficult and the family lost the farm in 1816 due to problems with the ownership papers. Poor whites were losing their land to more affluent slave-holding land owners. The economics of slavery caused poor white men to be unable to compete as large land owners with slaves could monopolize markets. This observation, made as he was just a child, was perhaps a seed in the growth of his hatred of slavery.

After the loss of the family farm, the Lincolns moved to the Indiana territory where slavery was not permitted. Young Abraham performed manual labor, clearing and working the land. His voracious appetite for knowledge caused him to be called lazy as he could often be seen at mid-day reading under a tree. In 1830 the family moved to Illinois, where Abraham began to work at more intellectual pursuits and began thinking of a political career. Lincoln, always in tune with public conception indulged in image-making especially during his

presidential campaign, focusing on his backwoods beginning and struggle for learning. These “visual metaphors were key to the development of Lincoln’s own enduring and reputation-enhancing anti-heroic image, that of a rail splitter who wore homespun clothes.” (Foner, p. 86) He also made clever political use of the new technology, photography, to enhance his everyman image with the public.

After moving to New Salem, Illinois, away from the “hyper-Calvinist milieu of his Baptist parents,” he occasionally attended the Episcopal Church. (Foner, p. 227) Following the death of his three year old son Eddie in 1850, the Lincoln family attended the First Presbyterian Church where Mary was a full member and Abraham attended on an irregular basis.

Having only approximately one year of formal education Lincoln studied and read voraciously especially the Bible, Shakespeare, and Euclid’s Ancient Greek texts on Geometry. (Cothran, ed. P. 12) He idolized George Washington and especially enjoyed “Mason Locke Weem’s hagiographical life of Washington, which as late as 1861 he vividly remembered ‘first reading away back in my childhood.’” (Foner, p.80) The stories of soldiers heroically fighting for freedom left a great impression on him and had been a factor in forming his views. His belief in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution as the best possible means of government lasted through his entire life.

Lincoln’s speeches contained numerous quotations from the Bible and from Shakespeare. Scriptures were made to be a formidable weapon as a politician. “It is a pleasure to be able to quote lines to fit any occasion,” he told a young boy in Springfield; “the Bible is the richest source of pertinent quotations.” (Foner, p. 226) Fellow lawyer Isaac N. Arnold stated Lincoln “believed in the great fundamental principles of Christianity.” (Foner, p.223) His evolving ideas

regarding faith led to the values that, along with his ambition, drove his political policies. Also, his sensitivity to public opinion, including the strong mainstream Protestantism, allowed him to sway audiences with his eloquent speeches.

Historian William Lee Miller, author of *Lincoln's Virtues: An Ethical Biography*, portrays Lincoln in an extremely complimentary political light stating he exhibits “a combination of the moral clarity and elevation of ...the prophet, with the ‘prudence and responsibility of a worthy politician’” (Miller, p. 222) Miller sincerely believes “the moral clarity was to come.” (Miller, p. 222)

Lincoln had referred to the Declaration of Independence as a historic document in numerous speeches including the Lyceum Address in 1838 where he made the parallel between the 1776 patriots pledging devotion to the Declaration of Independence and the devotion that should be pledged then to the Constitution and the laws of this country. (Miller, p. 246) In his eulogy to Henry Clay in 1852 he included condemnation of John C. Calhoun and some Southern governors for deriding the declaration’s claim that all men are created equal, saying “this sounds strangely in Republican America.” (Miller, p. 246) “He was making the transition, by way of condemning those who denied its application, from treating the Declaration only in its historical context to using it as a moral norm for today- the same transition a considerable part of the American public opinion was making.” (Miller, p. 246)

In an address to the New Jersey Senate on February 21, 1861, Lincoln stated “I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence... It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have equal chance.” (White, p.

23) Although he believes in this equal chance he states his determination to preserve the Union is the utmost task insisting that “when the people rise in masses in behalf of the Union and the liberties of their country, truly may it be said “the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.”” (White, p. 31) Here he uses Biblical imagery where Jesus tells Peter his mission was to build his church against which hell will not prevail conveying the idea that the salvation of the nation was the crisis being faced. (White, p. 32)

To begin to comprehend the racial views of Abraham Lincoln, his environment in Illinois is of utmost importance as is the realization that, as an ambitious man concerned with politics, he had to walk a tightrope when speaking of slavery and blacks. Race relations in antebellum Illinois, “which may have been the most Negro-phobic of all the Northern states,” were built on the white supremacist ideals. (Fredrickson, p. 35) The majority of people in southern and central areas of the state were settlers who had moved from slave states and were strongly anti-slavery on an economic basis as slave owners could farm more land and become wealthy. These settlers, poor non-slave holders were against slavery but were also against blacks. In Illinois, the anti-slavery atmosphere was largely driven by the fear that blacks could someday be freed and live among the whites. Many states of the old Northwest passed “Black Laws” discouraging free blacks from even entering. Illinois even discriminated against those already in the state. These free blacks were denied voting rights and were not permitted to serve on juries or testify in courts. Illinois in 1853 enacted what historian Eugene Berwanger has called “undoubtedly the most severe anti-negro measure passed by a free state” (Fredrickson, p. 38). Slaveholders could pass through the state but could not stay. Blacks crossing the border would be fined fifty dollars if they remained more than ten days-this fine to be paid immediately. If unable to pay, his labor

would be auctioned for a period of time negotiated at auction. If the illegal immigrant did not leave after another ten days, the fine would be doubled. (Fredrickson, p. 39)

During this period a minority of whites, many who had moved from the Northeast to Northern Illinois, objected to the Draconian Black laws and failed to enforce them. Some abolitionists were included in this group. The Black population of the State grew during the 1850s in the North especially around Chicago where they could avoid exposure to the prevailing racism in the central and southern areas of the state and find jobs to support themselves. (Fredrickson, p. 39)

Even if the intense and hostile attitudes of the electorate against free Blacks did not affect Lincoln's views, it is certain that he would need to pay lip service to the ideas of white supremacy in order to be elected to any state office. The question is whether he meant the statements about Blacks and race relations that he made during the great debates or if he was dissembling for the purpose of getting elected. (Fredrickson, p. 41)

“Stephen Douglass was the first in a long line of observers frustrated by the inconsistent things Abraham Lincoln had to say about racial equality.” (Foner, p.109) He pointed out that when in the Northern part of Illinois “he stood up for Negro equality” but “discarded the doctrine and declared that there always must be a superior and inferior race” when in the counties of the South.” (Foner, p.109) As a politician and master of rhetoric Lincoln was able to oppose “social and political equality of the races” while also “defending-at least rhetorically – the natural rights of all races to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, as enumerated in the Declaration of Independence.” (DiLorenzo, p. 13) Thomas DiLorenzo calls this “a textbook example of a masterful, rhetorically gifted, fence-straddling politician wanting to have it both ways-in favor of

and opposed to racial equality at the same time-in an attempt to maximize his political support.” (DiLorenzo, p. 13) DiLorenzo in his book, *The Real Lincoln: A New Look at Abraham Lincoln, His Agenda, and an Unnecessary War*, provides a skeptical perspective of Lincoln’s motivations and actions regarding race, slavery, and equality. DiLorenzo asserts that, despite Lincoln’s anti-slavery and contradictory racial rhetoric, his behavior proves him to be racially intolerant. During the 1850s Lincoln’s annual income averaged approximately five thousand dollars, three times the salary of the Illinois governor. Lincoln also was a successful trial lawyer before marrying into an affluent slave-owning family, the Todds. He eventually became a prominent and very wealthy railroad attorney. As an attorney Lincoln never represented a runaway slave but did represent a slave owner. DiLorenzo illustrates this discrepancy, although Lincoln was so opposed to slavery, he would send blacks back “into permanent lifetime servitude for a modest legal fee.” (DiLorenzo, p. 16) DiLorenzo has authored several books on Lincoln that bring to the forefront unpleasant facts that have been overlooked and deemphasized by many Lincoln scholars. DiLorenzo’s work has been heavily scrutinized by Lincoln scholars for his controversial portrayal of the beloved President. Although not a historian, DiLorenzo has received much acclaim for his opinionated but insightful criticisms of Lincoln’s character and actions from various writers, periodicals, and even professors of history.

In a kinder view of Lincoln, Richard Striner’s *Father Abraham: Lincoln’s Relentless Struggle to End Slavery*, strongly attempts to put Lincoln’s racist statements in the best possible light. He believes Lincoln was “being deliberately ambiguous or equivocal when he made statements that could be interpreted as racist in order to deflect or neutralize Douglass’s frequent and fervent appeals to white supremacy and keep the debate focused on the morality of slavery.” (Fredrickson, p. 14)

Some issues had the public sharply divided, such as the future of slavery in the territories. Don E. Fehrenbacher, Lincoln historian and author of *Prelude to Greatness: Lincoln in the 1850s* has stated that Lincoln's "prelude to greatness" came during a senatorial contest against Douglass in 1858 where Lincoln pushed to the forefront the morality of slavery (Fredrickson, p. 40). This kept the Republican Party committed to containing slavery and "putting it in the course of ultimate extinction." (Fredrickson, p. 40) Other facts uncovered by Fehrenbacher could be interpreted in a more cynical manner. Opposition by Douglass to the Lecompton Constitution for Kansas "made him a defacto opponent of the expansion of slavery. Since Lincoln's electoral chances in 1858 depended on his ability to head off Douglass's co-optation of the territorial issue, it was good politics for him to raise abstract moral considerations and associate Douglass' 'popular sovereignty' policy with the defense of slavery and its rights to expand." (Fredrickson, p. 40, 41)

Although Lincoln was cordial in his dealings with individual African Americans he still was known to tell crude jokes about "darkies and colored fellows." (Miller, p.40) William Lee Miller does state "there is no evidence that he joined in the more intentionally demeaning anti-Negro acts and attitudes common in his world." (Miller, p.40) Lincoln aided William de Fleurville, Billy the barber, in his quest to set up a barber shop, and serve as his lawyer and friend for years. Fredrick Douglass met with Lincoln and was quoted as saying "I was never more quickly or more completely put at ease in the presence of a great man than that of Abraham Lincoln" (Miller, p.41). "In all my interviews with Mr. Lincoln," Fredrick Douglass recalled in the 1880s, "I was impressed with his entire freedom from popular prejudice against the colored race." (Fredrickson, *A Man But Not A Brother*, 1975, p.39)

Although Douglass spoke well of Lincoln, he reminded his black audience in 1876, that:

“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 a 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.” (Fredrickson, *A Man But Not A Brother*, 1975, p.39)

Once again the contradictory statements suggest Lincoln was neither completely a white supremacist nor completely a morally principled champion of racial equality. He is neither the hero of egalitarian tradition as portrayed by one side or the typical white racist as portrayed by the other side. (Fredrickson, *A Man But Not A Brother*, 1975, p.39)

It is believed that Lincoln during his entire life considered colonization of freed slaves to a country other than America must be part of the emancipation process. Many plans, some voluntary, others compulsory, were discussed and had support of politicians and a large portion of nineteenth century Americans. In retrospect, in the twenty-first century, this idea seems absurd but during this time “Virtually the entire Indian population east of the Mississippi river had been removed by 1840. The mass migration of peoples was hardly unknown in the nineteenth century. In the decade following the famine of the 1840s an estimated two million men, women, and children emigrated from Ireland.” (Foner, p.137)

Support of colonization was widespread with “‘Almost every respectable man,’ Fredrick Douglass observed, belonged to or supported the American colonization society.” (Foner, p.138) Two statesmen Lincoln truly admired, Henry Clay and Thomas Jefferson were in favor of this movement. Other prominent people of the time favoring colonization were “John Marshall,

James Madison, Daniel Webster, Andrew Jackson, Roger B. Taney, and even Harriet Beecher Stowe (whose abolitionist novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* ends with the hero, George Harris, affirming his 'African nationality' and emigrating from the United States.)" (Foner, p.138)

None of the politicians "was more adamant in linking colonization with abolition than Henry Clay." (Foner, p.139) Clay, a slaveholder condemned slavery but feared emancipation would create an "uncontrollable population of free blacks." (Foner, p.139)

Henry Clay was the "principal inspiration for Lincoln's conception of race relations and the ultimate destiny of African Americans." (Fredrickson, p. 55) Lincoln himself is reported to have stated in 1864, "and I tell you I never had an opinion upon the subject of slavery in my life that I did not get from him." (Fredrickson, p. 55) He explained the anomaly of Clay's slaveholding versus his anti-slavery stance as being due to the fact he "was born into a society in which slavery was deeply entrenched and did not see 'how it could at once be eradicated without producing a greater evil even to the cause of human liberty.'" (Fredrickson, p. 55, 56) The inconsistencies in Lincoln's own views may have made it easier for him to forgive those in someone whom he greatly admired.

"Despite his moral abhorrence of slavery, Lincoln believed that the institution should be confronted and ultimately eradicated within the political and constitutional framework established by the Founders." (Harris, p. 4) He initially proposed for the Border States a plan of compensated emancipation which, funded by Congress, "would not violate these states authority over slavery and, by extension, over freed blacks." (Harris, p. 5) Lincoln hoped that the Border States would agree to a payoff of "five hundred dollars apiece for all the negroes they had according to the census of 1860" which would provide "a system of gradual emancipation"

leading to “the extinction of slavery in twenty years.” (Harris, p. 161) The dollar amount required for this plan was “only about one third of what was necessary to support the war for one year.” (Harris, p. 161) Lincoln believed that this compensated emancipation “should be connected with a scheme of colonizing the blacks some where on the American Continent.” (Harris, p. 161)

Lincoln’s plan of compensated emancipation in the border states would, he insisted, “achieve two important objectives: it could abolish slavery in these Union states and produce an early end to the war.” (Harris, p. 5) In summary, Lincoln stated “without slavery the rebellion could never have existed; without slavery it could not continue.” (White, p. 181)

In November 1861 Lincoln drafted a bill that was to be presented to the state legislature of Delaware, the first state that he attempted to enlist for his gradual compensated emancipation plan. There were so few slaves in Delaware-only eighteen hundred in 1860-that it seemed to be the perfect state to start the federal government’s program, so that slavery would be eliminated by 1893. This bill was defeated, even with so few slaves in the state, due to the fear that they would demand equal rights.

Lincoln next attempted to lump the border states as a whole and again pushed his compensation plan. Initially the North was supportive but the target states argued that “it opened the way to federal action against slavery in the South” (Fredrickson, p. 97). The lack of support for this moderate plan to phase out slavery and the disastrous war results created pressure from the North for a direct offensive against slavery in the rebel states. Emancipation was now viewed as necessary for the Union war effort, and no longer viewed as only a moral cause.

After the failure of his compensated emancipation plan Lincoln on July 22, 1862, read a draft proclamation to his cabinet declaring “that slaves in areas still in rebellion against ‘the constitutional authority of the United States’ on January 1, 1863 ‘shall then, thenceforward, and forever be free.’” (Fredrickson, p. 98) Justifying emancipation as “a fit and necessary military measure,” he still reiterated his offer of compensation for any state adopting gradual abolition. Lincoln, still hopeful, left this offer open to any Confederate state returning to the Union in the next half year.

After making the decision to emancipate, Lincoln followed the advice of Secretary of State, William Seward, and held off on issuing the preliminary proclamation until after a Union victory. This would avoid the appearance of desperation as viewed internationally.

Historian George Fredrickson, in *Big Enough to be Inconsistent: Abraham Lincoln Confronts Slavery and Race*, describes Lincoln’s behavior during the months after his decision to emancipate up until September 22, 1862, when he issued the preliminary proclamation, as “close-to-the-vest political shrewdness or deviousness in a good cause” (Fredrickson, p. 99). Lincoln had supposedly made the decision to free the slaves but purposefully gave the impression that it was still being considered. This tactic has been interpreted as a political move to present a controversial action in a manner calculated to acquire the maximum support of the population.

Frustrated with Lincoln’s seeming failure to move against slavery, Horace Greely, *New York Tribune* editor published an open letter in the *Tribune* with the caption “The Prayer of Twenty Millions.” (White, p. 125) Greely states by not emancipating now Lincoln was “strangely and drastically remiss.” (White, p. 125)

Lincoln answered Greely's letter on August 22 with a reply printed in the *National Intelligencer*. Lincoln explained his stance, as to the relationship of his presidential authority and the emancipation problem. "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." (White, p. 125)

In his eulogy to Clay, Lincoln affirms his ideas on colonization using phrases that sugar coated what some have described as "ethnic cleansing" and describing the removal of the blacks as an "exodus-like return of a captive people to its Promised Land." (Fredrickson, p. 58) He did not make statements regarding inequality of the races, just intimated that blacks could better fulfill their capabilities outside of America. With his usual eloquence and extreme conviction he affirmed Clay's ideas of colonization by stating:

"If as friends of colonization hope, the present and coming generations of our countrymen shall by any means, succeed in freeing our land from the dangerous presence of slavery and at the same time, in restoring a captive people to their long-lost fatherland, with bright prospects for the future; and this so gradually that neither races nor individuals shall have suffered by the change it will indeed be a glorious consummation."

(Fredrickson, p. 57, 58)

Some historians have suggested that Lincoln outgrew his ideas of colonization in his later years as President. While historian, Michael Lind, contends that it is "not clear that by his death Lincoln had abandoned his belief in colonization." (Fredrickson, p. 26) Lind raises a "recollection of General Benjamin F. Butler, which most historians now consider spurious, that Lincoln asked him in 1865 to make a logistical study that would answer the question of 'whether

the Negroes can be exported' en masse." (Fredrickson, p. 26) Although "historians are naturally reluctant to take Ben Butler's word for anything, some recent scholars have found good reason to accept his account of this conversation. Ludwell H. Johnson has pointed out that Butler had no conceivable motive for lying in this instance." (Fredrickson, *A Man But Not A Brother*, 1975, p.56, 57) "Despite his dyed-in-the-wool racism, Lincoln remains for Lind, the foremost advocate of America as a model of democracy for the rest of the world." (Fredrickson, p. 27)

The first public hint of Lincoln's evolving views on slavery and anti-slavery "came in 1837 when he and one other member of the Illinois state legislature protested for the record against a previously approved resolution condemning abolition. They objected not out of sympathy for the abolitionists, whom they conceded did more harm than good, but because the original resolution had not made it clear that slavery was an evil institution, 'founded on both injustice and bad policy.'" (Fredrickson, *A Man But Not A Brother*, 1975, p.44) Lincoln strongly criticized the tendency of abolitionists "rather to increase than abate [slavery's evils]." (Foner, p.67) Lincoln had been anti-slavery but was not an abolitionist. "Like most nineteenth century Americans, who revered the Union and Constitution, Lincoln did not sympathize with the abolitionists' goal of immediate emancipation." (Foner, p.170) He shared his views on slavery with abolitionists stating "I have always hated slavery, I think, as much as any abolitionist." (Foner, p.170) He borrowed words from an anti-slavery clergyman, Leonard Bacon, from Connecticut stating "if slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." (Foner, p.170) His memorable and eloquent speeches stating his moral opposition to the practice and his view that "slavery and freedom were essentially incompatible" made a great impression on the abolitionists. (Foner, p.171) Even his wife in her personal correspondence to her sister Emily wrote "although Mr. Lincoln is, or was, a Fremont man, you must not include him with so many

of those who belong to that party,--an abolitionist. In principal he is far from it. All he desires is that slavery shall not be extended-let it remain where it is.” (Fenster, p. 220)

Before the 1840s Lincoln’s beliefs in the constitutional principals regarding slavery differed from those of the abolitionists. He believed Congress did not have the Constitutional authority “to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different states.” (Foner, p.68) He did believe although that Congress possessed power to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia without the approval of the slave states. In 1849, during his single congressional term he introduced a bill to accomplish that fact but abandoned it due to inadequate support. Lincoln, at that time did support the Wilmot Proviso which would not permit slavery in any new territory resulting from the Mexican War.

Beginning around 1854 Lincoln began referring to Thomas Jefferson in his ideas on territorial questions, questions regarding slavery, and equality. In 1859 he honored Jefferson as the man who had in the Declaration of Independence pronounced “the definitions and axioms of free society.” (Foner, p.71) Lincoln’s old law partner, William Herndon, had stated “Mr. Lincoln hated Jefferson as a man” and “as a politician.” (Foner, p.71) However, historians have stated that the memory of Mr. Herndon may not always be correct. Explaining how his views of democracy supported his anti-slavery views, Lincoln stated “As I would not be a slave, 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.” (Foner, p.71, 72)

Lincoln like Jefferson, held to the belief of natural equality, and like Jefferson, his thoughts “seemed suspended between a civic conception of American nationality, based on the universal principle of equality and (thus open to immigrants and, in principle to blacks), and a

racial nationalism that saw blacks as in some ways not truly American.” (Foner, p.76) He could not conceive that the United States would be able to function as a biracial society and truly believed that blacks would rather leave for a place where they could enjoy true equality. “What I most desire would be the separation of the white and black races” is a phrase from a speech in Springfield in 1858. (Foner, p.146)

While president, Lincoln attempted to encourage blacks to support the idea of colonization. He invited a delegation of African American men from Washington’s black churches to convince them of the soundness of the idea of emigration. Renowned historian Eric Foner in his book, *Our Lincoln: New Perspectives on Lincoln and His World*, calls Lincoln’s statements at this meeting “one of the most controversial moments of his entire career.” (Foner, p.155)

Addressing the members of the delegation Lincoln stated: “You and we are different races, even when you cease to be slaves; you are yet far removed from being placed on an equality with the white race... It is better for us both, therefore, to be separated.” (Foner, p.155) Lincoln continued “Your race are suffering in my judgment, the greatest wrong inflicted on any people.” (Foner, p.155) At this point in a very controversial phrase, he seemingly places blame for the war on the presence of blacks in this country by stating “But for your race among us there could not be war.” (Foner, p.155) In order to rectify the situation Lincoln offered the idea of removal to Central America and requests them to “sacrifice something of your present comfort” (Foner, p.155). He believed refusal to emigrate on the part of the blacks would be “extremely selfish.” (Foner, p.155)

Always the savvy politician, Lincoln had a stenographer present so that his remarks would quickly be made public in the newspapers. The general public, both black and white, found his statements shocking and unfortunate. Blacks especially were angry and considered it an outrage to hear that the President considered their presence to be “the cause of all this bloodshed.” (Foner, p.156) Fredrick Douglass, absolutely incensed, stated “Mr. Lincoln assumes the language and arguments of an iterant colonization lecturer, shows all his inconsistencies ... his contempt for Negroes and his canting hypocrisy.” (Foner, p.156) Douglass reiterated that the Negro was not the cause of the war, slavery was.

In order to pay for a protracted war the House of Representatives developed a massive tax system starting with the tax on income, something never done previously. Sales taxes, from food to cigars were instituted as were taxes on railroad and steam boat tickets as well as stock transactions. This financial ability and the power to collect such revenue provided the North with a great advantage. Lincoln suggested to Congress that the federal government could purchase freedom for the slaves. He insisted that slavery “was the disease of the entire nation” and that those in the North “should be ready and eager to share largely the pecuniary losses to which the South would be subjected if emancipation should occur... All must share the suffering of its removal.” (Von Drehle, p.93)

Lincoln continued by saying

“American slavery is no small affair, and it cannot be done away with at once... It belongs to our politics, to our industries, to our commerce, and to our religion. Every portion of our territory in some form or other has contributed to the growth and the increase of slavery... It is wrong, a great evil indeed, but the South is no more responsible for the wrong done to the African race than is the North.

Slavery existed... by the act of the North as of the South; and in any scheme to get rid of it, the North, as well as the South, was morally bound to do its full and equal share” (Von Drehle, p.93, 94).

Regarding his idea of the government purchasing slaves freedom, Lincoln proposed to Congress that a joint resolution be issued offering to “co-operate with any state which may adopt gradual abolishment of slavery.” (Von Drehle, p. 94) New York Times editor and author of *Rise to Greatness: Abraham Lincoln and America’s Most Perilous Year*, David Von Drehle, states that this proposal “represented a profound change in the federal government stance toward slavery.” (Von Drehle, p. 94) Lincoln, acutely aware of public sentiment portrayed this as part of the war effort instead of a moral imperative. Hoping to deprive the Confederates of the opportunity of incorporating the border states worked in favor of the Union. “To deprive them of this hope, substantially ends the rebellion.” (Von Drehle, p. 94)

Abolitionist Senator Thaddeus Stevens complained that Lincoln’s moderate approach was like serving “diluted, milk-and-water-gruel,” but Charles Sumner realized any type of vote for emancipation, in any context would begin a chain of events described as falling dominos (Von Drehle, p. 94). The Daily National Republican, an anti-slavery newspaper, printed “The great, transcendent fact is, that for the first time in two generations we have a recommendation from the presidential chair for the abolition of slavery.” (Von Drehle, p. 94)

The compensated emancipation plan, if approved by the states would work as a means to circumvent a major problem that Lincoln faced in regards to slavery-the Supreme Court. Although now in his eighties Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, author of the Dred Scott decision, was still active.

The Union victory of the iron-clad warship *Monitor* over the Confederate iron clad *Merrimac* ended the South's hopes of attempting to fight through the Union blockades. This victory, along with news of the Confederate retreat from Manassas caused numerous slaves to seek safety with the advancing Union troops. This led Lincoln to believe that the self-liberation of these slaves proved emancipation had already begun. In speaking to a group of border state congressmen, Lincoln assured them that although he considered "slavery was wrong and should continue to think so" he still did not believe the Constitution gave him or Congress power over slavery in their states, because emancipation was a subject exclusively under the control of the states. (Von Drehle, p.105)

Lincoln continued, speaking of Union armies now in close contact to slaves with many blacks seeking protection. This caused him great frustration as he could not force volunteer soldiers, some opposed to slavery, to send these poor slaves into bondage again. He believed his compensation proposal was a "good faith" answer to the problem of self-emancipation of slaves and could harm the rebellion more than any battle. (Von Drehle, p.105) Unfortunately, the border states did not agree to Mr. Lincoln's plan and refused to change their policies regarding slavery.

When news of Lincoln's compensated emancipation proposals reached Europe, diplomats were happy, as the news was well received in Europe. The British, strongly anti-slavery, had declared neutrality early in the American fight permitting both sides to buy munitions. The British textile industry required cotton from Southern plantations to keep their mills open, a fact the Confederate states hoped would bring about British support for their cause. Confederates believed if Britain joined in their cause, their great naval power would aid in running Union blockades. Historian William Klingaman states in *Abraham Lincoln and the Road to*

*Emancipation: 1861-1865*, “Lincoln’s refusal to define the war as a conflict to abolish slavery blurred the distinction between North and South in European eyes.” (Klingaman, p. 111)

“Lincoln’s mastery of words is unequaled among American Presidents, or world statesman.” (Steers, 2007, p. 89) His speeches and writings have been studied, criticized, praised and memorialized. Despite all that has been written in an effort to conclusively pin down Lincoln “ideologically, psychologically, religiously, legally, linguistically, sexually, and morally, the Lincoln of change, growth, and contradiction” endures. (Foner, 2008, p. 273) Lincoln was “big enough to be inconsistent- cruel, merciful, peace-loving, a fighter, despising Negroes and letting them fight and vote, protecting slavery, and freeing slaves. He was a man-a big, inconsistent, brave man.” (Foner, 2008, p. 273) The consummate politician.

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The study of the Civil War period revolves around Abraham Lincoln as the focal point, but many times does not delve into the lesser known people who played a great part in the decisions and events of the time. New York, with an exceptionally strong background of social and political reform played a significant part in this turbulent period through its events and participants.

Perhaps one of the strongest links that President Lincoln had to Upstate New York was through his Secretary of State, William Henry Seward of Auburn. Seward held many of the same views as Lincoln regarding slavery and abolition and became his close personal friend and advisor.

Seward, born into a slaveholding family in 1801, saw the tremendous racial inequities among those living in his own home. He married the daughter of Judge Elijah Miller in 1824. Both he and his wife, Frances, had strong abolitionist leanings.

During his tenure as Governor of New York, Seward became known “for his progressive policies: improving the state’s transportation system, extending public education to the children of immigrants, and defending the rights of slaves and freed blacks.” (Stahr, 2012, p.3) Seward had discovered the overrepresentation of blacks in prison and recommended, in “a solicitous regard for public welfare, justice to an injured race, and the dictates of enlightened humanity,” providing for black education. (Stahr, 2012, p.60) He also believed that education should be provided for children of immigrants.

Although he had a strong desire for abolition he “was not an abolitionist- he favored a gradual and voluntary end of slavery rather than immediate abolition-but he was prepared to take risks for freedom, such as sheltering fugitive slaves in his Auburn home.” (Stahr, 2012, p.3)

Lincoln's house divided speech presented the idea that "slavery and freedom were locked in mortal combat." (Foner, 2011, p. 102) The same concept was put forward by William Seward in Rochester New York in 1858. Seward maintained that economic expansion was causing slave and free states, two "radically different" civilizations into closer proximity. "Shall I tell you what this collision means?... It is an irrepressible conflict between opposed and enduring forces and it means that the United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free labor nation." (Foner, 2011, p. 102)

Seward saw slavery as an economic relic and believed it stood in the way of economic progress. He saw America, free of slavery, encompassing lands from the Atlantic to the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Hawaiian Islands. Lincoln also considered "slavery as an impediment to American destiny," but his views "rested on political and moral premises, not economic and civilizational ones." (Foner, 2011, p. 102)

Of the four men vying for the Presidential nomination in 1860, Seward was the frontrunner. He felt confident of the nomination due to the fact "that his campaign at the convention was in the hands of the most powerful political boss in the country: Thurlow Weed." (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p. 115) Weed had successfully handled all Seward's campaigns from New York State Senator, New York Governor to United States Senator. He returned from Washington to Auburn to "share the anticipated Republican nomination in the company of family and friends." (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p. 11) A canon had been moved to the park to await the signal, starting a great celebration. Seward's early radical statements regarding slavery and abolition caused the Republican Party to nominate Abraham Lincoln who was considered less radical while still anti-slavery.

Another reason for Seward being passed over for the nomination is the fact that “many Republicans disliked how he welcomed Catholic and other immigrants and feared his radical views on slavery.” (Stahr, 2012, p. 546) Republicans, “looking for a less controversial candidate for President- chose this moment to select a nominee with a lower profile.” (Von Drehle, 2012, p. 87)

Lincoln, who had a shrewd understanding of men, saw that “Seward would defer to an authority figure” but did have “brief eruptions of rebelliousness.” (Donald, 2004, p. 150,151) Seward in an unpredictable moment sent a memorandum to Lincoln stating “the new administration lacked any clear policy, either domestic or foreign” and that “the President had been spending too much time on minor patronage matters.” (Donald, 2004, p. 152) Seward continued to make suggestions, “notably, he advised Lincoln to stir up a war against a European foe as a way to reunite patriots North and South against a common enemy.” Seward continued with “I seek neither to evade nor assume responsibility.” (Von Drehle, 2012, p. 88)

This has been seen by most historians as an attempt by Seward to usurp power. Lincoln calmly explained “he had one policy-to preserve the Union.” (Von Drehle, 2012, p. 88) He also made quite clear who was in command by stating “If this must be done, I must do it.” (Von Drehle, 2012, p. 88) In *Lincoln and Seward in Civil War Diplomacy: Their Relationship at the Outset Reexamined*, Norman Ferris states that, regarding foreign policy, Seward was not advocating war, but recommending that explanations be demanded from Spain and France as to their desire “to intervene in Western Hemispheric affairs.” (Ferris, 1991, p. 5) Ferris believes that Seward was seeking “Lincoln’s sanction for asking European envoys in Washington whether their governments intended to take advantage of the slaveholder’s rebellion to intervene in American affairs.” (Ferris, 1991, p. 6)

Seward soon came to understand “the discipline and cold calculation behind Lincoln’s every decision.” (Von Drehle, 2012, p. 90) Lincoln, in patronage issues, was not swayed by friendship and “he would always give more to his enemies than he would to his friends.” (Von Drehle, 2012, p. 90) He sincerely believed his friends would understand and remain as his friend even if disappointed in his decisions.

President Lincoln appointed his three rivals for the Republican nomination to his cabinet along with Simon Cameron who had run as Pennsylvania’s favorite son. Seward became Secretary of State, Salmon Chase became Secretary of the Treasury, and Edward Bates became Attorney General. Cameron was given the position of Secretary of War. When questioned why he had chosen these men, Lincoln said “we needed the strongest men of the party in the cabinet... These were the very strongest men. I had no right to deprive the country of their services.” (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p.319)

On July 13, 1862 Lincoln spoke to Seward and Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy, on the carriage ride to Oak Hill Cemetery where Stanton’s child would be buried. The President discussed his plans to emancipate “the slaves by proclamation in case the Rebels did not cease to persist in their war.” (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p. 463) He had “come to the conclusion that it was a military necessity absolutely essential for the salvation of the Union.” (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p. 463) In this manner “the Constitutional protection of slavery could and would be overridden by the constitutionally sanctioned war powers of the President.” (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p. 463)

When asked his opinion, Seward said the “subject involved consequences so vast and momentous that he should wish to bestow on it mature reflection before giving a decisive answer,” though he did think it was “justifiable.” (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p. 463)

On July 22, 1863 Lincoln called his cabinet together to read a draft of his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. He explained that he wanted their opinion, but his decision was final. Seward objected, stating the timing was wrong. “I approve of the proclamation, but I question the expediency of its issue at this juncture. The depression of the public mind, consequent upon our repeated reverses, is so great that I fear... it may be viewed as the last measure of an exhausted government, a cry for help...our last shriek, on the retreat.” (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p. 468) He considered it better to wait “until the eagle of victory takes his flight... hang your proclamation around his neck.” (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p. 463)

Lincoln admitted Seward’s idea had great validity stating “the wisdom of the view of the Secretary of State struck me with very great force.” (Von Drehle, 2012, p. 230) On September 22, 1862 Lincoln read the revised version of his Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet. It now “was entirely a statement of military policy, an exercise of his constitutional power to take all actions necessary to put down an insurrection.” (Von Drehle, 2012, p. 290) The proclamation had stated that the government would recognize this freedom. Seward suggested that it may be better to state “recognize and maintain.” This one small edit now “committed the United States not just to proclaim freedom, but to enforce it.” (Von Drehle, 2012, p. 291)

This draft proclamation allowed Confederate states time to return to the Union and offered the option of “gradual emancipation and endorsed the colonization of freed slaves.” Also, the slaves’ freedom “would be sustained during the term of the present incumbent.”

(Foner, 2011, p. 231) Both Chase and Seward suggested that this phrase be dropped from the proclamation and Lincoln's "final version promised that those to whom it applied would be forever free." (Foner, 2011, p. 231)

Although Seward was extremely close to Lincoln in his ideas regarding slavery, he thought that the concept of colonization was impossible to achieve. The country needed labor, and he was for "bringing men and states into this Union, never for taking any out." (Foner, 2011, p. 234) Upon the death of Lincoln, George E. Baker, William Seward's secretary, wrote they "never disagreed in but one subject-that was the colonization of the negroes." (Foner, 2011, p. 234)

Seward became Lincoln's closest advisor and friend. They spent many evenings in each other's company talking, telling stories, and jokes. Seward became indispensable to President Lincoln, advising him on "social protocol: the color of gloves to be worn on special occasions, the time for formal White House dinners, the etiquette of calling cards, the proper way to address titled foreigners." (Donald, 2004, p. 158) He constantly worked publicly and behind the scenes to smooth the road for Lincoln.

Both men enjoyed a good joke, even at their own expense. While reviewing the troops their carriage driver cursed the roads, horses, and weather so profanely that Lincoln asked "driver, my friend, are you an Episcopalian?" The driver answered no, that if he did go to church it would be the Methodist church. Lincoln answered "Oh, excuse me, I thought you must be an Episcopalian for you swear just like Secretary Seward, and he's a churchwarden." (Donald, 2004, p. 171)

Seward hosted foreign ambassadors and envoys at his dinner table and was able to pick up information in the talks over cigars. His main task during this period was to bar cotton-hungry European powers from offering aid to the Rebel States. “He brought to this a long standing sophisticated view of the effect of international trade on national power.” (Flood, 2009, p. 96)

In 1863, Seward gave a tour through upstate New York to a group of ambassadors from England, France, Spain, Germany and Russia. The destination was Niagara Falls, but Seward’s true purpose was to give them a picture of the industrial might of the North. Seward deftly used the tour to “counter the impression abroad that the lengthy war was starting to exhaust the resources of the North.” (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p. 547) Assistant Secretary of State, Seward’s son Fred, described the tour as a showcase for “Hundreds of factories with whirling wheels, thousands of acres of golden harvest fields, miles of railway trains laden with freight, busy fleets on rivers, lakes and canals.” (Flood, 2009, p. 96) On their return journey the ministers stayed in Auburn where Seward hosted a huge picnic. “All seemed to be enjoying themselves very much” wrote Frances Seward to her son Augustus. (Seward Papers, 1863) Seward’s plan worked quite well as shortly after the tour, he received “trustworthy assurances from the governments of England and France” that Confederate contracts for armored vessels would not be honored and the warships would not be delivered. (Kearns Goodwin, 2006, p. 547)

In early 1865 President Lincoln sent the following letter to Secretary of State William Seward.

Executive Mansion Washington, Jan. 31. 1865

Hon. William H. Seward Secretary of State

You will proceed to Fortress-Monroe, Virginia, there to meet, and informally confer with Messrs. Stephens, Hunter, and Campbell, on the basis of my letter to F. P. Blair, Esq., of Jan. 18. 1865, a copy of which you have.

You will make known to them that three things are indispensable, to wit:

1. The restoration of the nation authority throughout all the States.
  2. No receding, by the Executive of the United States in the Slavery question, from the position assumed thereon, in the late Annual Message to Congress, and in preceding documents.
  3. No cessation of hostilities short of an end of the war, and the disbanding of all forces hostile to the government.
- You will inform them all propositions of their not inconsistent with the above, will be considered and passed upon in a spirit of sincere liberality—  
You will hear all they may choose to say, and report it to me.  
You will not assume to definitely consummate anything.

Yours &c,  
*Abraham Lincoln*

(Lincoln, 1865, p. 251)

Seward accompanied Lincoln in February 1865 to meet with Confederate emissaries at Hampton Roads, Virginia. Alexander H. Stephens, the Vice President of the Confederacy, R. M. T. Hunter, the President pro tem of the Confederate Senate, and John A. Campbell, former U.S. Supreme Court Justice, now Confederate Assistant Secretary of War deliberated possible terms to end the fighting. One proposal, from Stephens, was “a joint attack by the United States and the Confederate States on Mexico, where the French had established a puppet regime under the emperor Maximilian.” (Donald, 2004, p. 174) Lincoln’s refusal was substantiated by Seward’s quoting from “Lincoln’s first inaugural address, declaring that the war would end only after the defeat of the Confederacy.” (Donald, 2004, p. 174) Continuing, the Southern emissaries questioned if all slaves were freed or just slaves in designated areas. “Seward surprised them by

reporting that only a few days before, the Congress had passed the Thirteenth Amendment, which abolished slavery.” (Donald, 2004, p. 174)

This development quickly brought about the end of the conference. While the emissaries from the South were boarding the steamer to return to Richmond, Seward sent a free black man with a basket of champagne in a row boat. “Speaking through a boatswain’s trumpet, Seward called: ‘Keep the champagne, but return the negro.’” (Donald, 2004, p. 175)

Upon news on April 3, 1865 of Richmond’s capture Seward contacted Lincoln, who was in Virginia near Richmond. He stated his intention of going to Lincoln’s side in case “there were to be any serious peace talks.” (Stahr, 2012, p.431) A carriage accident, fracturing his jaw and right arm changed his plan. Upon arrival back in Washington, Lincoln went immediately to see his Secretary of State. Seward whispered “you are back from Richmond?” With Lincoln answering “yes, and I think we are near the end at last.” (Stahr, 2012, p.432) This was their final visit.

John Wilkes Booth determined that the President, Vice President and Secretary of State should die. It seems “likely that Booth targeted Seward because he believed that if both Lincoln and Johnson were killed, Seward would take over as defacto President.” Booth also believed that Seward’s death “would contribute to the chaos,” one of his goals along with retribution. (Stahr, 2012, p.434)

“Seward was the indispensable man of the Lincoln administration.” (Stahr, 2012, p.546) He prevented Europe and other nations from involvement in the nation’s Civil War and was the President’s closest advisor on foreign and domestic policy. Through the darkest period in our nation he managed to keep his sense of humor and helped bolster the melancholy Lincoln.

Seward survived the attack on his life and the trauma of the assassination of Lincoln. He continued in politics serving as Secretary of State under Andrew Johnson. He is most remembered for his “negotiating the purchase of Alaska and securing its approval by a reluctant Congress.” (Stahr, 2012, p.4) This acquisition was called “Seward’s Folly” by many at the time. Seward first became interested in Alaska due to the whaling industry. West coast whaling interests wanted “the federal government to ‘obtain such rights and privileges of the government of Russia, as will enable our fishing vessels to visit the harbors of its possession.’” (Stahr, 2012, p.4)

Seward worked with Russian minister Eduard de Stoeckl to set up the purchase of Alaska for \$7, 200, 000 and the treaty was signed “at about four o’clock on the morning of March 30, 1867.” (Stahr, 2012, p.486) Over time, Seward, known for his ideas on territorial expansion, was proved correct in his assumption that Alaska would become a valuable addition to the country.

### New York City Draft Riots

In March 1863 the Republicans and Lincoln realized that black enlistment after emancipation could not meet the requirement of manpower necessary for the Union. The controversial Union draft was instituted to reinforce the military and to stimulate volunteering, although the wealthy could still buy an exemption or hire a substitute. Also, both Lincoln and Stanton believed that enforcement of the draft would prove to those already on the battlefields that the government was firmly standing behind its armies in spite of the unpopularity of the war. Lincoln firmly backed Stanton’s moves to enforce the conscription provost marshals giving them sweeping powers to enroll men.

“Not ones to coddle treason, Lincoln and Stanton adopted a tough line against anti-war activities.” (Oates, 2011, p. 344) With Lincoln’s backing, Stanton’s provost marshals were authorized to jail anyone daring to interfere with the draft, considering this to be aiding the rebellion. Stanton’s agents did incarcerate “more than thirteen thousand people-most of them anti-war Democrats- into northern prisons.” (Oates, 2011, p. 344) Due to public objection Lincoln and Stanton attempted to reign in any heavy-handed use of military power whenever possible. Stanton quickly saw to the release of those whose arrest he considered unwarranted; and the President himself spent an inordinate amount of time writing pardons for civilians.

The anti-war discontent was growing with disaffected white northerners believing that, even worse than emancipation was the idea of being forced to fight for the liberation of slaves and dying in Mister Lincoln’s inept army. Democrats began a “peace movement” to end the hostilities and return the soldiers to their homes. (Oates, 2011, p. 343) These Democrats blamed Lincoln for the draft, military arrests, and for emancipation. The Republicans “tended to view all anti-war dissidents as disloyal... calling them poisonous copperheads one and all.” (Oates, 2011, p. 343)

During the summer of 1863 white mobs ranting about Lincoln’s war for black emancipation caused riots in “Boston, Troy, Newark, and New York City.” (Oates, 2011, p. 357) New York City had grown in the last fifteen years primarily due to Irish and German immigration. Most were living in squalid tenements in lower “Manhattan Island, making the cities Forth Ward nearly twice as crowded as the notorious slums of London’s East End.” (Klingaman, 2001, p. 262)

In the North, prejudice against Negroes was growing exponentially among some whites who blamed blacks for causing the war. “Irish immigrants living in northern cities feared that freed slaves might migrate north and compete with them as a source of cheap labor.”

(Klingaman, 2001, p. 165) Editors from an Anglo-African newspaper noted that “to thousands of white northerners, setting black men free to be the equals of white men in the slave States is something more dreadful than rebellion or secession, or even a dismembered Union.”

(Klingaman, 2001, p. 165)

In summer 1862, when state governments instituted conscription, riots, especially among the immigrant population broke out in multiple states. “Protesters insisted that ‘we won’t fight to free the nigger.’” (Klingaman, 2001, p. 165) Following approval by Congress of the Union’s first Conscription Act of March 3, 1862 the situation became even more volatile.

Senator Sumner said of the situation “the President tells me he now fears ‘the fire in the rear’ meaning the democracy-especially the northwest-more than our military chances.”

(Klingaman, 2001, p. 246) More and more political meetings ended in violence while draft officials were beaten and, in some cases, murdered. Negroes were attacked in Detroit amid meetings protesting the Proclamation and conscription.

The Democratic Party fueled the fires of racism by warning “New York’s Irish and German residents to prepare for the emancipation of slaves and the resultant labor competition when Southern blacks would supposedly flee North.” (Harris, 2003, p. 279) The Democrats pushed the idea of a New York where Southern blacks outnumbered whites. The working class whites believed themselves to be losing “political leverage and economic status...as blacks appeared to be gaining power.” (Harris, 2003, p. 280) The wealthy, who could “hire a substitute

or pay the government three hundred dollars might avoid enlistment.” (Harris, 2003, p. 280) Poor working class whites considered that they “are sold for three hundred dollars the price of exemption from war service whilst they pay a thousand for Negroes.” (Harris, 2003, p. 280) Lincoln, well beyond the age of conscription “paid for a substitute of his own; one John S. Staples, a Pennsylvanian.” (Donald, & Holzer, ed., 2005, p.162)

New York City, with nearly half of its population of eight hundred thousand being foreign born and living in squalor, was a ticking time bomb. The Irish Americans believed the Union government was “having the poor man dragged from his family and sent to the war to fight for the Negro and not to restore the Union.” (Klingaman, 2001, p. 263) Poor economic conditions and racism together were the spark to the bomb causing the worst rioting in United States history.

In New York City on July 11, 1863, an official from the office of the provost marshal began to draw names of New York males between twenty and forty-five years of age. Although tense, this first day passed without major disturbances. The violence began July 13 when a mob of mostly Irish white men “burned down the draft office and went on a rampage, breaking into saloons, looting jewelry stores, ganging up on policemen and even attacking the Mayor’s house.” (Oates, 2011, p. 357) In “a three day orgy of violence which sickened Lincoln to read about” rioters tortured and hung Negroes, looted and burned a black orphanage, beat and whipped blacks to death and killed whites and policemen intent on interfering.

The militia of New York, having been sent to Gettysburg at the request of President Lincoln, was unable to aid in controlling the violence when the riots began. The three days of horror “cost at least one hundred lives, along with millions in property damage.” (Donald, &

Holzer, ed., 2005, p.176) Finally, President Lincoln was forced to “order exhausted veterans of the recent Battle of Gettysburg to travel north to New York and help put down the ugly protest.” (Donald, & Holzer, ed., 2005, p.176)

The war and the enlistment of blacks had caused changes in a great many “whites opinion of the Negro.” (Foner, 2011, p. 256) The proud service of African American troops began to break down the “long-standing image of docile or barbaric slaves.” (Foner, 2011, p. 256) Racism was still rampant as was dramatically shown by the draft riots of July 1863 in New York City. “Black residents were literally hunted down like wild beasts and forced to take refuge in Central Park or New Jersey.” (Foner, 2011, p. 256)

Lincoln had believed that colonization would “be far better to separate the races than to have such scenes as those in New York the other day, where negroes were hanged to lampposts.” (Foner, 2011, p. 259) This belief of Lincoln seemed to come to an end in late August, as realization that “placing black men in the army suggested a very different future for them than colonization.” (Foner, 2011, p. 259)

### Elmira Union Prison Camp

In 1861 President Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand northern volunteers to aid in the suppression of the southern rebellion. The New York State Governor Edwin G. Morgan stated that soldiers were to be trained at three locations in New York State: New York City, Albany, and Elmira. (Gray, 2001, p. 1) Elmira was chosen for its geographic location where food and fuel were available and major railroads converged for efficient transport of troops. Another reason for Elmira to be selected as a depot and training center was that “Governor

Morgan was pressured enough by Secretary of War Simon Cameron to take special notice of ...the various railroad lines leading into and out of town, particularly that of the Northern Central... in which he had money interests.” (Gray, 2001, p. 1) Cameron expected to profit from the rail line’s usage for transport of troops as would others in his home state where the Northern Central ran.

After Lincoln’s call to arms the “Southern Tier Rifles” from the Elmira area “volunteered almost to a man.” (Horigan, 2005, p.6) It was one of the first regiments to muster in Elmira. Within the first ninety days after Lincoln’s request, ten regiments mustered in Elmira.

The defeat at Bull Run forced President Lincoln to call for five hundred thousand troops causing Elmira to become a garrison town with all the problems associated with large numbers of unattached men roaming the city.

The number of volunteers began to drop as the war dragged on, and in July 1862, Congress passed a bill empowering President Lincoln to call state’s militia into federal service. Historian James McPherson “concluded the government did not hesitate to use this power to reach across the state boundaries and institute a quasi-draft.” (Horigan, 2005, p.13)

Up to 1863, a prisoner exchange had been permitted under a gentlemen’s agreement style cartel headed by Major General John A. Dix for the Union and Major General D. H. Hill, for the Confederacy. A system of exchange was based on rank with a general “valued at sixty privates, a colonel at fifteen, and a captain at six.” (Gray, 2001, p. 5) Men of the same rank could be swapped man for man.

This cartel disintegrated in 1863 for multiple reasons. Without knowing the prison conditions, some soldiers could possibly choose to surrender believing prison life to be safer than

combat. The Confederacy refused to exchange African American soldiers caught fighting for the north and threatened execution of white officers of these black soldiers. The main reason the exchange fell apart was the south's lack of man power. Ulysses S. Grant believed "every man we hold, when released on parole or otherwise, becomes an active soldier against us at once either directly or indirectly." (Gray, 2001, p. 5) Grant's policies could not be hindered by the prison exchange system. "We have got to fight until the military power of the South is exhausted and if we release or exchange prisoners captured it simply becomes a war of extermination." (Gray, 2001, p. 5) Union Army Chief of Staff Henry W. Halleck, stated "it is much cheaper to feed an enemy in prison than to fight him in the field." (Gray, 2001, p. 5) Lincoln was in agreement, as was his new Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, with the belief that depleting the South's manpower would aid in ending the war.

Commissary General William Hoffman on May 19, 1864 sent an order to Commander Seth Eastman "to set apart the barracks on the Chemung River at Elmira as a depot for prisoners of war." (Gray, 2001, p. 7) Eastman sent reports that the barracks could house four thousand men with the capability of another thousand in tents. Kitchen facilities could provide for only five thousand men and medical facilities were nearly nonexistent. Eastman was informed that approximately ten thousand prisoners were to be housed at the Elmira prison.

William Hoffman, after graduation from West Point began his military career on the poorly financed frontier where his penny-pinching personality was reinforced. "His preoccupations with thrift and the temporary nature of the camps contributed to inadequate prison conditions." (Gray, 2001, p. 161) His understanding of "bureaucracy was matched only by his parsimonious, budget-conscious edicts that resulted in withholding large sums of money that were earmarked for the purchase of prisoner of war rations, clothing, shelter, and medical

supplies.” (Horigan, 2005, p.19) Unused money allocated for prisoners of war reverted back to the government at the end of hostilities. Historian Michael Horigan states that savings of “\$1,845,126.00” were returned to the government. (Horigan, 2005, p.19) Michael Gray, author of several books on Civil War prisons puts this figure at “\$1,853, 353.00, before adding the sales of prison camp property.” (Gray, 2001, p. 161)

Upon the opening of the Elmira camp, Hoffman requested surgeon Charles T. Alexander to inspect the prison. The doctor had two major problems, first, the sanitary conditions, which were “caused by inferior sinks located near Foster’s Pond...which ...contained stagnant water and if not cleaned would ‘quickly become offensive and a source of disease.’” (Gray, 2001, p. 13) Building new sinks or latrines was suggested as was flushing the stagnant sinks by running fresh water through a conduit by the river. Secondly, Alexander stated it was absolutely necessary for “a competent surgeon to take charge. Furthermore, the notion of using tents for a hospital was inappropriate.” (Gray, 2001, p. 14)

The *New York Times* printed an editorial describing the Southern prison camps housing Union soldiers with “the horrors of the ‘Libby Prison’ which will almost equal in fearful interest the records of the Bastille.” (Horigan, 2005, p.84) It went on to say “retaliation is a terrible thing but the miseries and pains, and slow wasting life of our brethren and friends in those horrific prisons, under brutal officers, is a worse thing.” (Horigan, 2005, p.84) Lincoln and his political advisors all monitored the *New York Times* closely.

After seeing returning Union prisoners in such poor condition, Secretary of War Stanton believed they had been deliberately starved. Stanton had been suspicious of poor treatment of

prisoners by the Confederates and informed Lincoln that Union war prisoners “are undergoing ferocious barbarity or the more horrible death of starvation.” (Horigan, 2005, p.85)

Colonel Hoffman wrote to Stanton suggesting that “as a means of compelling the rebels to adopt a less barbarous policy toward the prisoners in their hands that the rebel officers at Johnson’s Island be allowed only half rations.” (Horigan, 2005, p.84) Stanton later expanded on this advice to include all rebel officers in Northern prison camps.

Lincoln, aware of Secretary of War Stanton’s disposition allowed for a give-and-take relationship. “Historian Richard N. Current has duly noted: ‘such apparently was the division of labor between Lincoln and Stanton, between lenity and the law. If a life was spared, Lincoln could get the credit. If not, Stanton, with grim satisfaction might take the blame.’” (Horigan, 2005, p.85) Although, Lincoln would have the final word, he permitted Stanton to have extraordinary powers. In regards to retaliation the reality is “Stanton and Hoffman wished to put forward a policy of retaliation; there is no documented objection to this idea from President Abraham Lincoln.” (Horigan, 2005, p.86)

With Hoffman’s endorsement, always the penny-pincher, and “with full backing of the War Department’s upper echelon, the secretary of war ordered a general twenty percent reduction in rations.” (Horigan, 2005, p.86) Added to this reduction was the order from the Commissary General on August 10, prohibiting purchase of food by prisoners from the sutler’s shop. Packages of food, clothing, or other items sent from family could not go to the prisoners unless they were formally listed among the sick. This, along with the reduced rations was a death sentence for many Confederate prisoners of war. One description of soup by a young southern prisoner was “four beans to a gallon of water.” (Gray, 2001, p. 31)

Winter weather comes early in the Chemung Valley and there were still “1,038 ‘A’ tents, pitched inside the enclosure each of which could house up to five prisoners. A total of 5,190 men camped outdoors, while 3,873 were housed in thirty barracks.” (Gray, 2001, p. 55) In a letter to commissary General Hoffman, Colonel Tracy, Elmira Post Commander, states “many men are in tents without floors or blankets. Barracks should be erected instead of tents.” (Gray, 2001, p. 55) Permission to build additional barracks had previously been denied by Hoffman, but was finally approved in October. Hoffman ordered that the buildings be constructed “in every way the closest economy will be studied.” (Gray, 2001, p. 55) The delay in construction of barracks was a deliberate decision by Hoffman and Stanton, both concerned with retaliation, and resulted in hundreds of deaths.

Also in October plans were sent to Hoffman for the draining of Foster Pond which was causing a “continued prevalence of disease and death in this camp.” (Gray, 2001, p. 57) The pond was described by Doctor Sanger as “a festering mass of corruption, impregnating the entire atmosphere of the camp with its pestilential odors, night and day.” (Gray, 2001, p. 57) Colonel Tracy submitted his plan to construct an underground drainage sluice of six inch pipe, thus appeasing local property owners that had refused the open trench plan. Hoffman agreed to the plan, but in his financial concern only approved two inch pipe. Tracy reminded Hoffman that the condition of the pond had been fully described and the recommendation for drainage had been reported the previous August in a report by Eastman. Tracy asserted, regarding the stagnant pond, that “nothing else that I can see produces the large mortality among the prisoners...the medical officers attribute the larger proportion of the sickness prevailing to the effects of this body of impure and malarial matter.” (Horigan, 2005, p.134)

The drainage project was completed on January 1, 1865. Colonel Tracy sent his report to the Office of the Commissary General of Prisoners “that the conduit for conducting a stream of water from the Chemung River through the prison camp...works like a charm.” (Horigan, 2005, p.135) The delay in correcting the unhealthy condition of Foster’s Pond could be “directly traced to the commissary general of prisoners.” (Horigan, 2005, p.135) From the opening day of the Elmira prison to January 1 1865, one-thousand-two-hundred sixty-three Confederate prisoners perished.

Northern newspapers printed propaganda to cover the facts regarding Elmira prison conditions, calling reports of mistreatment “pure fabrication.” (Horigan, 2005, p.125) The *New York Herald* confirmed “rations at Elmira ‘are amply sufficient.’” (Horigan, 2005, p.125) Even when admitting to the extreme level of illness in Elmira prison, the paper stated this was “from causes beyond the control of the authorities, and of a temporary character, and there is no lack of medical attendance or supplies.” (Horigan, 2005, p.125)

The death rate in the Elmira prison was the “highest of all Union military prison camps. Of the 12,147 prisoners confined there, about 2,961 or twenty-four percent perished.” (Gray, 2001, p. 153) The short time that the prison was in existence makes these figures even more shocking.

Andersonville, the Confederate prison camp for Union soldiers had a higher mortality rate which Benjamin Hill, a Confederate Senator, attributed to “the Union war policy, which blockaded medicine, burned clothing factories, and halted exchanges.” (Gray, 2001, p. 156) The rations in Andersonville were considered to be commensurate with the rations Confederate soldiers were receiving, as the civilian population was suffering under near starvation conditions.

Elmira, on the other hand, was located in an area of abundance. Another factor is that Andersonville was located in Georgia and experienced severe effects from the march of Union General William Tecumseh Sherman as he brought about “the utter destruction of its roads, houses, and people.” (Flood, 2009, p. 398)

Survivors of the Elmira prison camp related stories well into the nineteenth hundreds of the lack of rations and horrendous conditions, but they were unaware “that at the time of their captivity that less than forty-four percent of appropriated funds would be spent for food and other essential needs.” (Horigan, 2005, p.87)

The Elmira prison has long ago been demolished and returned to farm land and suburban neighborhoods with only a New York State historical marker to denote the site. As the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Hellmira” is this year, the only surviving building, dissembled and stored in pieces, is to be reconstructed as a museum in an effort to spark tourism (*Democrat and Chronicle*, 05/04/2014.) The Woodlawn Cemetery, where Confederate prisoners were buried, still draws southerners searching for their ancestors’ final resting places.

### Fredrick Douglass and Abolition Movement in New York State

Frederick Douglass, born a slave, became one of the most important abolitionist speakers and writers of his time. The fact that he was able to transform himself from uneducated slave to orator is a testament to his convictions and drive. John Blassingame, in his introduction to Douglass’s first autobiography states that “one observer who knew Douglass during the years he spent in bondage recalled that he was ‘an unlearned and rather ordinary negro.’” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. ix)

In his first autobiography, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, the author explains that most slaves have no birth date, just a vague ideas such as “planting-time, harvest-time, cherry-time, spring-time, or fall-time.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 13) His mother, Harriet Bailey was a slave and his father was a white man, perhaps the master. Douglass speaks of beings separated from his mother as an infant explaining this was common practice. Young children were cared for by elderly female slaves, too old to do the manual labor of farming. Douglass believed this was done to “hinder the development of the child’s affection toward its mother, and to blunt and destroy the natural affection of the mother for the child.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 13) For slaves that faced the possibility of being sold at any time, this isolation worked in the favor of the master. “Ties that ordinarily bind children to their homes were all suspended in my case.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 28)

At approximately eight years of age Douglass was sent to Baltimore to Hugh and Sophia Auld, to care for their son Thomas. Mrs. Auld taught Douglass the rudiments of reading until her husband forbade the practice. Mr. Auld explained that “learning would spoil the best nigger in the world” continuing with, he would “become unmanageable, and of no value to his master. As to himself, it could do him no good, but a great deal of harm. It would make him discontented and unhappy.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 31) Douglass explains how these words put into perspective the meaning of slavery and “I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 32)

In his narrative, Douglass explains that he cannot give details of his escape as that would only make the situation worse for those he knew and left behind. “I have never approved of the very public manner in which some of our western friends have conducted what they call the

underground railroad, but which, I think, by their open declarations, has been made most emphatically the upperground railroad.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 71)

After his escape to New Bedford, Douglass worked any job available and became involved with anti-slavery groups. The anti-slavery paper, *The Liberator*, became “my meat and my drink” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 80) *The Liberator*, begun in 1831 by William Lloyd Garrison and Isaac Knapp expanded the ideas of “the principals, measures, and spirit of the anti-slavery reform.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 80) During an anti-slavery meeting on August 11, 1841 Douglass “felt strongly moved to speak.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 80) William Lloyd Garrison heard him that evening and later wrote in the preface to Douglass’s first autobiography “I shall never forget his first speech at the convention- the extraordinary emotion it excited in my own mind- the powerful impression it created upon a crowded auditory.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 3) This was the beginning of Douglass’s life as a lecturer, “under the auspices either of the American or the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. 5)

The next four years Douglass lectured in New England and in May of 1845 published his first autobiography. In order to prove that his account was not fiction, he “placed a daguerreotype of himself on the book’s frontispiece and signed his name below it.” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. xxii) After publishing this autobiography Douglass traveled to Great Britain to lecture on abolition and the horrors of slavery. While there, letters were printed attacking Douglass’s account of his treatment as a slave. Douglass, answering these denunciations by A.C. C. Thompson, declared “he agrees with me at least in the important fact, that I am what I proclaim myself to be, an ungrateful fugitive from the ‘patriarchal institutions’ of the Slave States; and he certifies that many of the heroes of my Narrative are still living and doing well as

‘honored and worthy members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.’” (Douglass, *Narrative*, 2001, p. xxxiv)

On his return from Europe Douglass encountered opposition from his Boston friends to his plan to start an anti-slavery paper. Abolitionist friends in England raised funds for a printing press and Douglass decided to start the paper in Rochester, New York “where the circulation of my paper could not interfere with the local circulation of *The Liberator* and *The Standard*.” (Douglass, *Bondage*, 1856, p. 395) In December of 1847, the first issue of the *North Star*, Douglass’s weekly paper was published in Rochester. “Historian William McFeeley writes that for most slaves ‘the route to liberation led due north, and Frederick Douglass chose the richest image of the resolute, hopeful trek of runaways to freedom when he named his new anti-slavery newspaper, *North Star*.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 180)

During his life, Douglass published many of his speeches and letters in his own papers. In January 1862, in *Douglass’ Monthly*, he answers a rhetorical question on the minds of many Americans; what shall be done with the slaves if emancipated? His response is clear and exacting. “Our answer is, do nothing with them; mind your business, and let them mind theirs. Your doing with them is their greatest misfortune.” (Douglass, 1862, *Monthly*)

In Pennsylvania the first abolitionist group was established in 1775. Although activity was suspended during the Revolutionary War, in 1787 it was “renamed the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, the Relief of Free Negroes Unlawfully Held in Bondage, and for Improving the Condition of the African Race...the first president was Benjamin Franklin.” (Klees, 2000, p. 3)

Quakers, strongly anti-slavery, peacefully began to provide aid to runaway slaves. “In 1786, George Washington wrote of a slave owned by Mr. Darby in Alexandria who escaped to Philadelphia, and ‘whom a society of Quakers in that city, formed for such purposes, have attempted to liberate.’” (Klees, 2000, p.6) Washington himself wrote regarding one of his own escaped slaves that although he had received assurances that attempts were being made to apprehend the runaway, “it is not easy to do this, when there are numbers who would rather facilitate the escape of slaves than apprehend them when runaways” (Hendrick, 2004, p. 5) This society was the precursor to the Underground Railroad.

The name supposedly comes from the story of a runaway slave, Tice Davids, who evaded his master by swimming across a river to waiting abolitionists. By the time his master found a boat and crossed the river, Davids had disappeared. “The slave owner then thought ‘the nigger must have gone off on an underground road.’” (Hendrick, 2004, p. 3) As trains were new to the developing country, the organizations involved in helping runaway slaves adopted “railroad terminology, using such terms as ‘passenger,’ ‘depot,’ or ‘station,’ ‘ticket agents,’ ‘station master,’ and ‘conductor.’” (Hendrick, 2004, p. 3)

“In 1851, the *North Star* merged with the *Liberty Party* paper, which was financed by Gerrit Smith; the resulting paper was called *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*.” (Klees, 2000, p. 88) Smith, a wealthy New York politician, staunch abolitionist and philanthropist supported Douglass and “gave him the deed to forty acres of land near Rochester.” (Klees, 2000, p. 88)

William Henry Seward also aided Douglass’ newspaper financially, and both he and his wife Frances, used their personal fortunes to help ensure former slaves made it safely to Canada. Seward asked his friend, Universalist minister, John Austin to aid in the collection of money to

help a poor runaway. Austin wrote that he then, “went over to the Governor’s and gave it to the poor fugitive.” (Stahr, 2012, p. 154)

While at his home, William Seward wrote to his wife who was out of town that “the Underground Railroad works wonderfully. Two passengers came here last night.” (Seward, 1855) Seward’s involvement in the Underground Railroad is evidence of his strong anti-slavery beliefs because it was a federal crime to shelter fugitive slaves.

Seward also supported other abolitionists causes and “sold a small house in Auburn to Harriet Tubman, a fugitive slave active in helping other slaves escape. He offered Tubman very easy terms-only twenty-five dollars down and ten per quarter thereafter-and he did not object when she failed to make even these payments.” (Stahr, 2012, p. 154)

Although while a slave Frederick Douglass believed that the Underground Railroad was not adequately secretive he, himself, published the semi-annual financial report of Jermain Loguen of Syracuse who listed the “amounts that I have received and of the numbers of Fugitives that I have sheltered, and have found homes for.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 176)

Loguen and his wife, Carolyn, explained how many runaways arrive in poor health and are cared for by the family. “They often come sick, and must be cared for forthwith.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 178)

Syracuse, during the time Loguen served as the superintendent of the Underground Railroad aided “fifteen hundred fugitives” and was christened “the Canada of the United States.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 179)

As stationmaster of the Rochester Underground Railroad, Frederick Douglass “hid hundreds of escaping slaves at the North Star printing office, his first house on Alexander street just west of East Avenue, and at his later home on South Avenue near Highland Park.” (Klees, 2000, p. 88) During his tenure as stationmaster, “no fugitives were recaptured in the Flour City.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 181)

Perhaps the most famous conductor on the Underground Railroad was an escaped slave, Harriet Tubman. Although less than five feet tall, she “excelled at physical labor and ...could cut half a cord of wood in one day.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 187) This strength would later serve her well in her numerous trips to free other slaves.

Believing she was about to be sold she planned her escape. Unable to tell her family her plan, she sang a farewell spiritual laced with double meanings. “When dat ar old chariot comes, I’m gwine to lebe you, I’m boun’ for de promised land.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 188) Following the North Star she made it to the home of a woman known to help runaway slaves where she received instructions to her next stop. Upon arrival she was immediately handed a broom and told to sweep the yard. Harriet realized “no one would question a slave working around the house.” (Klees, 2000, p. 105) This understanding of hiding in plain sight aided in her many trips back to the South. “On one occasion Harriet pretended to be reading a book when the slave-catchers passed by. One of the men said to the other, ‘this can’t be the woman. The one we want can’t read or write.’” (Klees, 2000, p. 107) Tubman made up to nineteen trips “bringing out an estimated three hundred individuals.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 189)

William Still described Tubman, called the Black Moses, as fearless. “She was apparently proof against all adversaries. While she thus manifested such utter personal

indifference, she was much more watchful with regard to those she was piloting.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 190) She gave opium to crying infants and even had a pistol with which she would threaten those whose resolve faltered. She was aware that any slave, returning after an attempt to escape would be tortured for information. She said “I never ran my train off the track, and I never lost a passenger.” (Klees, 2000, p. 108)

Due to the geographical location, upstate New York was crisscrossed with routes on the Underground Railroad. “Much underground Railroad traffic moved along the road that is now Routes 5 and 20 at the Northern end of the major Finger Lakes.” (Klees, 2000, p. 107) Fugitives were moved from Auburn to Syracuse or Rochester for transfer to Canada. Slaves were also transported across the Lake Ontario from Pultneyville and Oswego.

There were many local stations of the Underground Railroad, some with specially built hiding places: 3402 West Lake Road, Canandaigua, the “cobblestone farm, built by Isaac Parrish in 1837” had a hidden room in the attic behind a chimney. (Klees, 2000, p. 119) 33 South Street, Auburn, the home of William Seward, hid slaves in two second floor rooms and the cellar kitchen. 104 Gibson Street, Canandaigua where runaways descended to a dry cistern through a trap door under the dining room table. 173 Mason Road, and 2187 East Whitney Road, Perinton and 1956 West Henrietta Road, Brighton the Warrant homestead were also stations on the way to freedom. (Klees, 2000, p. 119-123)

Underground Railroad sites in Rochester, New York included the “A.M.E.Z Church at 42 Favor Street, where Douglass began publishing the *North Star* in 1847; George Avery’s store at 12 Buffalo Street (now Main Street); and the barn of Samuel D. Porter on South Fitzhugh Street.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 181) Other homes that had links to the Underground Railroad: “the

house of portrait painter Grove S. Gilbert at 40 Grieg Street near Clarissa, the Clark house on Monroe Avenue, the Hargous house at 52 Main Street, and the Isaac Moore house at 1496 Culver Road.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 182)

William Bloss, a Rochester Underground Railroad stationmaster, sheltered fugitive slaves in the wood shed on his East Avenue property. His son, Joseph describes being taken by his father one night to see a runaway. William Bloss showed his son the deep scars from the whip on the poor woman’s back. “I am subject to a fine of \$1,000 and an imprisonment of six months for giving this woman a crust of bread, a cup of water- for not arresting her, or for in any way aiding her to escape from her master.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 182) He says he will always disobey this terrible law and instructs his son to follow suit.

The Quaker couple that had initially persuaded Frederick Douglass to come to Rochester, Isaac and Amy Post hid runaways in their barn at 36 Sophia Street (now Plymouth Avenue). Amy wrote that “the most we ever had at one time was twelve. Many a time I have gone out to the barn after dark with a basket of food and frightened men crept out of the hay to take it.” (Sernett, 2002, p. 181)

Lincoln’s eloquent words have not been equaled by Presidents or statesman since the time of his death. “It can be said with confidence that Lincoln ranks among the most quoted individuals in history, with the possible exception of William Shakespeare.” (Steers, 2007, p.89) Having stated that, it is reasonable to assume “that Lincoln is the most misquoted individual in history.” (Steers, 2007, p.89)

Some historians have greater credibility in the research of Lincoln than others. Don and Virginia Fehrenbacher “established five categories of Lincoln quotations,” ranging from

quotations recorded at the time, to those of questionable authenticity.” (Steers, 2007, p.90) Their book, *The Recollected Words of Abraham Lincoln*, includes all the material, even the most dubious quotes. “The Fehrenbachers write, ‘the legendary Lincoln, created in part out of dubious recollected material, may have been in the long run, as powerful an influence in American life as the historical Lincoln.’” (Steers, 2007, p.90)

In former New York State Governor Mario Cuomo’s book, *Why Lincoln Matters: Today More Than Ever*, he discusses how Lincoln’s eloquent words have been used and misused from the time of his death. “For generations, politicians have twisted themselves-and Lincoln-out of shape to make it appear that they are standing next to the sixteenth President.” (Cuomo, 2004, p.6)

Cuomo believes that, had Lincoln’s “battle to keep the nation together had been lost, it would have meant the end of the American experiment.” (Cuomo, 2004, p.11) He continues to explain that the experiment is ongoing as race relations continue to evolve. Cuomo believes that “as Lincoln progressed politically he grew in understanding and sensitivity.” (Cuomo, 2004, p.158) Frederick Douglass agreed that “Lincoln had more than redeemed himself for whatever unpleasant view he might have held about ‘negroes’ in his earlier years.” (Cuomo, 2004, p.158) This evolution of understanding is what Cuomo hopes will continue until all are able to participate equally in what “our forefathers promised in the Declaration of Independence.” (Cuomo, 2004, p.164)

Abraham Lincoln began his political career with a strong hatred of slavery and extreme respect for the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. These two ideals, seemingly at odds with each other, were influenced by his association with New York activists and

abolitionists and by local events during his presidency. Historical emphasis is seldom placed on the ancillary persons and events such as William Seward, Frederick Douglass, the Draft riots, and the Elmira Prison. The fact that Lincoln turned a blind eye to retaliatory actions by Secretary of War Stanton regarding rations for the Elmira prison camp is shocking to most people having attended public school. Seward is remembered for his folly instead of his wise advice and his actions avoiding European involvement in the war. Lincoln as taught in public schools is the great emancipator, the savior of the union, and the depiction of the common man in his homespun clothing. The educational system has glorified him while underplaying or ignoring other factor of the time.

The Civil War was not won by one man, and slavery was abolished by one proclamation. History of this period should be taught giving emphasis on all the players and events. The website to follow gives educators and students a wide array of interrelated information on the Civil War. Resources are provided for further information for educators and learning opportunities for students.

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The New York State social studies curriculum requires educators to teach students about the causes of the Civil War, abolition, and the Underground Railroad, although coverage of these topics is very limited in scope.

The curriculum places a great deal of emphasis on President Abraham Lincoln. The themes in the curriculum only focus on the successful aspects of Lincoln's presidency. Lincoln's actions that had a negative connotation are disregarded, opposition to his ideas is overlooked, and his controversial policies are not mentioned. These circumstances should not be omitted as some of these controversial actions resulted in significant historical events such as the New York City Draft riots. All aspects of the issues should be taught with an impartial viewpoint so that students can make their own interpretations and connections.

Although abolition and the Underground Railroad are required topics in the curriculum, teachers often provide brief discussions of these topics. In regard to abolition, it is common practice for educators to teach students about the very few famous abolitionists, disregarding the vast networks of individuals who participated in the movement. Students need more credible information with engaging and thorough discussions to develop conceptual understandings of the activities of the Underground Railroad. Without these vital components of the learning segment students will not be thoroughly knowledgeable on the historical topic. "Currently, the fact that the Underground Railroad was not a real railroad is not universally understood." (Klees, 1997, p.7) A local Syracuse woman contacted the Onondaga County Historical Society stating that while renovating her home she found evidence it had been used by the Underground Railroad. She then stated "the rails are still in the basement." (Klees, 1997, p.7) Utilizing the materials and sources on this website enables educators to bring current research into the classroom and clarify misconceptions.

The curriculum also seems to reduce the importance of women and women's roles in various social movements such as abolition and the Underground Railroad as well as political activism, and women on the front lines of the war. Women were involved in every fundamental aspect of the war. Without fully addressing the integral roles women played during the time, students will have a deficient understanding of women's positions during this era in American history.

Due to these teaching practices, students are left without comprehensive knowledge regarding social reformers, women, and other events during the Civil War era. These students are unaware of the great challenges many people experienced in social and political activism as well as the opposition to President Lincoln's policies.

Teachers must make a concerted effort to educate students on all aspects of a particular topic to provide a greater understanding of historical events to make connections to the past, present, and future. To accomplish these goals, educators must utilize an assortment of materials and resources to provide a multitude of interpretations and accounts. The website to follow, Civil War Circle available at <http://caprice73.wix.com/lincolns-circle>, offers a variety of resources and interactive opportunities that can bring this research into the classroom.

The website is designed to be utilized by students and teachers to explore the many events and individuals that are generally disregarded in the curriculum but played a significant role in social movements and the Civil War. The website has specific pages for educators and students as well as a great quantity of primary source materials and numerous informative texts.

The page for educators on Civil War Circle offers teachers a vast amount of quality websites that span a variety of topics in social studies and are great to use in the classroom.

These specific websites do not have commercial ads or spam and do not contain inappropriate material. Even though these web pages are based on education it is advised that teachers should always check the web page prior to classroom use to ensure appropriate content and if the website is in working order. The page for educators also offers a variety of inclusive lesson plans, classroom and learning strategies, lesson materials, and links to professional development webinars.

The inclusive lesson plans are organized by elementary and secondary levels and incorporate technology, music, an assortment of primary sources, and kinesthetic activities. Integrating technology into lessons is important as students are much more likely to pay attention or be engaged when using technology and it tends to get more students to participate in the learning segment. It is apparent that when presented the option, students prefer to use computer programs when available. Many of the research-based lessons on the website require students to use computers in the classroom for writing, projects and interactive activities. “The computer is an ideal tool for helping students learn phonological awareness and phonics, build fluency, increase their vocabulary and word recognition, and enhance comprehension.”(Vaughn & Bos, 2009, p. 253) In both general and special education classes more educators use technology such as computers or iPads to complement their instruction. However, effectively implementing and supervising student use of technology during instruction appears to be an issue requiring constant attention, especially at the secondary level.

Other lessons available on the website provide students the opportunity to be creative with artistic projects. These lessons are generally directed toward the elementary and middle school range but can be properly implemented with purpose in higher grades as well. One lesson instructs students to read biographies of various historical figures of the time period. Students

then have the choice to create a diary entry of the individual, a poster with information and illustrations of the individual, a baseball card of the figure, or a fakebook profile detailing the life of that person. Students must summarize information from the short biography to identify the role the historical figure played during the time period. Assignments that incorporate summarizing assist students in identifying the main ideas of a text. “Students have to analyze information at a deep level in order to decide what information to delete, what to substitute, and what to keep when they are asked to give a summary.” (Dean et al., 2012, p. 78) Students use their creative skills by drawing which aids in the learning process. “Pictures and pictographs provide opportunities for students to represent their learning in a personalized manner.” (Dean et al., 2012, p. 71) Utilizing computers to create fakebook profiles of historical figures engages student creativity for those who are not very artistic. “Technology provides a way to add animation to pictures, which enhances the effect of using pictures to represent knowledge.” (Dean et al., 2012, p. 71) This lesson presents options for students to choose from, giving them more control over their learning.

Another lesson requires students to work collectively in small groups. The groups are structured for pairing high and low functioning students together for peer assistance and teaching. Although working in groups, there is individual accountability as each student has a particular assignment but also has to inform the other members of their findings. Each group will then rotate around the room so all students interact with each other and exchange information and ideas. This “cooperative learning provides an environment in which students can reflect upon their newly acquired knowledge, process what they are learning by talking with and actively listening to their peers, and develop a common understanding about various topics.” (Dean et al., 2012, p. 37) The group work is vital to promote production, for brainstorming and

to participate in interactive dialog with their partners. It is important for students to talk to their peers for support and the sharing of ideas and information. “As students talk through material, they arrive at a deeper understanding of it. This process helps them retain what they learn.” (Dean et al., 2012, p. 37& 38) During this lesson, the teacher will be physically monitoring all of the students by walking about the room and always staying in close physical proximity to all of the students. This is helpful to visually monitor which students may require additional assistance by a quick visual review of their work. This also enables the teacher to provide corrective feedback to individual students without disturbing the work of other students. “When feedback provides explicit guidance that helps students adjust their learning, there is a greater impact on achievement, students are more likely to take risks with their learning, and they are more likely to keep trying until they succeed.” (Dean et al., 2012, p. 3) This collaborative group work allows the instructor the opportunity to provide positive praise and reinforcement to individuals and groups of students.

Teachers can access the inclusive strategies from the educator’s page. These methods are arranged by learning types, timing and delivery of instruction. The categories of strategies include beginning of instruction, during or throughout (ongoing) instruction, student interest and motivation, and scaffolding or differentiating instruction. Each category has multiple strategies listed that can be utilized with any topic. Every strategy listed has a full description of how to successfully implement into the classroom and many have a website listed that provides an example and additional information on the method. Researchers promote the use of inclusive instruction techniques as there are significant positive academic and social benefits for all students involved.

The learning materials page is also accessed from the educator's page. There are large numbers of interactive tools and links to other media, as well as timelines, power-points, and documentaries.

The page titled more information will also be of great use for teachers. The more information page contains suggested readings and a vast amount of primary resources. The suggested readings link have books titles that are divided by grade level and also include recommendations for advanced readers and audio book titles.

The primary resources page is especially helpful for educators as there are a vast amount of diverse sources available. Political cartoons, speeches, texts, songs, diary entries, constitutional amendments, and poems are accessible through this page which enables educators to save time gathering materials.

The website also includes a blog that can easily be properly implemented into classroom lesson plans. Students can post and respond to blog comments on the topic during class or for homework assignments.

The local history portion of the website is a great way for students to learn about the various types of events and activities occurring in their hometown. As it is not always possible to take students out of school for fieldtrips, the pictures and virtual tours are excellent alternatives to bring local history into the classroom. If the school can accommodate a field trip, this local history page is a great way to introduce students to what they will see and explore. When educators link student experiences to content, the connections between the classroom and life outside of school are strengthened. (Connections, 2010, p.2) "Teachers should use concrete materials and real-life application whenever possible."(Vaughn & Bos, 2009, p. 369) Students

can acquire a greater appreciation of where they live as an important source of historical information and respect these historic places that enable them to make connections to the past, present, and future.

Students have a separate page on the website with different sections of activities.

Students can access the page to assist them with assignments, homework, or to participate in group project work. The student's page offers computer-based projects, maps, short biographies, content vocabulary, photos and videos, and games.

The implementation of games and stations into instruction is highly useful and effective for retention of content information. Instructional "games have been found to serve a range of functions in education including tutoring, exploring and practicing skills, and attitude change" (Mitchell, A., Savill-Smith, C., 2004, p. 58). Games and videos are great ways to hook students' attention and engage them in the learning segment. "Instructional games can provide practice in a format that is interesting to students." (Vaughn & Bos, 2009, p. 87) Educators should allow ample time for students to practice new concepts, usually working with partners or in groups which promotes interactive dialog among peers.

Vocabulary is directly connected with the learning of concepts. "Vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction in specialized and general-concept knowledge and through independent word-learning strategies." (Johnson, 2008, p. 31) The vocabulary section has a comprehensive list of content vocabulary words on the topics and a link to an extensive glossary of Civil War era terms. These vocabulary definitions can help students when writing papers, doing independent reading, and also when participating in group activities. Utilizing a variety of different strategies to teach new

vocabulary is vital for students, particularly individuals with disabilities to learn new material. Implementing many research based methods simultaneously is important for retention of the new vocabulary, and enables students to correctly recall how to spell new words.

One strategy from the educator's page requests students to participate in the interactive vocabulary method of I have... who has... which gets students involved and engaged with the vocabulary content in a kinesthetic manner. This method is a learning task that develops students' academic language, promotes peer collaboration, and encourages students to have interactive peer dialogue with students they may not normally have contact with. Students will be given two to three cards with a term or definition on one side. Students must then get out of their seats and match the vocabulary word to the definition on separate cards given to different students in the classroom. "Continued practice and reinforcement activities, provides the students with many varied repetitions of a word before that word becomes part of the student's vocabulary." (Marzano & Pickering, 2005, p.7) Requesting students to get out of their seats and move about really gets the students involved in the task as it allows more flexibility and ownership of student learning. Students tend to feel more in control and believe they have more options with their task. As students "make the motions and talk about what they are doing, they encode information in their memory in multiple ways, helping them increase their understanding of concepts." (Dean et al., 2012, p. 73) This motivation strategy illustrates that learning can be informative and fun.

Children learn in a variety of ways and teachers have to alter their approach and method of teaching using multiple different strategies and tools to enhance the learning process. Utilizing the strategies, lessons, and materials in this website will assist educators in engaging students with current unbiased research and information. The implementation of evidence based practices

and specialized instruction will benefit all students, not just students with difficulties or disabilities. It is imperative that educators know the individual needs of their students and implement methods to appropriately teach all students, especially those with disabilities.

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