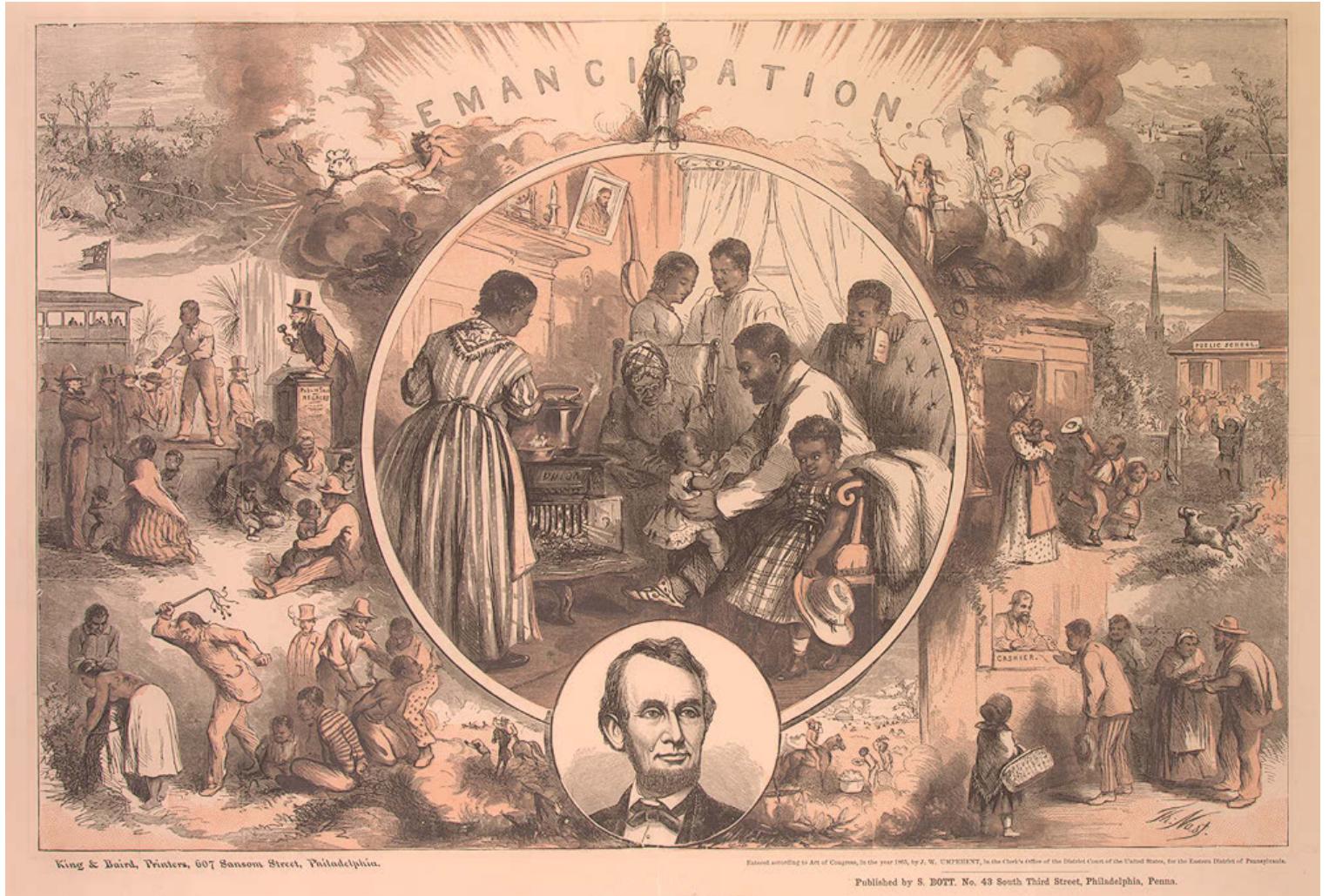


# Getting to Emancipation



# Changing War Objectives, 1863

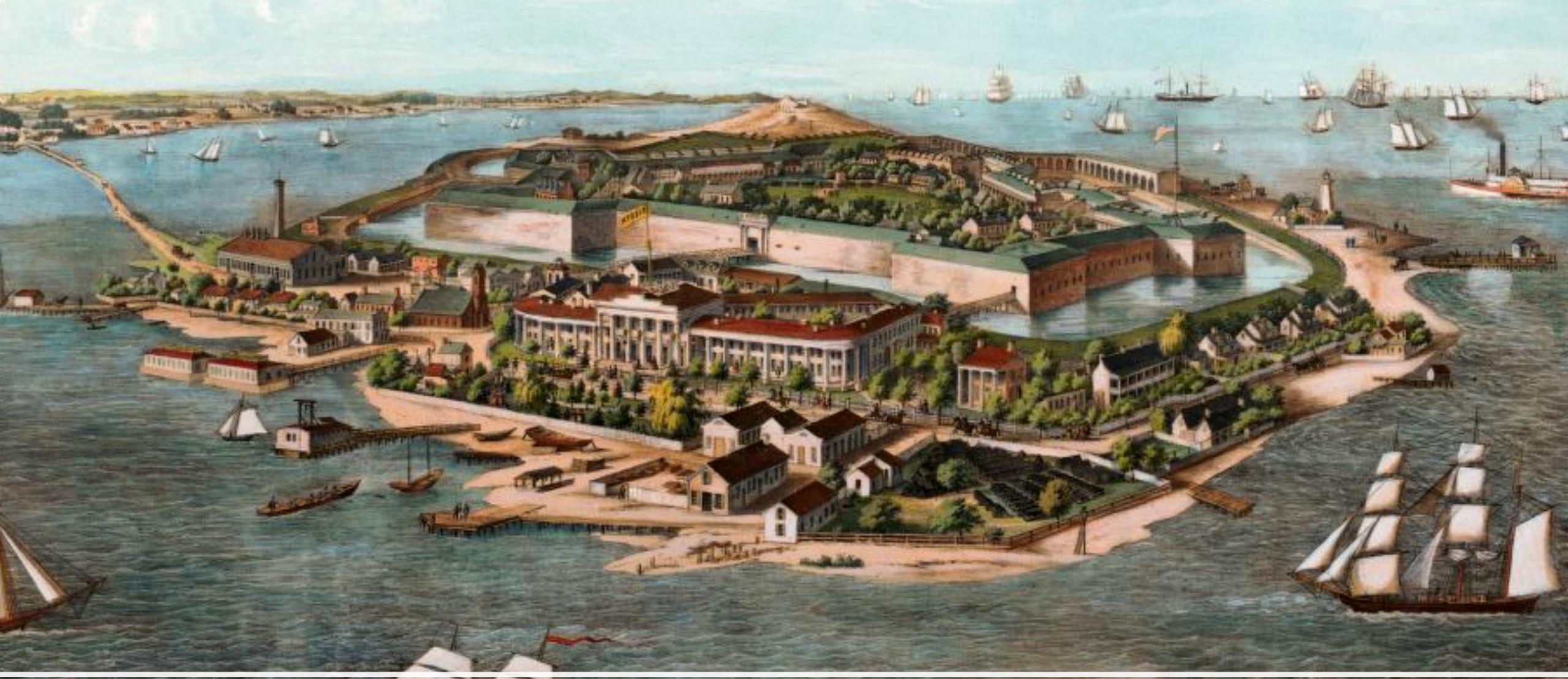
- US objective shifted from restoring the Union as it was to changing the nature of the Union
  - Becomes about emancipation—a revolutionary struggle
  - Imposing a free labor system on the South
- Different war aims = different strategies and tactics
  - To restore the Union as it was, there needed to be minimal bloodshed
  - Once the goal shifted, the war became much more relentless
    - Not just about battlefield victories
    - Occupying vast territories
    - Damaging the Southern economy
    - Destroying the will to fight

# Reckoning with Black Refugees

- Union policies developed haphazardly
  - Generals independently took actions when refugees crossed into Union lines
- Became clear that the government could not avoid addressing the issue
  - Both Congress and Lincoln responded to what was happening in the field
  - ***Events on the ground drove policy***
    - This is the problem with the old “Lincoln freed the slaves” line

# Fort Monroe, occupied in May 1861





Fort Monroe



Fort Monroe today



# Gen. Benjamin Butler

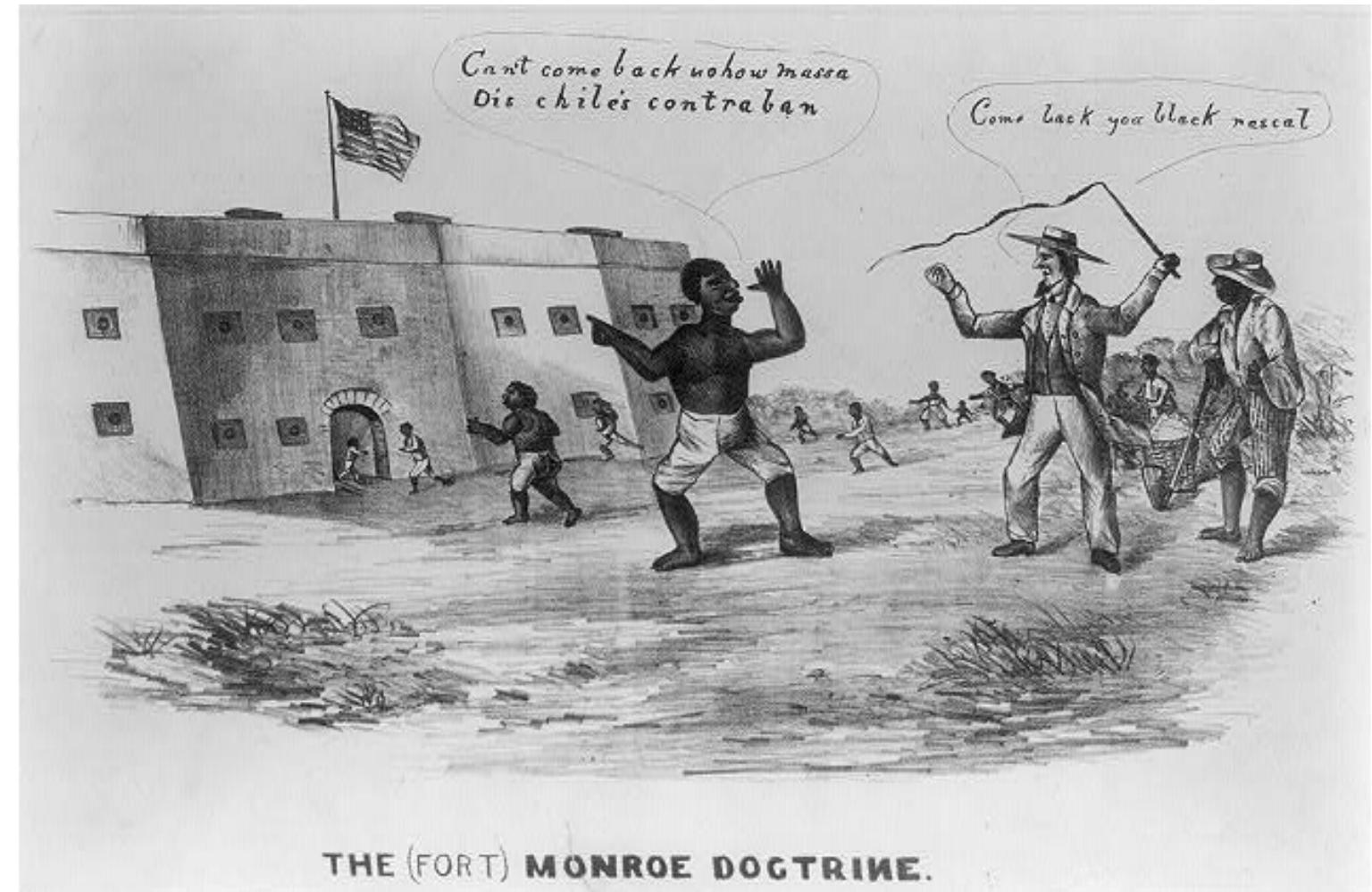
- Initially in charge at Fort Monroe
- When African Americans appeared seeking refuge, he declared them “contraband of war”
- Decision he made on his own



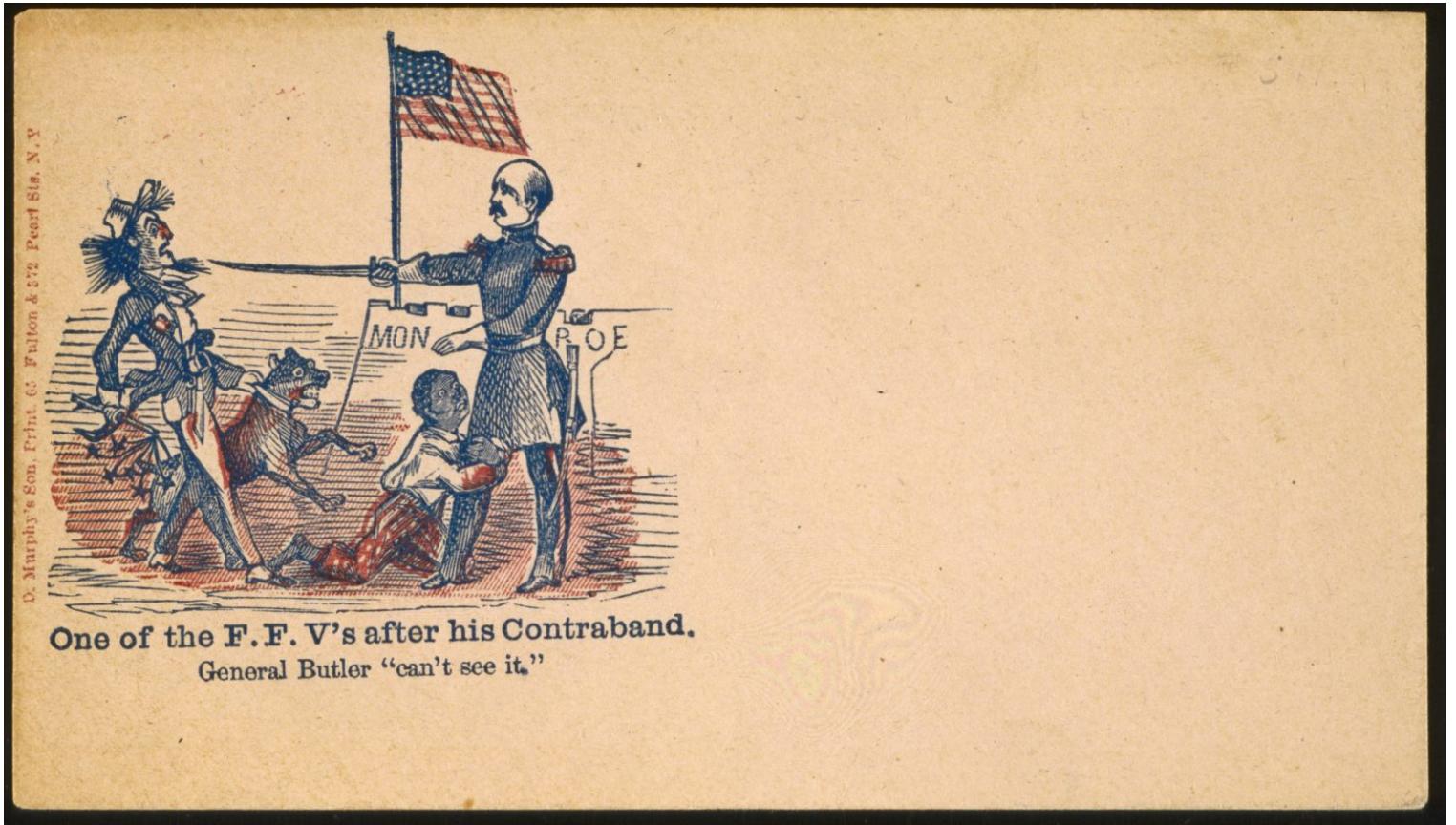
“Stampede among the Negroes...their arrival at Fortress Monroe,” *Harper’s Weekly*, May 1861

Runaway slaves approaching the Federal garrison near Fortress Monroe and seeking the protection of General Butler.  
The fugitive slaves entering Fortress Monroe—Passing the drawbridge at the main entrance guarded by the sentries.

# “The (Fort) Monroe Doctrine”



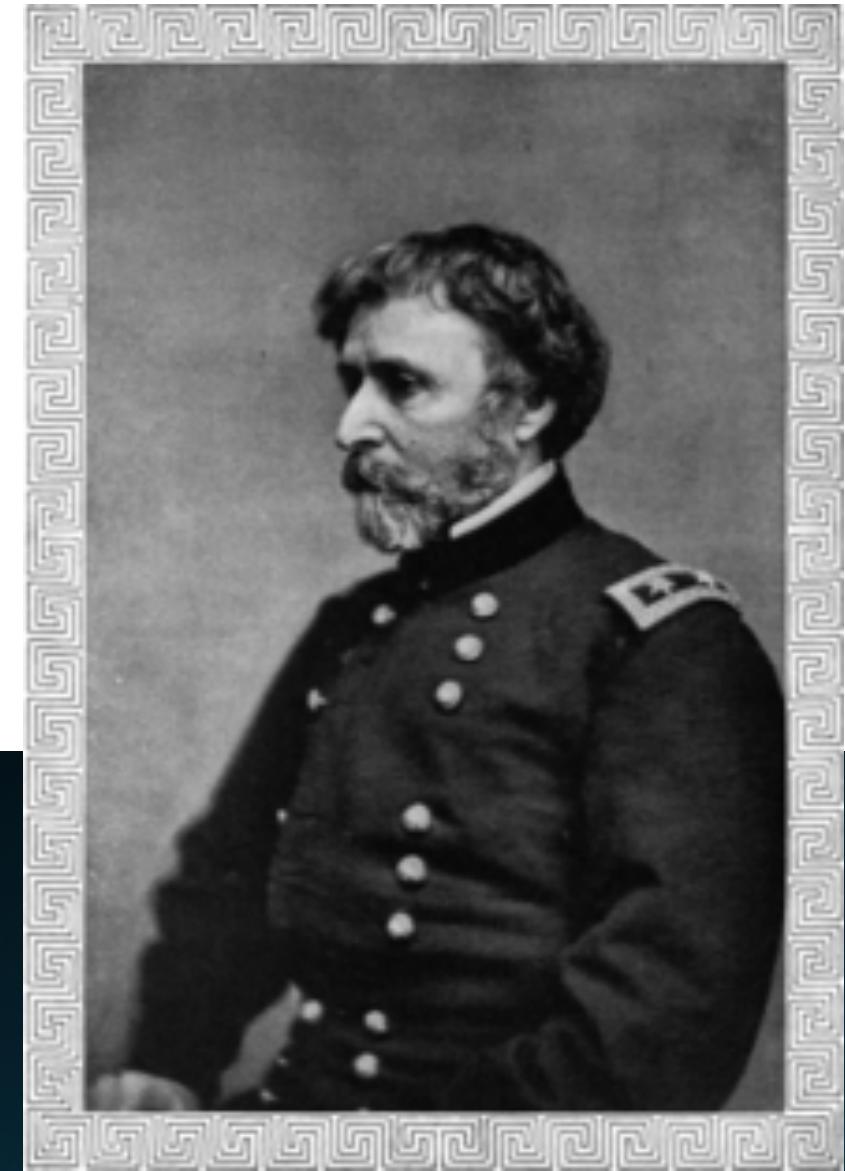
# Civil war era envelope



# Contraband “policy”

- No consistency at first—some Union generals continued to send people back into slavery
  - Tremendously contentious issue
- Aug. 1861 Congress passes **1<sup>st</sup> Confiscation Act**
  - Effectively endorsed what Gen. Butler had done
  - Refugees who “belonged” to Confederate rebels, or those used to contribute to the Confederate cause, no longer had to be returned
  - But enslavers who claimed to be loyal could still demand return of their “property”
    - Issue of proving/disproving an enslaver’s claim of loyalty?
    - Effectively left things in the hands of individual officers

# John C. Fremont

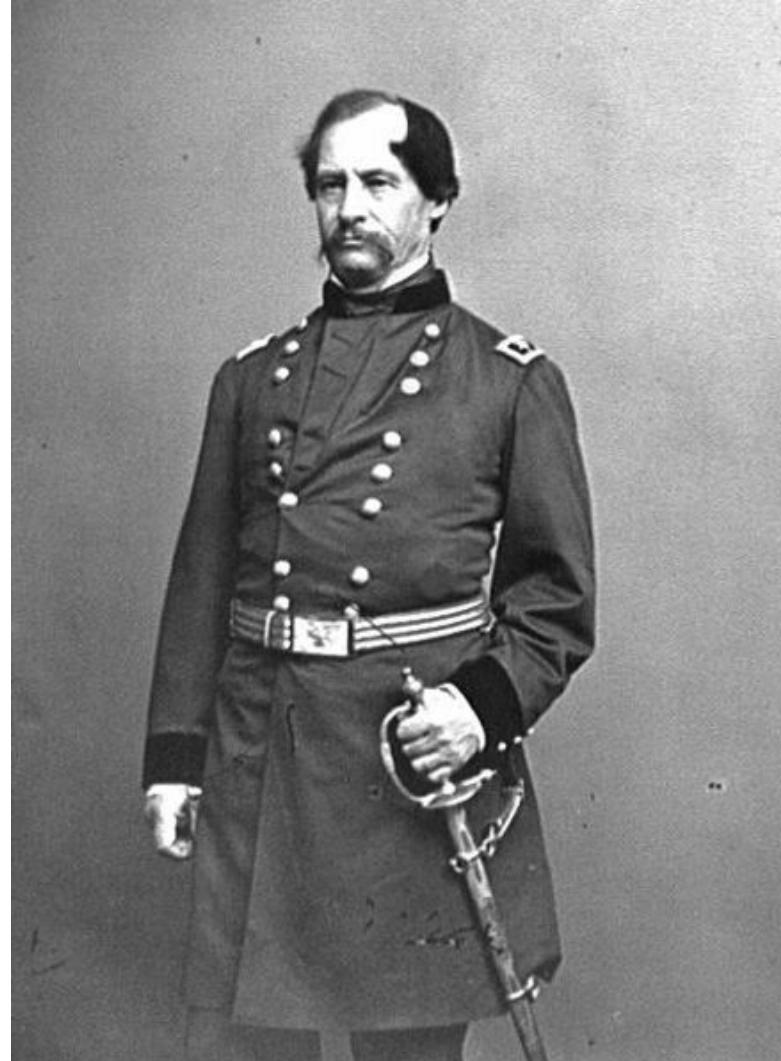


# John C. Fremont

- At war's outset: commander in charge of the Western Department
  - Famed explorer
  - First Republican presidential candidate back in 1856
  - Committed abolitionist
- In Missouri in August 1861: declared martial law
  - Began confiscating/emancipating slaves of all those disloyal to the Union
- Lincoln incensed
  - Told him to rescind order
  - When he refused, Lincoln fired him
- But Fremont helped to put emancipation on the table

# David Hunter

- In charge of the Sea Islands off the coast of South Carolina
  - All the white inhabitants of the islands had fled
- Black refugees wanted to create regiments
- May 1862: Hunter issued General Order 11
  - Freeing all those enslaved in Georgia, Florida, South Carolina
- Again, Lincoln nullified the order
  - Refused to equip or pay Hunter's Black troops



*“The three states of Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina... having deliberately declared themselves no longer under the protection of the United States of America, and having taken up arms against the said United States, **it becomes a military necessity to declare them under martial law.** This was accordingly done on the 25th day of April, 1862. **Slavery and martial law in a free country are altogether incompatible; the persons in these three States—Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina—heretofore held as slaves, are therefore declared forever free.”***

Maj. Gen. David Hunter, Department of the South,  
General Order No. 11, May 9, 1862

# SOUTH CAROLINA Sea Islands

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## South Carolina



25  
18



Refugees

# Eric Foner, “Lincoln and Colonization”

- Lincoln was a spokesman for colonization during the 1850s and “pursued it avidly” during his first two years in office
  - As late as December 1862, he averred “I strongly favor colonization”
    - *After* he’s issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation
  - Came from a part of the country where the idea of colonization had been widely supported
    - Saw colonization as a moderate position between the evil of slavery and radical abolitionism, which threatened the Union
  - Never supported *compulsory* deportation
  - BUT he also seemed unable to imagine a multiracial society
    - And he did not critique Illinois’s Black Laws

# Eric Foner on Colonization

- Seems bizarre to us, but it wasn't such a fringe idea at the time
  - Age of mass migrations of peoples
  - Many leading figures had supported the notion for decades
    - Henry Clay—whom Lincoln idolized—was an early member and later president of the American Colonization Society (1817)
    - Harriet Beecher Stowe
  - Resembled other schemes to determine the racial makeup of America that were implemented
    - Forcible removal of Native Americans east of the Mississippi

# Colonization, cont.

- Historians have tended to neglect or explain away Lincoln's belief in colonization
  - Doesn't fit with the "Great Emancipator" image
- But once war began, Lincoln started looking for sites
  - Presidents of Guatemala and Honduras rejected proposals
  - Discussion of turning freedmen into coalminers in Chiriquí (Panama)
  - December 3, 1861: Lincoln urged Congress to provide funds for colonization efforts
- Some African Americans had supported the idea of colonization in the 1850s, especially to Canada
  - But opposition to such schemes surged with outbreak of war

# Lincoln's “evolution” on colonization

- August 14, 1862: Lincoln for the first (and only) time discussed colonization with a group of African Americans at the White House: it did *not* go well
  - Seemed to blame African Americans for the war
  - Said it would be “extremely selfish” for them not to emigrate
  - These remarks were printed
    - Strong backlash from African Americans and their supporters
  - Still, Lincoln pressed forward – Île à Vache
    - Only actual scheme ever implemented was a disaster
- 1863-64: Lincoln finally abandoned idea
  - Feb. 64: Supported the notion of allowing educated freedmen and Black soldiers to vote
    - In re. to Louisiana’s new state constitution



# Emancipation in Washington, D.C., and Second Confiscation Act

- In April 1862, Congress declared slavery illegal in Washington D.C.
- This was followed by the **Second Confiscation Act**:
  - Permitted government to seize slaves
  - Forbade the return of fugitives
  - Enabled government to employ Black soldiers
- Radical Republicans in Congress, not Lincoln, pushing toward Emancipation



# Emancipation Proclamation

- Lincoln drafted in July 1862
- Most abolitionists jubilant, but wary; thought Lincoln wouldn't follow through
- Released the preliminary version in Sept. 1862
- Signed into effect January 1, 1863
- Allowed for enlistment of African American troops
- Made it harder for Europeans to side with Confederacy
- Strengthened Confederate resolve

# Emancipation Proclamation

*Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, **by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief...as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion**, do...order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following, to wit:*

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

# Emancipation Proclamation, cont.

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

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

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

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

# William Henry Seward

- *"We show our sympathy with slavery by emancipating slaves where we cannot reach them and holding them in bondage where we can set them free."*
- Lincoln feared antagonizing the slave states loyal to the Union by setting their slaves free.

# Frederick Douglass (Feb. 1863)

*"In the hurry and excitement of the moment, it is difficult to grasp the full and complete significance of President Lincoln's proclamation. **The change in attitude of the Government is vast and startling. For more than sixty years the Federal Government has been little better than a stupendous engine of Slavery and oppression, through which Slavery has ruled us, as with a rod of iron....Assuming that our Government and people will sustain the President and the Proclamation, we can scarcely conceive of a more complete revolution in the position of a nation."***

## Douglass, cont.

***“There are certain great national acts, which by their relation to universal principles, properly belong to the whole human family, and Abraham Lincoln’s Proclamation of the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 1863, is one of these acts. Henceforth shall that day take rank with the Fourth of July. [Applause.] Henceforth it becomes the date of a new and glorious era in the history of American liberty.... Men may see in it only a military necessity. To me it has a higher significance. It is a grand moral necessity.”***