

Unit III: Civil War and Reconstruction

See Text, Chapters 15-16-17 of *U.S. A Narrative History*, Volume 1, to 1877 (2015)
Davidson et al.

Perspectives on Slavery

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William Harper's Apology (1837)

Slavery was forced upon us by the extremest exigency of circumstances in a struggle for very existence. Without it, it is doubtful whether a white man would be now existing on this continent—certain that, if there were, they would be in a state of the utmost destitution, weakness, and misery. I neither deprecate nor resent the gift of slavery.

The Africans brought to us had been slaves in their own country and only underwent a change of masters.

That there are great evils in a society where slavery exists, and that the institution is liable to great abuse, I have already said. But the whole of human life is a system of evils and compensations. The free laborer has few real guarantees from society, while security is one of the compensations of the slave's humble position. There have been fewer murders of slaves than of parents, children, and apprentices in society where slavery does not exist. The slave offers no temptation to murderer, nor does he really suffer injury from his master. Who but a driveling fanatic has thought of the necessity of protecting domestic animals from the cruelty of their owners?

...It is true that the slave is driven to labor by stripes [lashes]; and if the object of punishment is to produce obedience or reformation with the least permanent injury, it is the best method of punishment. Men claim that this is intolerable. It is not degrading to a slave, nor is it felt to be so. Is it degrading to a child? Source: *The American Spirit*

1. What historical events or developments are mentioned or analyzed?
2. What is the perspective toward the issue of slavery?
3. What argument(s) or evidence is put forth in support of this perspective?

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Slaves Don't Strike (1846)

An intelligent Louisianian said to me, "Were we to emancipate our Negroes as suddenly as your government did to the West Indians, they would be a doomed race. But there can be no doubt that white labor is more profitable even in this climate."

"Then, why do you not encourage it?" I asked.

"It must be the work of time," he replied. "The prejudices of owners have to be overcome, and the sugar and cotton crop is easily lost if not taken in at once when ripe; the canes being damaged by a slight frost, and the cotton requiring to be picked dry as soon as mature, and being ruined by rain. Very lately a planter, five miles below New Orleans, having resolved to dispense with slave labor, hired one hundred Irish and German emigrants at very high wages. In the middle of the harvest they all struck for double pay. No others were to be had, and it was impossible to purchase slaves in a few days. In that short time he lost produce to the value of \$10, 000." Source: The American Spirit

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David Wilmot Appeals for Free Soil (1847)

But sir, the issue now presented is not whether slavery shall exist unmolested where it is now, but whether it shall be carried to new and distant regions, now free, where the footprint of a slave cannot be found. This, sir, is the issue. Upon it I take my stand, and from it I cannot be frightened or driven by idle charges of abolitionism.

I ask not that slavery be abolished. I demand that this government preserve the integrity of free territory against the aggressions of slavery—against its wrongful usurpations.

Sir, I was in favor of the annexation of Texas....The Democracy [Democratic Party] of the North, almost to a man, went for annexation. Yes, sir, here was an empire larger than France given up to slavery. Shall further concessions be made by the North? Shall we give up free territory, the inheritance of free labor? Must we yield this also? Never, sir, never, until we ourselves are fit to be slaves...

But, sir, we are told that the joint blood and treasure of the whole country [are] being expended in this acquisition, therefore it should be divided, and slavery allowed to take its share. Sir, the South has her share already; the installment for slavery was paid in advance. We are fighting this war for Texas and the South. I affirm it—every intelligent man knows it—Texas is the primary cause of this war. For this, sir, Northern treasure is being exhausted, and Northern blood poured upon the plains of Mexico. We are fighting this war cheerfully, not reluctantly—cheerfully fighting this war for Texas; and yet we seek not to change the character of her institutions. Slavery is there; let it remain...

Now, sir, we are told that California is ours, that New Mexico is ours—won by the valor of our arms. They are free. Shall they remain free? Shall these fair provinces be the inheritance and homes of the white labor of freemen or the black labor of slaves? This, sir, is the issue—this the question. The North has the right, and her representatives here have the power...

But the South contend that, in their emigration to this free territory, they have the right to take and hold slaves, the same as other property. Unless the amendment I have offered be adopted, or other early legislation is had upon this subject, they will do so. Indeed, they unitedly, as one man, have declared their right and purpose so to do, and the work has already begun...

Shall the South be permitted, by aggression, by invasion of the right, by subduing free territory and planting slavery upon it, to wrest these provinces from Northern freemen, and turn them to the accomplishment of their own sectional purposes and schemes?

This is the question. Men of the North, answer....Shall we of the North submit to it? If we do, we are coward slaves, and deserve to have the manacles fastened upon our own limbs.

Source: The American Spirit

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Southerners Threaten Secession (1849)

Mr. Meade [of Virginia]—But, sir, if the organization of this House is to be followed by the passage of these bills—if these outrages are to be committed upon my people—I trust in God, sir, that my eyes have rested upon the last Speaker of the House of Representatives...

Mr. Toombs [of Georgia]—I do not, then, hesitate to avow before this House and the country, and in the presence of the living God, that if by your legislation you [Northerners] seek to drive us from the territories of California and New Mexico, purchased by the common blood and treasure of the whole people, and to abolish slavery in this District [of Columbia], thereby attempting to fix a national degradation upon half the states of this Confederacy, *I am for disunion*. And if my physical courage be equal to the maintenance of my convictions of right and duty, I will devote all I am and all I have on earth to its consummation.

From 1787 to this hour, the people of the South have asked nothing but justice—nothing but the maintenance of the principles and the spirit which controlled our fathers in the formation of the Constitution. Unless we are unworthy of our ancestors, we will never accept less as a condition of union....

The Territories are the common property of the people of the United States, purchased by their common blood and treasure. You [the Congress] are their common agents. It is your duty, while they are in a territorial state, to remove all impediments to their free enjoyment by all sections and people of the Union, the slaveholder and the non-slaveholder....

Mr. Colcock [of South Carolina]—...I here pledge myself that if any bill should be passed at this Congress abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, or incorporating the Wilmot Proviso in any form, I will introduce a resolution in this House declaring, in terms, *that this Union ought to be dissolved*. Source: The American Spirit

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John Calhoun Demands Southern Rights (1850)

...How can the Union be saved? To this I answer, there is but one way by which it can be, and that is by adopting such measures as will satisfy the states belonging to the Southern section that they can remain in the Union consistently with their honor and their safety. There is, again, only one way by which this can be effected, and that is by removing the causes by which this belief [that the South cannot honorably and safely remain in the Union] has been produced. Do that and discontent will cease, harmony and kind feelings between the sections be restored, and every apprehension of danger to the Union removed. The question, then, is, By what can this be done? But, before I undertake to answer this question, I propose to show by what the Union cannot be saved.

...this cry of Union comes commonly from those whom we cannot believe to be sincere. It usually comes from our assailants. But we cannot believe them to be sincere; for, if they loved the Union, they would necessarily be devoted to the Constitution. It made the Union, and to destroy the Constitution would be to destroy the Union. But the only reliable and certain evidence of devotion to the Constitution is to abstain, on the one hand, from violating it, and to repel, on the other, all attempts to violate it. It is only by faithfully performing these high duties that the Constitution can be preserved, and with it the Union....

The South asks for justice, simple justice, and less she ought not to take. She has no compromise to offer but the Constitution; and no concession or surrender to make. She has already surrendered so much that she has little left to surrender. Such a settlement would go to the root of the evil, and remove all cause of discontent by satisfying the South she could remain honorably and safely in the Union, and thereby restore the harmony and fraternal feelings between the section which existed anterior to the Missouri [Compromise] agitation [1820]. Nothing else can, with any certainty, finally and forever settle the questions at issue, terminate agitation, and save the Union. Source: The American Spirit

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Joshua Giddings Rejects Slave Catching (1850)

Sir, there is not a man in this body—there is not an intelligent man in the free states—but knows, if he delivers a fugitive into the custody of his pursuers, that he will be carried to the South and sold to the sugar and cotton plantations. And his life will be sacrificed in five years if employed on the sugar plantations, and in seven years on the cotton plantations. The men of the North, who look upon this as murder, would as soon turn out and cut the throats of the defenseless Negro as to send him back to a land of chains and whips. As soon would they do this as comply with a law which violates every principle of common justice and humanity.

The [common] law, sir, holds him who aids in a murder as guilty as he who strikes the knife to the heart of the victim. Under our law, a man is hanged if he fails to prevent a murder when it is plainly in his power to do so. Such man is held guilty to the act, and he is hanged accordingly. The man who should assist in the capture of a fugitive would be regarded by us as guilty as he under whose lash the victim expires....

Sir, we will not commit this crime. Let me say to the President, no power of government can compel us to involve ourselves in such guilt. No! The freemen of Ohio will never turn out to chase the panting fugitive—they will never be metamorphosed into bloodhounds, to track him to his hiding-place, and seize and drag him out, and deliver him to his tormentors. Rely upon it, they will die first. They may be shot down, the cannon and bayonet and sword may do their work upon them; they may drown the fugitives in their blood, but never will they stoop to such degradation. Source: *The American Spirit*

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The South Scorns Mrs. Stowe (1852)

There are some who will think we have taken upon ourselves an unnecessary trouble in exposing the inconsistencies and false assertions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It is urged by persons that in devoting so much attention to abolition attacks we give them an importance to which they are not entitled. This may be true in general. But let it be borne in mind that this slanderous work has found its way to every section of our country, and has crossed the water to Great Britain, filling the mind of all who know nothing of slavery with hatred for that institution and those who uphold it. Justice to ourselves would seem to demand that it should not be suffered to circulate longer without the brand of falsehood upon it....

We have not the heart to speak of an erring woman as she deserved, though her misconduct admitted of no excuse and provoked the keenest and most just reprobation. We have little inclination—and, if we had much, we have not the time—to proceed with our disgusting labor, to anatomize minutely volumes as full of poisonous vermin as of putrescence, and to speak in such language as the occasion would justify, though it might be forbidden by decorum and self-respect.

We dismiss *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with the conviction and declaration that every holier purpose of our nature is misguided, every charitable sympathy betrayed, every loftier sentiment polluted, every moral purpose wrenched to wrong, and every patriotic feeling outraged, by its criminal prostitution of the high functions of the imagination to the pernicious intrigues of sectional animosity, and to the petty calumnies of willful slander. Source: The American Spirit

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Stephen Douglas's Popular-Sovereignty Plea (1854)

...When the people of the North shall all be rallied under one banner, and the whole South marshaled under another banner, and each section excited to frenzy and madness by hostility to the institutions of the other, then the patriot may well tremble for the perpetuity of the Union. Withdraw the slavery question from the political arena, and remove it to the states and territories, each to decide for itself, such a catastrophe can never happen. Then you will never be able to tell, by any Senator's vote for or against any measure, from what state or section of the Union he comes....

I have nothing to say about Northern rights or Southern rights, I know of no such divisions or distinctions under the Constitution. The bill does equal and exact justice to the whole Union, and every part of it; it violates the rights of no state or territory, but places each on a perfect equality, and leaves the people thereof to the free enjoyment of all their rights under the Constitution.....

I say frankly that, in my opinion, this measure will be as popular at the North as at the South, when its provisions and principles shall have been fully developed and become well understood. Source: The American Spirit

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Charles Sumner Assails the Slaveocracy (1856)

...South Carolina is old; Kansas is young. South Carolina counts by centuries; where Kansas counts by years. But a beneficent example may be born in a day; and I venture to say that against the two centuries of the older state may be already set the two years of trial, evolving corresponding virtue, in the younger community. In the one is the long wail of Slavery; in the other, the hymns of Freedom. And if we glance at special achievements, it will be difficult to find anything in the history of South Carolina which presents so much of heroic spirit in an heroic cause as appears in that repulse of the Missouri invaders by the beleaguered town of Lawrence, where even the women gave their efforts to Freedom....

Where the whole history of South Carolina blotted out of existence, from its very beginning down to the day of the last election of the Senator [Andrew P. Butler] to his present seat on this floor, civilization might lose—I do not say how little; but surely less than it has already gained by the example of Kansas, in its valiant struggle against oppression, and in the development of a new science of emigration. Already in Lawrence alone there are newspapers and schools, including a high school, and throughout this infant territory there is more mature scholarship far, in proportion to its inhabitants, than in all South Carolina. Ah, sir, I tell the Senator that Kansas, welcomed as a free state, will be a “ministering angel” to the Republic when South Carolina, in the cloak of darkness which she hugs, “lies howling.”

Source: The American Spirit

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Hinton Helper's Banned Book (1857)

Notwithstanding the fact that the white non-slaveholders of the South are in the majority as five to one, they have never yet had any part or lot in framing the laws under which they live. There is no legislation except for the benefit of slavery and slaveholders.

As a general rule, poor white persons are regarded with less esteem and attention than Negroes, and though the condition of the latter is wretched beyond description, vast numbers of the former are infinitely worse off. A cunningly devised mockery of freedom is guaranteed to them, and that is all. To all intents and purposes, they are disenfranchised and outlawed, and the only privilege extended to them is a shallow and circumscribed participation in the political movements that usher slaveholders into office.

We have not breathed away seven and twenty years in the South without becoming acquainted with the demagogical maneuverings of the oligarchy....To the illiterate poor whites– made poor and ignorant by the system of slavery– they hold out the idea that slavery is the very bulwark of our liberties, and the foundation of American independence!...

The lords of the lash are not only absolute masters of the blacks, who are bought and sold, and driven about like so many cattle, but they are also the oracles and arbiters of all non-slaveholding whites, whose freedom is merely nominal, and whose unparalleled illiteracy and degradation is purposely and fiendishly perpetuated. How little the “poor white trash”– the great majority of the Southern people– know of the real condition of the country is, indeed, sadly astonishing....

Source: The American Spirit

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The Pro-Southern Court Speaks (1857)

Now...the right of property in a slave is distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution. The right to traffic in it, like an ordinary article of merchandise and property, was guaranteed to the citizens of the United States, in every state that might desire it, for twenty years. And the government in express terms is pledged to protect it in all future time, if the slave escapes from his owner. This is done in plain words—too plain to be misunderstood. And no word can be found in the Constitution which gives Congress a greater power over slave property, or which entitles property of that kind to less protection, than property of any other description. The only power conferred is the power coupled with the duty of guarding and protecting the owner in his rights.

Upon these considerations, it is the opinion of the Court that the Act of Congress [Missouri Compromise] which prohibited a citizen from holding and owning property of this kind in the territory of the United States north of the line [of 36° 30'] therein mentioned is not warranted by the Constitution, and is therefore void; and that neither Dred Scott himself, nor any of his family, were made free by being carried into this territory; even if they had been carried there by the owner with the intention of becoming a permanent resident....

Upon the whole, therefore, it is the judgment of this Court that it appears by the record before us that the plaintiff in error [Dred Scott] is not a citizen of Missouri, in the sense in which that word is used in the Constitution; and that the Circuit Court of the United States for that reason had no jurisdiction in the case, and could give no judgment in it. Source: The American Spirit

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Stephen Douglas Opposes Black Citizenship (1858)

If you desire Negro citizenship, if you desire to allow them to come into the state and settle with the white man, if you desire them to vote on an equality with yourselves, and to make them eligible to office, to serve on juries, and to adjudge your rights, then support Mr. Lincoln and the Black [pro-Negro] Republican Party, who are in favor of the citizenship of the Negro. ("Never, never.")

For one, I am opposed to Negro citizenship in any and every form. (Cheers.) I believe this government was made on the white basis. ("Good.") I believe it was made by white men for the benefit of white men and their posterity for ever, and I am in favor of confining citizenship to white men, men of European birth and descent, instead of conferring it upon Negroes, Indians, and other inferior races. ("Good for you," Douglas forever.")

Mr. Lincoln, following the example and lead of all the little abolition orators who go around and lecture in the basements of schools and churches, reads from the Declaration of Independence that all men were created equal, and then asks how you can deprive a Negro of that equality which God and the Declaration of Independence awards to him. He and they maintain that Negro equality is guaranteed by the laws of God, and that it is asserted in the Declaration of Independence. If they think so, of course they have a right to say so, and so vote. I do not question Mr. Lincoln's conscientious belief that the Negro was made his equal, and hence is his brother (Laughter.), but for my own part, I do not regard the Negro as my equal, and positively deny that his is my brother or any kin to me whatever. ("Never," "Hit him again," and cheers.)... Source: The American Spirit

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Lincoln on Slavery

Abraham Lincoln is often referred to as "The Great Emancipator" and yet, he did not publicly call for emancipation throughout his entire life. Lincoln began his public career by claiming that he was "antislavery" -- against slavery's expansion, but not calling for immediate emancipation. However, the man who began as "antislavery" eventually issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed all slaves in those states that were in rebellion. He vigorously supported the 13th Amendment which abolished slavery throughout the United States, and, in the last speech of his life, he recommended extending the vote to African Americans.

This brief study of Lincoln's writings on slavery contains examples of Lincoln's views on slavery. It also shows one of his greatest strengths: his ability to change as it relates to his public stance on slavery. It was from the *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* that these selections were taken. The roman numerals and numbers at the end of each section refer to the volume and page of the *Collected Works*.

Notably absent in the following collection are Lincoln's more famous First and Second Inaugural speeches (1861, 1865), his Gettysburg Address and Emancipation Proclamation (both 1863).

March 3, 1837

At the age of 28, while serving in the Illinois General Assembly, Lincoln made one of his first public declarations against slavery.

The following protest was presented to the House, which was read and ordered to be spread on the journals, to wit:

"Resolutions upon the subject of domestic slavery having passed both branches of the General Assembly at its present session, the undersigned hereby protest against the passage of the same.

They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy; but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than to abate its evils.

They believe that the Congress of the United States has no power, under the constitution, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different States.

They believe that the Congress of the United States has the power, under the constitution, to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia; but that that power ought not to be exercised unless at the request of the people of said District.

The difference between these opinions and those contained in the said resolutions, is their reason for entering this protest."

Dan Stone,

A. Lincoln,

Representatives from the county of Sangamon (I, 75)

July 1, 1854: Fragment on Slavery

Lincoln often encountered views supporting slavery. In this fragment, he countered the arguments that slavery was justified based on color and intellect.

If A. can prove, however conclusively, that he may, of right, enslave B. -- why may not B. snatch the same argument, and prove equally, that he may enslave A?--

You say A. is white, and B. is black. It is color, then; the lighter, having the right to enslave the darker? Take care. By this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with a fairer skin than your own.

You do not mean color exactly?--You mean the whites are intellectually the superiors of the blacks, and, therefore have the right to enslave them? Take care again. By this rule, you are to be slave to the first man you meet, with an intellect superior to your own.

But, say you, it is a question of interest; and, if you can make it your interest, you have the right to enslave another. Very well. And if he can make it his interest, he has the right to enslave you. (II, 222)

October 16, 1854: Speech at Peoria, Illinois

Lincoln, in a speech at Peoria, attacked slavery on the grounds that its existence within the United States made American democracy appear hypocritical in the eyes of the world. However, he also confessed his uncertainty as how to end slavery where it then existed, because he believed that neither colonization nor racial equality were practical.

I can not but hate [the declared indifference for slavery's spread]. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world -- enables the enemies of free institutions, with plausibility, to taunt us as hypocrites -- causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity, and especially because it forces so many really good men amongst ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty -- criticising [sic] the Declaration of Independence, and insisting that there is no right principle of action but self-interest.

Before proceeding, let me say I think I have no prejudice against the Southern people. They are just what we would be in their situation. If slavery did not now exist amongst them, they would not introduce it. If it did now exist amongst us, we should not instantly give it up. This I believe of the masses north and south. Doubtless there are individuals, on both sides, who would not hold slaves under any circumstances; and others who would gladly introduce slavery anew, if it were out of existence. We know

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that some southern men do free their slaves, go north, and become tip-top abolitionists; while some northern ones go south, and become most cruel slave-masters.

When southern people tell us they are no more responsible for the origin of slavery, than we; I acknowledge the fact. When it is said that the institution exists; and that it is very difficult to get rid of it, in any satisfactory way, I can understand and appreciate the saying. I surely will not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself. If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do, as to the existing institution. My first impulse would be to free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia, -- to their own native land. But a moment's reflection would convince me, that whatever of high hope, (as I think there is) there may be in this, in the long run, its sudden execution is impossible. If they were all landed there in a day, they would all perish in the next ten days; and there are not surplus shipping and surplus money enough in the world to carry them there in many times ten days. What then? Free them all, and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition? I think I would not hold one in slavery, at any rate; yet the point is not clear enough for me to denounce people upon. What next? Free them, and make them politically and socially, our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this; and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of white people will not. (II, 255-256)

August 24, 1855

In a letter to his friend Joshua Speed, Lincoln freely expressed his hatred of slavery but he did not recommend immediate emancipation.

You know I dislike slavery; and you fully admit the abstract wrong of it. So far there is no cause of difference. But you say that sooner than yield your legal right to the slave -- especially at the bidding of those who are not themselves interested, you would see the Union dissolved. I am not aware that any one is bidding you to yield that right; very certainly I am not. I leave that matter entirely to yourself. I also acknowledge your rights and my obligations, under the constitution, in regard to your slaves. I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down, and caught, and carried back to their stripes, and unrewarded toils; but I bite my lip and keep quiet. In 1841 you and I had together a tedious low-water trip, on a Steam Boat from Louisville to St. Louis. You may remember, as I well do, that from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio there were, on board, ten or a dozen slaves, shackled together with irons. That sight was a continual torment to me; and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio, or any other slave-border. It is hardly fair to you to assume, that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exercises, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their feelings, in order to maintain their loyalty to the constitution and the Union. I do oppose the extension of slavery, because my judgment and feelings so prompt me; and I am under no obligation to the contrary. (II, 320)

July 10, 1858: Speech at Chicago, Illinois

In this speech at Chicago, Lincoln reiterated his hatred of slavery and also his belief that it should not be touched where it then existed.

I have always hated slavery, I think as much as any Abolitionist. I have been an Old Line Whig. I have always hated it, but I have always been quiet about it until this new era of the introduction of the Nebraska Bill began. I always believed that everybody was against it, and that it was in course of ultimate extinction.

I have said a hundred times, and I have now no inclination to take it back, that I believe there is no right, and ought to be no inclination in the people of the free States to enter into the slave States, and interfere with the question of slavery at all. (II, 492)

August 1, 1858: Definition of Democracy

This is perhaps Lincoln's most succinct description of his beliefs on democracy and slavery.

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. (II, 532)

October 7, 1858: Fifth Debate with Stephen A. Douglas, Galesburg, Illinois

In 1858, the Republican Party sought to unseat one of the nation's most powerful United States Senators, Stephen Douglas. To oppose him, they nominated Abraham Lincoln. The resulting Lincoln-Douglas debates gave each candidate ample opportunity to publicly express his opinions on slavery. During the fifth debate, Lincoln claimed that slavery ran counter to American democratic principles because the Declaration of Independence's phrase - "all men are created equal" applied to African-Americans.

Judge Douglas, and whoever like him teaches that the negro has no share, humble though it may be, in the Declaration of Independence, is going back to the era of our liberty and independence, and so far as in him lies, muzzling the cannon that thunders its annual joyous return; that he is blowing out the moral lights around us; when he contends that whoever wants slaves has a right to hold them; that he is penetrating, so far as lies in his power, the human soul, and eradicating the light of reason and the love of liberty, when he is in every possible way preparing the public mind, by his vast influence, for making the institution of slavery perpetual and national. (III, 234)

October 13, 1858: Sixth Debate with Stephen A. Douglas, Quincy, Illinois

In the Lincoln-Douglas debates, Douglas maintained that the Founding Fathers established this nation half-slave and half-free in the belief that it would always be so. Lincoln argued that the Founding Fathers considered slavery wrong, and firmly expected it to die a natural death.

I wish to return Judge Douglas my profound thanks for his public annunciation here to-day, to be put on record, that his system of policy in regard to the institution of slavery contemplates that it shall last forever. We are getting a little nearer the true issue of this controversy, and I am profoundly grateful for this one sentence. Judge Douglas asks you "why cannot the institution of slavery, or rather, why cannot the nation, part slave and part free, continue as our fathers made it forever?" In the first place, I insist that our fathers did not make this nation half slave and half free, or part slave and part free. I insist that they found the institution of slavery existing here. They did not make it so, but they left it so because they knew of no way to get rid of it at that time. When Judge Douglas undertakes to say that as a matter of choice the fathers of the government made this nation part slave and part free, he assumes what is historically a falsehood. More than that; when the fathers of the government cut off the source of slavery by the abolition of the slave trade, and adopted a system of restricting it from the new Territories where it had not existed, I maintain that they placed it where they understood, and all sensible men understood, it was in the course of ultimate extinction; and when Judge Douglas asks me why it cannot continue as our fathers made it, I ask him why he and his friends could not let it remain as our fathers made it? (III, 276)

October 15, 1858: Seventh and Last Debate with Stephen A. Douglas, Alton, Illinois

To some Americans, the phrase "all men are created equal" applied only to some. To Lincoln, it applied to all.

And when this new principle [that African Americans were not covered by the phrase "all men are created equal"] -- this new proposition that no human being ever thought of three years ago, -- is brought forward, I combat it as having an evil tendency, if not an evil design; I combat it as having a tendency to dehumanize the negro -- to take away from him the right of ever striving to be a man. I combat it as being one of the thousand things constantly done in these days to prepare the public mind to make property, and nothing but property of the negro in all the States of the Union.I have never sought to apply these principles to the old States for the purpose of abolishing slavery in those States. It is nothing but a miserable perversion of what I have said, to assume that I have declared Missouri, or any other slave State shall emancipate her slaves. I have proposed no such thing. (III, 304-305)

October 15, 1858: Seventh and Last Debate with Stephen A. Douglas, Alton, Illinois

In the final Lincoln-Douglas debate, Lincoln claimed that the issues over which the two candidates had sparred, were not just issues of his time, rather, Lincoln believed that these debates were small battles in the larger war between individual rights and the divine right of kings.

That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles -- right and wrong -- throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time; and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says, "You work and toil and earn bread, and I'll eat it." No matter in what shape it comes, whether from the mouth of a king who seeks to bestride the people of his own nation and live by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men as an apology for enslaving another race, it is the same tyrannical principle. (III, 315)

October 18, 1858: Letter to James N. Brown

Some feared that Lincoln was recommending social and political equality between the races. Writing to James N. Brown, Lincoln discounted this belief although seven years later, he would embrace this hope in the last speech of his life.

I do not perceive how I can express myself, more plainly, than I have done in the foregoing extracts. In four of them I have expressly disclaimed all intention to bring about social and political equality between the white and black races, and, in all the rest, I have done the same thing by clear implication.

I have made it equally plain that I think the negro is included in the word "men" used in the Declaration of Independence.

I believe the declar[ation] that "all men are created equal" is the great fundamental principle upon which our free institutions rest; that negro slavery is violative of that principle; but that, by our frame of government, that principle has not been made one of legal obligation; that by our frame of government, the States which have slavery are to retain it, or surrender it at their own pleasure; and that all others -- individuals, free-states and national government -- are constitutionally bound to leave them alone about it.

I believe our government was thus framed because of the necessity springing from the actual presence of slavery, when it was framed.

That such necessity does not exist in the territories[sic], where slavery is not present. ...It does not follow that social and political equality between whites and blacks, must be incorporated, because slavery must not. (III, 328)

March 1, 1859: Speech at Chicago, Illinois

I do not wish to be misunderstood upon this subject of slavery in this country. I suppose it may long exist, and perhaps the best way for it to come to an end peaceably is for it to exist for a length of time. But I say that the spread and strengthening and perpetuation of it is an entirely different proposition. There we should in every way resist it as a wrong, treating it as a wrong, with the fixed idea that it must and will come to an end. (III, 370)

April 6, 1859: Letter to Henry L. Pierce

This is a world of compensations; and he who would be no slave, must consent to have no slave. Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves; and, under a just God, can not long retain it. (III, 376)

September 17, 1859: Speech at Cincinnati, Ohio

I think Slavery is wrong, morally, and politically. I desire that it should be no further spread in these United States, and I should not object if it should gradually terminate in the whole Union. (III, 440)

I say that we must not interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists, because the constitution forbids it, and the general welfare does not require us to do so.

We must prevent the revival of the African slave trade and the enacting by Congress of a territorial slave code. (III, 460)

September 17, 1859: Fragment on Free Labor

We know, Southern men declare that their slaves are better off than hired laborers amongst us. How little they know, whereof they speak! There is no permanent class of hired laborers amongst us.

Free labor has the inspiration of hope; pure slavery has no hope. The power of hope upon human exertion, and happiness, is wonderful. The slave-master himself has a conception of it; and hence the system of tasks among slaves. The slave whom you can not drive with the lash to break seventy-five pounds of hemp in a day, if you will task him to break a hundred, and promise him pay for all he does over, he will break you a hundred and fifty. You have substituted hope, for the rod. (III, 462-3)

February 1, 1861: Letter To William H. Seward

I say now, however, as I have all the while said, that on the territorial question -- that is, the question of extending slavery under the national auspices, -- I am inflexible. I am for no compromise which assists or permits the extension of the institution on soil owned by the nation. And any trick by which the nation is to acquire territory, and then allow some local authority to spread slavery over it, is as obnoxious as any other. (IV, 183)

* * * Notably absent in this collection are Lincoln's more famous First and Second Inaugural speeches (1861, 1865), his Gettysburg Address and Emancipation Proclamation (both 1863).

April 11, 1865: Last Public Address

In Lincoln's last public address, he recommended extending the right to vote to the African Americans who had fought for the Union. This expressed his belief that African Americans should be granted full political equality.

It is also unsatisfactory to some that the elective franchise is not given to the colored man. I would myself prefer that it were now conferred on the very intelligent, and on those who serve our cause as soldiers. (VIII, 403)

<http://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/slavery.htm>

Questions

1. What perceptible differences can be identified between Lincoln's private correspondences and his public proclamations? Is this significant?
2. Given the nature of his public proclamations, were Southern assumptions about Lincoln justified? Why/not?
3. If Lincoln was consistently antislavery yet never embraced racial equality, how does that impact our perception of him as a man? As a President? Consider Historian HW Brands' "half step ahead" standard when thinking about this question.

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First Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln – March 4, 1861

Fellow-Citizens of the United States: In compliance with a custom as old as the Government itself, I appear before you to address you briefly and to take in your presence the oath prescribed by the Constitution of the United States to be taken by the President before he enters on the execution of this office."

I do not consider it necessary at present for me to discuss those matters of administration about which there is no special anxiety or excitement.

Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States that by the accession of a Republican Administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that--

I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.

Those who nominated and elected me did so with full knowledge that I had made this and many similar declarations and had never recanted them; and more than this, they placed in the platform for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read:

Resolved, That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend; and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes.

I now reiterate these sentiments, and in doing so I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in any wise endangered by the now incoming Administration. I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given will be cheerfully given to all the States when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause--as cheerfully to one section as to another.

There is much controversy about the delivering up of fugitives from service or labor. The clause I now read is as plainly written in the Constitution as any other of its provisions:

No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein be discharged from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.

It is scarcely questioned that this provision was intended by those who made it for the reclaiming of what we call fugitive slaves; and the intention of the lawgiver is the law. All members of Congress swear their support to the whole Constitution--to this provision as much as to any other. To the proposition, then, that slaves whose cases come within the terms of this clause "shall be delivered

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up" their oaths are unanimous. Now, if they would make the effort in good temper, could they not with nearly equal unanimity frame and pass a law by means of which to keep good that unanimous oath?

There is some difference of opinion whether this clause should be enforced by national or by State authority, but surely that difference is not a very material one. If the slave is to be surrendered, it can be of but little consequence to him or to others by which authority it is done. And should anyone in any case be content that his oath shall go unkept on a merely unsubstantial controversy as to how it shall be kept?

Again: In any law upon this subject ought not all the safeguards of liberty known in civilized and humane jurisprudence to be introduced, so that a free man be not in any case surrendered as a slave? And might it not be well at the same time to provide by law for the enforcement of that clause in the Constitution which guarantees that "the citizens of each State shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several States"?

I take the official oath to-day with no mental reservations and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules; and while I do not choose now to specify particular acts of Congress as proper to be enforced, I do suggest that it will be much safer for all, both in official and private stations, to conform to and abide by all those acts which stand unrepealed than to violate any of them trusting to find impunity in having them held to be unconstitutional.

It is seventy-two years since the first inauguration of a President under our National Constitution. During that period fifteen different and greatly distinguished citizens have in succession administered the executive branch of the Government. They have conducted it through many perils, and generally with great success. Yet, with all this scope of precedent, I now enter upon the same task for the brief constitutional term of four years under great and peculiar difficulty. A disruption of the Federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted.

I hold that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution the Union of these States is perpetual. Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination. Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution, and the Union will endure forever, it being impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument itself.

Again: If the United States be not a government proper, but an association of States in the nature of contract merely, can it, as a contract, be peaceably unmade by less than all the parties who made it? One party to a contract may violate it--break it, so to speak--but does it not require all to lawfully rescind it?

Descending from these general principles, we find the proposition that in legal contemplation the Union is perpetual confirmed by the history of the Union itself. The Union is much older than the Constitution. It was formed, in fact, by the Articles of Association in 1774. It was matured and continued by the Declaration of Independence in 1776. It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly plighted and engaged that it should be perpetual, by the

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Articles of Confederation in 1778. And finally, in 1787, one of the declared objects for ordaining and establishing the Constitution was "to form a more perfect Union."

But if destruction of the Union by one or by a part only of the States be lawfully possible, the Union is less perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity.

It follows from these views that no State upon its own mere motion can lawfully get out of the Union; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void, and that acts of violence within any State or States against the authority of the United States are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.

I therefore consider that in view of the Constitution and the laws the Union is unbroken, and to the extent of my ability, I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins upon me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the States. Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part, and I shall perform it so far as practicable unless my rightful masters, the American people, shall withhold the requisite means or in some authoritative manner direct the contrary. I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself.

In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere. Where hostility to the United States in any interior locality shall be so great and universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding the Federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the people for that object. While the strict legal right may exist in the Government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating and so nearly impracticable withal that I deem it better to forego for the time the uses of such offices.

The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union. So far as possible the people everywhere shall have that sense of perfect security which is most favorable to calm thought and reflection. The course here indicated will be followed unless current events and experience shall show a modification or change to be proper, and in every case and exigency my best discretion will be exercised, according to circumstances actually existing and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections.

That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events and are glad of any pretext to do it I will neither affirm nor deny; but if there be such, I need address no word to them. To those, however, who really love the Union may I not speak?

Before entering upon so grave a matter as the destruction of our national fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes, would it not be wise to ascertain precisely why we do it? Will you hazard so desperate a step while there is any possibility that any portion of the ills you fly from have no real existence? Will

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you, while the certain ills you fly to are greater than all the real ones you fly from, will you risk the commission of so fearful a mistake?

All profess to be content in the Union if all constitutional rights can be maintained. Is it true, then, that any right plainly written in the Constitution has been denied? I think not. Happily, the human mind is so constituted that no party can reach to the audacity of doing this. Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the Constitution has ever been denied. If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional right, it might in a moral point of view justify revolution; certainly would if such right were a vital one. But such is not our case. All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guaranties and prohibitions, in the Constitution that controversies never arise concerning them. But no organic law can ever be framed with a provision specifically applicable to every question which may occur in practical administration. No foresight can anticipate nor any document of reasonable length contain express provisions for all possible questions. Shall fugitives from labor be surrendered by national or by State authority? The Constitution does not expressly say. May Congress prohibit slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say. Must Congress protect slavery in the Territories? The Constitution does not expressly say.

From questions of this class spring all our constitutional controversies, and we divide upon them into majorities and minorities. If the minority will not acquiesce, the majority must, or the Government must cease. There is no other alternative, for continuing the Government is acquiescence on one side or the other. If a minority in such case will secede rather than acquiesce, they make a precedent which in turn will divide and ruin them, for a minority of their own will secede from them whenever a majority refuses to be controlled by such minority. For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy a year or two hence arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this.

Is there such perfect identity of interests among the States to compose a new union as to produce harmony only and prevent renewed secession?

Plainly the central idea of secession is the essence of anarchy. A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign of a free people. Whoever rejects it does of necessity fly to anarchy or to despotism. Unanimity is impossible. The rule of a minority, as a permanent arrangement, is wholly inadmissible; so that, rejecting the majority principle, anarchy or despotism in some form is all that is left.

I do not forget the position assumed by some that constitutional questions are to be decided by the Supreme Court, nor do I deny that such decisions must be binding in any case upon the parties to a suit as to the object of that suit, while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all other departments of the Government. And while it is obviously possible that such decision may be erroneous in any given case, still the evil effect following it, being

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limited to that particular case, with the chance that it may be overruled and never become a precedent for other cases, can better be borne than could the evils of a different practice. At the same time, the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the Government upon vital questions affecting the whole people is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made in ordinary litigation between parties in personal actions the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having to that extent practically resigned their Government into the hands of that eminent tribunal. Nor is there in this view any assault upon the court or the judges. It is a duty from which they may not shrink to decide cases properly brought before them, and it is no fault of theirs if others seek to turn their decisions to political purposes.

One section of our country believes slavery is right and ought to be extended, while the other believes it is wrong and ought not to be extended. This is the only substantial dispute. The fugitive- slave clause of the Constitution and the law for the suppression of the foreign slave trade are each as well enforced, perhaps, as any law can ever be in a community where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself. The great body of the people abide by the dry legal obligation in both cases, and a few break over in each. This, I think, can not be perfectly cured, and it would be worse in both cases after the separation of the sections than before. The foreign slave trade, now imperfectly suppressed, would be ultimately revived without restriction in one section, while fugitive slaves, now only partially surrendered, would not be surrendered at all by the other.

Physically speaking, we can not separate. We can not remove our respective sections from each other nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country can not do this. They can not but remain face to face, and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. Is it possible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before? Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you can not fight always; and when, after much loss on both sides and no gain on either, you cease fighting, the identical old questions, as to terms of intercourse, are again upon you.

This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing Government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. I can not be ignorant of the fact that many worthy and patriotic citizens are desirous of having the National Constitution amended. While I make no recommendation of amendments, I fully recognize the rightful authority of the people over the whole subject, to be exercised in either of the modes prescribed in the instrument itself; and I should, under existing circumstances, favor rather than oppose a fair opportunity being afforded the people to act upon it. I will venture to add that to me the convention mode seems preferable, in that it allows amendments to originate with the people themselves, instead of only permitting them to take or reject propositions originated by others, not especially chosen for the purpose, and which might not be precisely such as they would wish to either accept or refuse. I

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understand a proposed amendment to the Constitution--which amendment, however, I have not seen--has passed Congress, to the effect that the Federal Government shall never interfere with the domestic institutions of the States, including that of persons held to service. To avoid misconstruction of what I have said, I depart from my purpose not to speak of particular amendments so far as to say that, holding such a provision to now be implied constitutional law, I have no objection to its being made express and irrevocable.

The Chief Magistrate derives all his authority from the people, and they have referred none upon him to fix terms for the separation of the States. The people themselves can do this if also they choose, but the Executive as such has nothing to do with it. His duty is to administer the present Government as it came to his hands and to transmit it unimpaired by him to his successor.

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences, is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of Nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

By the frame of the Government under which we live this same people have wisely given their public servants but little power for mischief, and have with equal wisdom provided for the return of that little to their own hands at very short intervals. While the people retain their virtue and vigilance no Administration by any extreme of wickedness or folly can very seriously injure the Government in the short space of four years.

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and, on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it; while the new Administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either. If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend it."

I am loath to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

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The Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863

A Transcription

By the President of the United States of America:

A Proclamation.

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

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the Executive Government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

"That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof, respectively, shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be, in good faith, represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State, and the people thereof, are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, therefore I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief, of the Army and Navy of the United States in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days, from the day first above mentioned, 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.

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,

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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.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President: ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania - November 19, 1863

On June 1, 1865, Senator Charles Sumner referred to the most famous speech ever given by President Abraham Lincoln. In his eulogy on the slain president, he called the Gettysburg Address a "monumental act." He said Lincoln was mistaken that "the world will little note, nor long remember what we say here." Rather, the Bostonian remarked, "The world noted at once what he said, and will never cease to remember it. The battle itself was less important than the speech."

There are five known copies of the speech in Lincoln's handwriting, each with a slightly different text, and named for the people who first received them: Nicolay, Hay, Everett, Bancroft and Bliss. Two copies apparently were written before delivering the speech, one of which probably was the reading copy. The remaining ones were produced months later for soldier benefit events. Despite widely-circulated stories to the contrary, the president did not dash off a copy aboard a train to Gettysburg. Lincoln carefully prepared his major speeches in advance; his steady, even script in every manuscript is consistent with a firm writing surface, not the notoriously bumpy Civil War-era trains. Additional versions of the speech appeared in newspapers of the era, feeding modern-day confusion about the authoritative text.

[Bliss Copy]

Ever since Lincoln wrote it in 1864, this version has been the most often reproduced, notably on the walls of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. It is named after Colonel Alexander Bliss, stepson of historian George Bancroft. Bancroft asked President Lincoln for a copy to use as a fundraiser for soldiers (see "Bancroft Copy" below). However, because Lincoln wrote on both sides of the

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paper, the speech could not be reprinted, so Lincoln made another copy at Bliss's request. It is the last known copy written by Lincoln and the only one signed and dated by him. Today it is on display at the Lincoln Room of the White House.

Gettysburg Address

“Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate -- we can not consecrate -- we can not hallow -- this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us -- that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion -- that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain -- that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom -- and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.” - Abraham Lincoln November 19, 1863

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Second Inaugural Address. Delivered at Washington, D. C. March 4, 1865.

Fellow-countrymen: At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it—all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war—seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes his aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered—that of neither has been answered fully.

The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers

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

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

Lincoln Historian Eric Foner Details 16th President's Views on Slavery

... [R]enewed focus, argues Foner, is well deserved as Lincoln is one of the most renowned figures in our nation's history and perhaps the quintessential American.

The body of Foner's lecture focused on his prize-winning book, *The Fiery Trial*, in which Lincoln's life is examined within the context of the broader question of slavery. Foner was quick to separate his book from the mountain of literature on Lincoln by explaining how his approach does not try to explain Lincoln's choices and actions by solely doing an analysis of Lincoln as a person but instead tries to explain Lincoln in the larger context of the time in which he lived. As Foner said, there is no single moment or single quote that can represent Lincoln's evolving position on slavery, instead Lincoln's greatness was his capacity for growth as the nation wrestled with its original sin.

Going further, Foner explained how despite being known as the Great Emancipator, Lincoln did not always align himself with all anti-slavery parties in the United States. In particular, he at first stood at odds with abolitionism, willing to confer with abolitionist leaders but unwilling to count himself among their membership. Foner put this into the larger context of what it meant to oppose slavery prior to the Civil War. While abolitionists focused on civil rights and eventual equality for all races, Lincoln represented an argument against slavery that was instead based on natural rights and the U.S. Constitution with the idea that the races didn't need to be equal but that slavery violated the natural right for a person to pursue happiness and to reap the fruits of their own labor. In the beginning, argues Foner, Lincoln was opposed to slavery not on the grounds of moral, political, or religious impetuous, but rather because he saw slave labor as theft in violation of the Nation's founding creed.

This early position by Lincoln would evolve after his ascension to the presidency as the secession of 11 states from the Union and the outbreak of the Civil War would change the nature of the debate over slavery. Lincoln became committed to the ultimate eradication of slavery and when he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, he tied the survival of the Union to the death of slavery. This was a turning point in the nation's history and this is the Lincoln we often celebrate and remember. Foner's work serves to remind us of the larger story and this helps attain a larger appreciation for Lincoln as a man who grew to have such an enormous impact upon our nation's history.

<http://www.hamilton.edu/news/story/lincoln-historian-describes-slavery-trial>

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Adapted from a document placed on-line by Longman American History On-Line.

A Sharecrop Contract

(The following sharecrop contract, written in 1882, is an example of a typical contract between sharecropper and landowner. The contract heavily favors the interests of the landowner.)

To every one applying to rent land upon shares, the following conditions must be read, and agreed to.

To every 30 and 35 acres, I agree to furnish the team, plow, and farming implements, except cotton planters, and I do not agree to furnish a cart to every cropper. The croppers are to have half of the cotton, corn, and fodder (and peas and pumpkins and potatoes if any are planted) if the following conditions are complied with, but-if not-they are to have only two-fifths ($\frac{2}{5}$). Croppers are to have no part or interest in the cotton seed raised from the crop planted and worked by them. No vine crops of any description, that is, no watermelons, muskmelons, . . . squashes or anything of that kind, except peas and pumpkins, and potatoes, are to be planted in the cotton or corn. All must work under my direction. All plantation work to be done by the croppers. My part of the crop to be housed by them, and the fodder and oats to be hauled and put in the house. All the cotton must be topped about 1st August. If any cropper fails from any cause to save all the fodder from his crop, I am to have enough fodder to make it equal to one-half of the whole if the whole amount of fodder had been saved.

For every mule or horse furnished by me there must be 1000 good sized rails. . . hauled, and the fence repaired as far as they will go, the fence to be torn down and put up from the bottom if I so direct. All croppers to haul rails and work on fence whenever I may order. Rails to be split when I may say. Each cropper to clean out every ditch in his crop, and where a ditch runs between two croppers, the cleaning out of that ditch is to be divided equally between them. Every ditch bank in the crop must be shrubbed down and cleaned off before the crop is planted and must be cut down every time the land is worked with his hoe and when the crop is "laid by," the ditch banks must be left clean of bushes, weeds, and seeds. The cleaning out of all ditches must be done by the first of October. The rails must be split and the fence repaired before corn is planted.

Each cropper must keep in good repair all bridges in his crop or over ditches that he has to clean out and when a bridge needs repairing that is outside of all their crops, then any one that I call on must repair it.

Fence jams to be done as ditch banks. If any cotton is planted on the land outside of the plantation fence, I am to have three-fourths of all the cotton made in those patches, that is to say, no cotton must be planted by croppers in their home patches.

All croppers must clean out stable and fill them with straw, and haul straw in front of stable whenever I direct. All the cotton must be manured, and enough fertilizer must be brought to manure each crop highly, the croppers to pay for one-half of all manure bought, the quantity to be purchased for each crop must be left to me.

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No cropper is to work off the plantation when there is any work to be done on the land he has rented, or when his work is needed by me or other croppers. Trees to be cut down on Orchard, house field, & Evanson fences, leaving such as I may designate.

Road field is to be planted from the very edge of the ditch to the fence, and all the land to be planted close up to the ditches and fences. No stock of any kind belonging to croppers to run in the plantation after crops are gathered.

If the fence should be blown down, or if trees should fall on the fence outside of the land planted by any of the croppers, any one or all that I may call upon must put it up and repair it.

Every cropper must feed or have fed, the team he works, Saturday nights, Sundays, and every morning before going to work, beginning to feed his team (morning, noon, and night every day in the week) on the day he rents and feeding it to including the 31st day of December. If any cropper shall from any cause fail to repair his fence as far as 1000 rails will go, or shall fail to clean out any part of his ditches, or shall fail to leave his ditch banks, any part of them, well shrubbed and clean when his crop is laid by, or shall fail to clean out stables, fill them up and haul straw in front of them whenever he is told, he shall have only two-fifths ($\frac{2}{5}$) of the cotton, corn, fodder, peas, and pumpkins made on the land he cultivates.

If any cropper shall fail to feed his team Saturday nights, all day Sunday and all the rest of the week, morning/noon, and night, for every time he so fails he must pay me five cents.

No corn or cotton stalks must be burned, but must be cut down, cut up and plowed in. Nothing must be burned off the land except when it is impossible to plow it in.

Every cropper must be responsible for all gear and farming implements placed in his hands, and if not returned must be paid for unless it is worn out by use.

Croppers must sow & plow in oats and haul them to the crib, but must have no part of them. Nothing to be sold from their crops, nor fodder nor corn to be carried out of the fields until my rent is all paid, and all amounts they owe me and for which I am responsible are paid in full.

I am to gin & pack all the cotton and charge every cropper an eighteenth of his part, the cropper to furnish his part of the bagging, ties, & twine.

The sale of every cropper's part of the cotton to be made by me when and where I choose to sell, and after deducting all they owe me and all sums that I may be responsible for on their accounts, to pay them their half of the net proceeds. Work of every description, particularly the work on fences and ditches, to be done to my satisfaction, and must be done over until I am satisfied that it is done as it should be.

No wood to burn, nor light wood, nor poles, nor timber for boards, nor wood for any purpose whatever must be gotten above the house occupied by Henry Beasley-nor must any trees be cut down nor any wood used for any purpose, except for firewood, without my permission.

Source: Grimes Family Papers (#3357), 1882. Held in the Southern Historical Collection University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Frederick Douglass, “What the Black Man Wants,” speech before the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society at Boston (April 1865).

I have had but one idea for the last three years to present to the American people, and the phraseology in which I clothe it is the old abolition phraseology. I am for the “immediate, unconditional, and universal” enfranchisement of the black man, in every State in the Union. Without this, his liberty is a mockery; without this, you might as well almost retain the old name of slavery for his condition; for in fact, if he is not the slave of the individual master, he is the slave of society, and holds his liberty as a privilege, not as a right. He is at the mercy of the mob, and has no means of protecting himself. It may be objected, however, that this pressing of the Negro’s right to suffrage is premature. Let us have slavery abolished, it may be said, let us have labor organized, and then, in the natural course of events, the right of suffrage will be extended to the Negro. I do not agree with this. The constitution of the human mind is such, that if it once disregards the conviction forced upon it by a revelation of truth, it requires the exercise of a higher power to produce the same conviction afterwards. The American people are now in tears. The Shenandoah has run blood--the best blood of the North. All around Richmond, the blood of New England and of the North has been shed--of your sons, your brothers and your fathers. We all feel, in the existence of this Rebellion, that judgments terrible, wide-spread, far-reaching, overwhelming, are abroad in the land; and we feel, in view of these judgments, just now, a disposition to learn righteousness. This is the hour. Our streets are in mourning, tears are falling at every fireside, and under the chastisement of this Rebellion we have almost come up to the point of conceding this great, this all-important right of suffrage. I fear that if we fail to do it now, if abolitionists fail to press it now, we may not see, for centuries to come, the same disposition that exists at this moment. Hence, I say, now is the time to press this right. It may be asked, “Why do you want it? Some men have got along very well without it. Women have not this right.” Shall we justify one wrong by another? This is the sufficient answer. Shall we at this moment justify the deprivation of the Negro of the right to vote, because some one else is deprived of that privilege? I hold that women, as well as men, have the right to vote, and my heart and voice go with the movement to extend suffrage to woman; but that question rests upon another basis than which our right rests. We may be asked, I say, why we want it. I will tell you why we want it. We want it because it is our right, first of all. No class of men can, without insulting their own nature, be content with any deprivation of their rights. We want it again, as a means for educating our race. Men are so constituted that they derive their conviction of their own possibilities largely by the estimate formed of them by others. If nothing is expected of a people, that people will find it difficult to contradict that expectation. By depriving us of suffrage, you affirm our incapacity to form an intelligent judgment respecting public men and public measures; you declare before the world that we are unfit to exercise the elective franchise, and by this means lead us to undervalue ourselves, to put a low estimate upon ourselves, and to feel that we have no possibilities like other men. Again, I want the elective franchise, for one, as a colored man, because ours is a peculiar government, based upon a peculiar idea, and that idea is universal suffrage. If I were in a monarchical government, or an autocratic or aristocratic government, where the few bore rule and the many were subject, there would be no special stigma resting upon me, because I did not exercise the elective

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franchise. It would do me no great violence. Mingling with the mass I should partake of the strength of the mass; I should be supported by the mass, and I should have the same incentives to endeavor with the mass of my fellow-men; it would be no particular burden, no particular deprivation; but here where universal suffrage is the rule, where that is the fundamental idea of the Government, to rule us out is to make us an exception, to brand us with the stigma of inferiority, and to invite to our heads the missiles of those about us; therefore, I want the franchise for the black man.

Frederick Douglass Complains (1882)

Frederick Douglass, ex-slave and officer during the Civil War, regretted bitterly that the federal government, despite the urgings by the Radical Republicans, failed to provide land to the former slaves.

Though slavery was abolished, the wrongs of my people were not ended. Though they were not slaves they were not yet quite free. No man can be truly free whose liberty is dependent upon the thought, feeling, and action of others; and who has himself no means in his own hands for guarding, protecting, defending, and maintaining that liberty. Yet the negro after his emancipation was precisely in this state of destitution.

The law on the side of freedom is of great advantage only where there is power to make that law respected. I know no class of my fellowmen, however just, enlightened, and humane, which can be wisely and safely trusted absolutely, with the liberties of any other class.

Protestants are excellent people, but it would not be wise for Catholics to depend entirely upon them to look after their rights and interests. Catholics are a pretty good sort of people (though there is a soul-shuddering history behind them), yet no enlightened Protestants would commit their liberty to their care and keeping. And yet the government had left the freedmen in a worse condition than either of these. It felt that it had done enough for him. It had made him free, and henceforth he must make his own way in the world, or as the slang phrase has it, "Root, pig, or die"; yet he had none of the conditions for self-preservation or self-protection. He was free from the individual master, but the slave of society. He had neither property, money, nor friends. He was free from the old plantation, but he had nothing but the dusty road under his feet. He was free from the old quarter that once gave him shelter, but a slave to the rains of summer and the frosts of winter. He was in a word literally turned loose naked, hungry, and destitute to the open sky.

The first feeling towards him by the old master classes, was full of bitterness and wrath. They resented his emancipation as an act of hostility towards them, and since they could not punish the emancipator, they felt like punishing the object which that act had emancipated. Hence they drove him off the old plantation, and told him he was no longer wanted there. They not only hated him because he had been freed as a punishment to them, but because they felt that they had been robbed of his labor.

An element of greater bitterness still came into their hearts: the freedman had been the friend of the Government, and many of his class had borne arms against them during the war. The thought of paying cash for labor that they could formerly extort by the lash did not in anywise improve their disposition to the emancipated slave, or improve his own condition.

Now, since poverty has, and can have no chance against wealth, the landless against the land owner, the ignorant against the intelligent, the freedman was powerless. He had nothing left him but a slavery-distorted and diseased body, and lame and twisted limbs with which to fight the battle of life.

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From Civil War Era: Historiography

Nationalist School (James Ford Rhodes, Woodrow Wilson, Edward Channing)

1890s: wanted to portray Civil War without the "bitterness" of previous recounts.

Increasing Nationalism and Industrialism united the country. Conflict was unavoidable. It was the "collision of impersonal forces beyond the control of individuals." The cotton gin kept slavery from dying out on its own. The war had produced an unforeseen result: nationalism and a united America. Slavery was blamed for keeping the South unindustrialized

Progressive School (Charles & Mary Beard, Matthew Josephson)

1927: The uneven distribution of wealth led Progressive historians to disapprove of the industrialization caused by the war. The resulting industrialization caused a new social class system and gave the government new power. The economy was completely renovated and focused on private profit. Slavery did not seem to play a significant part in the causes of the war.

Marxist School (James S. Allen)

1930: Great Depression hits America. The obvious implications of the economy in the U.S. then played a part in the historiography of the Civil War. Specifically, eliminating slavery caused the development of capitalism and the growth of the labor movement. Slavery was not a major cause of the war.

Southern Agrarians (Ulrich Phillips, Charles Ramsdell, Frank Owsley)

1930: The Depression is a problem in the U.S. The Southern characteristic of anti-materialism was necessary for the good of the country. Relied on perceptions of the South as an honorable, peaceful community while the North looked like a cold, industrialized area. Claim that Northern industrialists used abolitionist claims for economical reasons.

Revisionist School (Avery Craven, James Randall)

1930-1940: World War I ended and caused the majority of Americans to avoid future conflict based on "greed, arrogance, and national rivalries." The war could have been avoided. It was an evil act that politicians failed to get out of. "Normal" sectional tensions were heightened and ignored. Slavery was purely a symbol of sectionalism.

New Political Historians (Michael Holt) 1960: Political history became a part of historiography. The differences that caused sectional tension were based on things like Protestantism or nativism. Slavery had very little to do with it. When the tension grew to the size politicians could do nothing to ease it, the North and South became each other's scapegoats.

Comparative School (Eugene Genovese, Peter Kolchin, William Freehling) 1990:

Slavery's part in the Civil War can only be fully observed and understood when it is compared to the effects of slavery in other parts of the world.

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kipling2448 | (Level 3) Educator Emeritus

Posted on *November 12, 2014 at 8:33 PM* (Answer #1)

The question specifies “recent” historiography of the Civil War, which presumably means those schools of thought regarding the origins, conduct and aftermath of that conflict that have emerged within the last decade, give or take. Such an exercise can certainly be done, but a more useful response would involve discussion of earlier schools and perspectives. The more recent historiography would focus primarily on the Marxist, Revisionist, New Political, Post-Revisionist, Cultural and Comparative schools, and would, ideally, retain the African American school of thought as well, as African American scholarship has been overwhelmingly a post-Civil Rights Movement phenomenon.

The African American perspective, unsurprisingly, views the Civil War through a racial prism, in which prejudicial views among whites regarding dark-skinned peoples laid the foundation for the justification of slavery and the later conflict regarding abolition. The principal progenitor from which the African American school, a very close of the Revisionist school, arose was the late historian John Hope Franklin (1915-2009). Franklin, an African American and author of *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (1947), noted the vital role personal biography plays in the recitation of history. In a 1979n speech before the American Historical Society, Franklin made the following observation about the role of individual historians in recording and analyzing the past:

“If every generation rewrites its history, as various observers have often claimed, then it may be said that every generation since 1870 has written the history of the Reconstruction era. And what historians have written tells as much about their own generation as about the Reconstruction period itself. Even before the era was over, would-be historians, taking advantage of their own observations or those of their contemporaries, began to speak with authority about the period.”

[<http://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/presidential-addresses/john-hope-franklin>] The place of W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) in discussions of the African American perspective has to be acknowledge, as Du Bois remains a revered figure in American history and political discourse. Du Bois advanced the argument, especially in his *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935) of an America hopelessly divided along racial lines, with race assuming a more important role than socioeconomic class in determining one’s political affiliation. As such, white Democrats were no more amendable to the advancement of civil rights than any other category of white politician.

As the African American perspective could be viewed as a subset of the broader Revisionist school, that will be the next category of Civil War historiography discussed. Revisionism can occur on both sides of any debate, and the Civil War is certainly no exception. By definition, it refers to alternative views of history that may contradict or delegitimize established schools of thought. The Revisionist school, represented by the likes of Kenneth Stampp and La Wanda Cox, and has as its figurative

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leader the late Howard K. Beale, who viewed Reconstruction in the most pernicious way imaginable, with Northern carpetbaggers serving as advance agents of an unscrupulous North intent on exploiting the South. Slavery, according to this perspective – a perspective shared with the Marxist school – was but a byproduct of Northern political machinations and cannot be considered to have been a core reason for the Civil War. Kenneth Stampp (1912-2009), on the other hand, argued persuasively that Reconstruction, far from constituting the unmitigated disaster to which most historians had condemned that period, was actually successful in transforming the South and setting the conditions for future advances in the area of civil rights. Stampp's most recognized contribution to the study of that period, however, was in his treatment of the institution of slavery and its inherent barbarism. He was considered among the first historians to seriously tackle the inhumanity of that practice.

Progressive and Marxist perspectives argue that the Civil War was only tangentially about slavery and that a Northern agenda predicated upon the economic sublimation of the American South was the true cause of the conflict. Charles Beard and Eric Foner represented these perspectives respectively, with the latter a major proponent that the Civil War was fought overwhelmingly for economic purposes. Similarly, Beard saw slavery as peripheral to the conflict and Northern exploitation of the South the most important cause of the war.

Whereas many revisionist historians viewed the war as economic in nature, La Wanda Cox (1909-2005) argued that the issues of slavery and civil rights were, indeed, the motivating factors in propelling the nation into conflict, and Reconstruction was an important component of the largely-benevolent Northern strategy of transforming the South away from its racist, pro-slavery culture. Another representative of the Revisionist school (there are many precisely because this is such a broad category) was James Randall, whose *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (1937; substantially revised in 1961) emerged as one of the more widely-used studies of the history of the second half of the 19th century. Randall sought to dispel myths surrounding the war, such as then notion – routinely debunked today – of war as a noble enterprise. To Randall, the Civil War was the result of incompetent statesmanship and innumerable examples of bumbling by leaders on both sides of the North-South divide. Not one to wax poetic regarding the realities of the war, he once noted that “(t)hat there was heroism in the war is not doubted, but to thousands the war was as romantic as prison rats and as gallant as typhoid or syphilis.” Randall, as with others of this school, dismissed the notion of a war gallantly fought over the freedom of enslaved blacks.”

The Post-Revisionist school, embodied in the persons of Leon Witwack (1929-) and Michael Perman, whose *Emancipation and Reconstruction* (2003) argues eloquently for the marginal success of Reconstruction despite the best intentions of the North. Perman is convinced, however, that only through Reconstruction could the South be involuntarily transformed, no matter how inept the execution. Witwack's *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States 1790-1860* (1961) dispels the myths – or exaggerated claims, to be fair – that the North represented a bastion of liberty for blacks in contrast to the slavery of the antebellum South. If slavery was abolished in the North, racial prejudices were not

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eliminated with it, and Northern blacks continued to suffer serious discrimination. A major theme of the Post-Revisionists is one of continuity, in which the enduring legacy of racism precluded the development of a truly free society in which blacks were equal to whites, and that Reconstruction constituted a half-measure never realized. In their criticism of President Lincoln's cautious pre-war approach to slavery and the South, they share a place in historiography with Avery O. Craven, who condemned Lincoln's innate conservatism and ambivalent attitude towards slavery (fair or not, that's the argument).

These are the major schools represented in contemporary historiography regarding the Civil War and Reconstruction. Time precludes in-depth discussions of each school, or of a full airing of the New Political and Comparative schools, the former arguing that slavery was a minor issue subordinate to religious and cultural differences, the latter advancing the notion that a broader global perspective is needed to understand the role slavery played in the Civil War.