

Ladies and Gentlemen, Citizens of California and of these United States:—With unfeigned pleasure I appear to address you on this important occasion. The subject is one that should thrill the blood of every colored man, woman and child in and throughout these United States of America —The President's Emancipation Proclamation.

Ladies and Gentlemen—I admit, as you are well aware, that it was as a military necessity the President issued this document. He evidently was imbued with that magnanimous spirit which animates the minds of all great men. The noble and devoted philanthropist and humble Christian, Mr. Lincoln, God bless him! From the commencement of this unholy rebellion, its object was to extend slavery and destroy one of the finest governments the world ever knew. It had an incestuous birth in the days of Jno. C. Calhoun, and its first action was matured during the administration of James Buchanan, and was fostered by wicked men to the present results of the war. Mr. Lincoln assumed the reins of Government, by the grace of God and the will of the people. Like all exigencies, in ancient as well as modern times, a man for the place is always ready. Pending the sorrowing of the children of Israel in the house of bondage, we have a Moses and an Aaron—in the tread of the Christian religion, Joseph and Mary, the

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humble instruments to accomplish the redemption of the world. In Rome we have Cincinnatus—in England Cromwell, during the oppressions of the landed aristocracy of those times. We have O'Connell, in Ireland, demanding justice for his country. In the British efforts for Emancipation from the slave-trade and slavery we have a Wilberforce and a Sharpe. Among the Italians we have the noble Garibaldi. I might go through a long catalogue of great men, who seem to have been born for the express purpose of grappling with the monster Slavery in its many phases; and, sirs, I think Lincoln and his coadjutors, such as Chase, Fremont, Phelps, Hunter and Lane, the men the exigency has brought forth to grapple with Slavery as existing in these United States. Lincoln, as man, had no high-sounding antecedent for statesmanship or erudition, but, like Cincinnatus, is honest in honesty of purpose. Living among their ranks, he knew the people's wants, for he labored among them in the field; (and man labors but for gold, and, as the lamented Broderick said, "God is king." May his memory be ever green!) Enjoying the company of nature's noblemen, the bone and sinew of any country, he learned what made a free people and a republican form of government.

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Ladies and Gentlemen—After 32 years reign of the slaveocracy, the time of their

desolation draweth nigh—they plotted and planned the overthrow of these United States by dismemberment, not unlike Cataline to overthrow Rome, by poisoning the mind of the youth, uprooting the virtuous teachings of the philosophers. Thus, this class [o]f men sought, by encouraging the slave-trade, protecting the interest of the slaveocracy, by direct Legislation to sustain the institution at the expense of the liberty of the working man, be he black or white. The time had come. We have the man before us, almost from obscurity, for such he was born in the South, living in the West, known as a “rail-splitter,” as a stump-speaker. The little departed giant, if living, would witness the power that he was wont to emulate.

Time passes in weeks, months and years, like bad men with hearts and heads bent upon wickedness, barking, like infuriated dogs, then howling, making the national night hideous with their mourning for departed rule. The President again and again asked them to return to their allegiance. They refused, and thousands and thousands of men were sacrificed to their blind passion.

The President, as Commande-in-Chief, demanded those people now in rebellion against the laws and the people of these United States, to lay down their arms. He stood then, as he did when he

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passed the fiery ordeal at the inauguration, and would administer the laws according to the constitution. But the Pharaohs of the South had hardened their hearts. By this time many generals, among them Fremont, Phelps, Hunter and Lane, importuned the President to strike at slavery. He informed them that he was governed by the Constitution, and would not depart from it. About the 22d of September, he placed his foot down, convinced that the slave-power was the great corner-stone of the rebellion, and that, to destroy this old house of bondage, it was necessary that not one stone of slavery should remain upon another. As a military necessity, in his capacity of Executive of the American nation, he therefore declared all slaves then in States and parts of States in rebellion against the United States, forever free, if said States or parts of States did not return to their allegiance on or before the 1st day of January, 1863. They refused. The 100 days passed. The 1st of January, 1863, was upon them. The President adhered to his announcement, and on that memorable day the chains of three and a half millions of bondsmen were sundered and they became freedmen. By this act the United States gained one million of defenders, who, just the day before, were only known as chattel-property, returnable by the law of '50 to their claimants. From recent expressions of the Pres-

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ident, it is plain that he intends to keep to the letter and spirit of his Proclamation, and we have now met to celebrate the glorious day which it has given to us and to the world—the day which brought freedom to the captive, honor to the Government, and glory to the Commander-in-Chief. Further recommendations of the President to Congress to legislate for the purchasing of all slaves of those persons owning them who are not included in the States or part of States in rebellion, show to the world that, in the future of these United States, freedom is to be the rule. Let us rejoice, then, with exceeding great joy, that the day is fast dawning when Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto Heaven, crying, I am free! I am free! The United States no longer knows a man by his skin or hair, but by his manhood and his loyalty to his Government. Then why should we not rejoice and be glad? We do rejoice and are glad. This anniversary proves it, and our people in this State and the Territories of the Pacific, together with those of the Eastern States, to-day send up to Heaven, by millions of voices, their thanks for what has been done for them, and pray that the old Ship of State may ride safely over the stormy sea of troublous circumstances, with the old flag ever streaming proudly over the waves.

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That we have love of country, Milliken's Bend, Port Hudson, Fort Wagner, and other bloody fields attest. The bravery of the colored soldier is established. Sirs, when the impartial historian shall write the history of this war, then will we shine among the bravest of the earth, as having bought our liberty with our blood.

Young men, awake! Emulate the many heroes who have gone before you. Strike! Your country demands it—freedom demands it! Strike, as freemen can only strike! In the history of the past, during the revolution, we find that Rhode Island colored men did their duty as men and soldiers. They did it at Sackett's Harbor, in the brilliant battle of Lake Eric, under the gallant Perry, and elsewhere. I will quote to you some convincing proofs of their courage and prowess:

COLORED SOLDIERS.—The colored soldiers fought bravely in the revolutionary war, on Bunker Hill, standing shoulder to shoulder in regiments with the whites, and gained that victory over a superior number of British troops. [See the old map of Bunker Hill battle, a slave standing behind his master and shooting down an officer of the British Army, and ready for another &re] Our fathers shed their blood on the shores of Jersey, and faced the British bayonets in the most desperate hour of danger in the Revolution.

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Hon. Mr. Burgess of Rhode Island, said on the floor of Congress, January 28th, 1828:

At the commencement of the Revolutionary War, Rhode Island had a number of this description of people, (slaves.) A regiment of them were enlisted into the continental service, and no braver men met the enemy in battle, but not one of them was permitted to be a soldier until he had first been made a freemen.

Said the Hon. Mr. Martindale of New York, in Congress, January 22, 1838:

Blacks, who have been slaves, were entrusted as soldiers in the war of the revolution; and I, myself, saw a battalion of them, as fine, martial-looking men as I ever saw attached to the Northern army in the last war, on its march from Plattsburg to Sackett's Harbor.

Said the Hon. Charles Miner of Pennsylvania, in Congress, February 7th, 1828:

The African race make excellent soldiers. Large numbers of them were with Perry, and aided to gain the brilliant victory on Lake Erie. A whole battalion of them was distinguished for its soldierly appearance.

The Hon. Mr. Clarke, in the Convention which revised the Constitution of New York, in 1821, said in regard to the rights of suffrage of our colored men:

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In the war of the Revolution these people helped to fight your battles by land and by sea. Some of your States were glad to turn out corps of colored men, and to stand shoulder to shoulder with them. In your late war they contributed largely towards your most splendid victories. On Lake Erie and Champlain, where your fleets triumphed over a foe superior in numbers and engines of death, they were manned in a large proportion with men of color. And, in this very house, in the fall of 1814, a bill passed, receiving the approbation of all the branches of your Government, authorizing the Governor to accept the service of 2,000 free people of color.

On the 20th of March, 1779, it was recommended by Congress to the States of Georgia and South Carolina, to raise 3,000 colored troops, who were to be rewarded for their services by their freedom. The delegations from those States informed Congress that such a body of troops would be not only "formidable to the enemy," but would lessen the danger of "revolts and desertions" among the slaves themselves. (See Secret Journal of the Old Congress, Vol. 1, pp. 105-107.)

THE LAST AMERICAN WAR WITH GREAT BRITAIN.—During the last war, the slaves and free colored people were called to the defense of the country by Gen. Jackson, and received the highest testimony of the value of their services, and, let it be remarked,

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they were addressed as fellow-citizens with the whites.

PROCLAMATION BY GEN. JACKSON TO THE PEOPLE OF COLOR AT NEW ORLEANS.—Soldiers!

When on the banks of the Mobile I called you to take up arms, inviting you to partake the perils and glory of your white fellow-citizens, I expected much from you, for I was not ignorant that you possessed qualities most formidable to an invading enemy. I knew with what fortitude you could endure hunger and thirst, and all fatigues of a campaign. I knew well how you loved your native country, and that you had as well as ourselves, to defend what man holds most dear—his parents, relations, wife, children and property. You have done more than I expected. In addition to the previous qualities I before knew you to possess, I found, moreover, among you a noble enthusiasm which leads to the performance of great things.

Soldiers! The President of the United States shall hear how praiseworthy was your conduct in the hour of danger! and the Representatives of the American people will, I doubt not, give you the praise your exploits entitle you to. Your General anticipates them in applauding your noble ardor.

The enemy approaches; his vessels cover our lakes, our brave citizens are united, and all contention has ceased among them.

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Their only dispute is, who shall win the prize of valor, or who the most glory, its noblest reward. By order,

THOS. BUTLER, Aid-de-camp.

The plan of throwing up an entrenchment between the swamp and the river, at the point where the British were obliged to approach, if they came at all, was not first conceived by Gen. Jackson, nor was the use of the cotton bales a scheme of his, but was a plan of a colored man. He proposed to the General the expediency of defending this strong point, which was so obvious that there could be no hesitation or dispute about it; Jackson therefore ordered it to be built, and thus saved the American army and country.

Ladies and Gentlemen—With our glow of thanksgiving and praise, we should remember that we owe a kindly thought, a devoted prayer for the success of the Union army. Further, we should have that kind of patriotism that causes the hand to go into the pocket, and to contribute to the wants of the sick and wounded soldiers, through the Sanitary Committee. Then our duty, in part, is done, and not until then. Then let us, with hearty good cheers for Abraham Lincoln, his Proclamation, the Army and the Navy, pledge ourselves, our fortunes and our sacred honors, to stand, shoulder to shoulder, by our brother man, on land and sea, to support and

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January 16, 1864
Wilson, John G.
Pacific Appeal

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