EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

1863

Slavery was the most emotional issue that divided the North and the South during the Civil War. Although the primary motivation for the Emancipation Proclamation was strategic, it made the war a battle not only to save the Union, but to correct the injustice of slavery.

Whereas on the 22nd day of September, A.D. 1862, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing among other things, the following, to wit:

“That on the 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State the people thereof 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 1st 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 States 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 1st day of January, A.D. 1863, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the first day 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 Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, 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 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-defense; 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.
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1. Facts and Concepts
   1. Look up "emancipation" in a dictionary and write down its definition.

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   2. What is the date of this proclamation? When had a preliminary proclamation been announced?

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   3. Who made this proclamation?

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   4. Did the Emancipation Proclamation free all slaves in the United States? Give a quotation from the document to support your answer.

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   5. In your own words, explain what the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation announced.

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   6. What does the final Emancipation Proclamation do that the preliminary proclamation did not do?

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7. The freeing of the slaves is called "a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion..." In what ways could freeing the slaves have helped end the Civil War?


8. What two requests of freed slaves are made near the end of the document?


9. The next-to-last paragraph of the document says that freed slaves will "be received into the armed service of the United States." How would this action benefit the newly freed slaves? How would it reinforce the idea of their equality?


10. By what power does this document say that the freedom of the slaves will be backed up?
II. For Further Understanding

11. In what sense can it be argued that this document did not free any slaves at all? (Remember that some of the border states of the North were slave states.)

12. Name four slave states besides the ones mentioned in the document that were excluded from the proclamation. Why were they exempted?

13. What action taken by the federal government in 1808 shows that even then there was strong opposition to slavery?

14. What law freed all of the slaves in the United States? What law gave blacks U.S. citizenship?
Writing the Emancipation Proclamation