



# The Emancipation Proclamation

## Objectives

1. Explain why Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.
2. Identify the effects of the proclamation.
3. Describe the contributions of African Americans to the Union.

## Prepare to Read

### 🕒 Reading Skill

**Explain How Events Are Related in Time** President Lincoln and others made many choices in fighting the war. They made these choices in the context of the events at the time. When reading about history, it is important to see how events in a period are related in time. Do events influence the attitudes and decisions of people going forward in time? Do they change people's actions and freedoms?

### Vocabulary Builder

#### High-Use Words

restore, p. 524

sustain, p. 525

#### Key Terms and People

emancipate, p. 524

Horace Greeley, p. 524

★ **Background Knowledge** The first two years of war had not been good for the North. However, the North's victory at Antietam was a turning point. As you will now learn, that battle created the conditions that ended slavery and led to a Union victory.

### Main Idea

Lincoln was slow to decide on emancipation but finally embraced it as a necessary war measure.

## Emancipating the Enslaved

Many abolitionists rejoiced when the war began. They urged Lincoln to end slavery and thus punish the South for starting the war.

**Lincoln Changes His Mind** At first, the President resisted. He knew most northerners did not want to end slavery. "You... overestimate the number in the country who hold such views," he told one abolitionist. He feared that any action to emancipate, or free, enslaved African Americans might make the border states secede.

Lincoln said his goal was to restore the Union, even if that meant letting slavery continue. He stated this very clearly in a letter to abolitionist newspaper publisher Horace Greeley.

“If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave, I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves, I would do it. . . . What I do about slavery . . . I do because I believe it helps to save the Union.”

Gradually, Lincoln began to change his mind. He realized how important slavery was to the South's war effort. He told his Cabinet that he intended to issue an Emancipation Proclamation. But Cabinet members advised him to wait until after a success on the battlefield.

**A Famous Proclamation** On September 22, 1862, a few days after Lee's retreat from Antietam, Lincoln met again with his Cabinet and issued a preliminary proclamation.

On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued the final Emancipation Proclamation. This document had little immediate effect, however, because it freed enslaved people only in areas that were fighting the Union. Those were places where the Union had no power. The proclamation did not apply to parts of the South already under Union control. Nor did it free anyone in the border states.

The proclamation was both criticized and praised. Some abolitionists said it should be applied throughout the country. White southerners accused Lincoln of trying to cause a slave revolt. But many Union soldiers were enthusiastic. They welcomed anything that weakened the South. "This army will sustain the Emancipation Proclamation and enforce it with the bayonet," an Indiana soldier said.

**Effects of the Proclamation** Even though the proclamation freed few slaves at first, it had other important effects. Above all, it changed the Civil War into a struggle for freedom. This was no longer just a fight to save the nation. It was now also a fight to end slavery.

**Vocabulary Builder**  
**sustain** (suh STAYN) v. to keep going; to endure; to supply with food; to support as just

## The Emancipation Proclamation

“That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord [1863], 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. . . .”

—Emancipation Proclamation, January 1, 1863

A Union general posted the announcement at right, declaring the freedom of enslaved African Americans in the part of Virginia occupied by his troops.

## FREEDOM TO SLAVES!

Whereas, the President of the United States did, on the first day of the present month, issue his Proclamation declaring “that all persons held as Slaves in certain 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, would recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons. And Whereas, the county of Frederick is included in the territory designated by the Proclamation of the President, in which the Slaves should become free, I therefore hereby notify the citizens of the city of Winchester, and of said County, of said Proclamation, and of my intention to maintain and enforce the same.

I expect all citizens to yield a ready compliance with the Proclamation of the Chief Executive, and I admonish all persons disposed to resist its peaceful enforcement, that upon manifesting such disposition by acts, they will be regarded as rebels in arms against the lawful authority of the Federal Government and dealt with accordingly.

All persons liberated by said Proclamation are admonished to abstain from all violence, and immediately betake themselves to useful occupations.

The officers of this command are admonished and ordered to act in accordance with said proclamation and to yield their ready co-operation in its enforcement.

Winchester, Va.  
Jan. 5th, 1863.

R. H. Milroy,  
Brig. Gen'l Commanding.

### Reading Primary Sources

#### Skills Activity

President Lincoln's proclamation specified that it applied only to certain parts of the United States.

- Understand Sequence** In what order were these two declarations issued?
- Compare** In what way is the declaration on the right more specific than the one by President Lincoln?



### African American Soldiers

These are guards of the 107th Colored Infantry at Fort Corcoran in Washington, D.C.

**Critical Thinking: Apply Information** How did conditions for African American soldiers differ from those for white soldiers?

### Main Idea

African Americans fought for the Union and made other contributions to the war effort.



### Explain How Events Are Related in Time

Explain why these two events are related in time: African American soldiers fought for the Union; President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation.

Also, the Emancipation Proclamation dashed any hopes that Britain would recognize the South's independence. Britain would not help a government that was fighting to keep people enslaved.

In both North and South, Lincoln's proclamation united African Americans in support of the war. "We shout for joy that we live to record this righteous decree," wrote Frederick Douglass.

**Checkpoint** How did the proclamation affect the war?

## African Americans Help the Union

When the Civil War began, African American volunteers were not permitted to join the Union army. Northern African Americans appealed for the chance to help fight for the nation. However, not until after the Emancipation Proclamation were many allowed to serve.

**Volunteering for Service** The Emancipation Proclamation encouraged African Americans to enlist. Ultimately, 189,000 African Americans served in the Union army or navy. More than half were former slaves who had escaped or been freed by the fighting. All faced extra risks. If captured, they were not treated as prisoners of war. Most were returned to slavery and some were killed.

Black and white sailors served together on warships. In the army, however, African American soldiers served in all-black regiments under white officers. They earned less pay than white soldiers.

Despite these disadvantages, African American regiments fought with pride and courage. "They make better soldiers in every respect than any troops I have ever had under my command," a Union general said of an African American regiment from Kansas.



African American troops took part in about 40 major battles and hundreds of minor ones. The most famous was the attack on Fort Wagner in South Carolina by the 54th Massachusetts Infantry on July 18, 1863. The unit volunteered to lead the assault. As the soldiers charged, Confederate cannon fire rained down. Yet the 54th reached the top of the fort's walls before being turned back in fierce hand-to-hand fighting. The regiment suffered terrible losses. Nearly half of its soldiers were casualties.

Thousands of African Americans supported the Union in noncombat roles. Free northern and emancipated southern African Americans often worked for Union armies as cooks, wagon drivers, and hospital aides.

**Resisting Slavery** In the South, many enslaved African Americans did what they could to hurt the Confederate war effort. Some provided military and other kinds of information to Union armies. Enslaved people had always quietly resisted slavery by deliberately working slowly or damaging equipment. But with many slaveholders off fighting the war, large numbers of slaves refused to work.

**Checkpoint** How did African Americans help the Union cause?

**Looking Back and Ahead** The Emancipation Proclamation made the Civil War a fight to end slavery. After the war, the Thirteenth Amendment banned slavery throughout the nation. The next section tells how the war affected civilians on both sides.

## Section 3 | Check Your Progress

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### Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) Identify** Why did Lincoln at first resist identifying slavery as an issue of the Civil War?  
**(b) Analyze Cause and Effect** What effect did the Emancipation Proclamation have on slavery?
- (a) Recall** In what ways did African Americans participate in the Civil War?  
**(b) Explain Problems** What were three problems faced by African American soldiers?

### Reading Skill

- 3. Explain How Events Are Related in Time** Identify events that happened after the Emancipation Proclamation. Explain how these events are connected.

### Vocabulary Builder

- 4.** Write two definitions for **emancipate**. First, write a formal definition for your teacher. Second, write a definition in everyday English for a classmate.

### Writing

- 5.** Use library or Internet resources to find information about the African American 54th Massachusetts Infantry. Then, list the subtopics to be included in a research paper about the regiment. Write a paragraph about one of those subtopics. Identify some photographs and other nontext items that you would include in a research report on the 54th.