

traveled aboard a British merchant ship, the *Trent*. Captain Charles Wilkes of the American warship *San Jacinto* stopped the *Trent* and arrested the two men. The British threatened war against the Union and dispatched 8,000 troops to Canada. Aware of the need to fight just “one war at a time,” Lincoln freed the two prisoners, publicly claiming that Wilkes had acted without orders. Britain was as relieved as the United States was to find a peaceful way out of the crisis.

The first page of Lincoln's handwritten copy of the Emancipation Proclamation ▼

## Proclaiming Emancipation

As the South struggled in vain to gain foreign recognition, abolitionist feeling grew in the North. Some Northerners believed that just winning the war would not be enough if the issue of slavery was not permanently settled.

**LINCOLN'S VIEW OF SLAVERY** Although Lincoln disliked slavery, he did not believe that the federal government had the power to abolish it where it already existed. When Horace Greeley urged him in 1862 to transform the war into an abolitionist crusade, Lincoln replied that although it was his personal wish that all men could be free, his official duty was different: “My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy Slavery.”

As the war progressed, however, Lincoln did find a way to use his constitutional war powers to end slavery. Slave labor built fortifications and grew food for the Confederacy. As commander in chief, Lincoln decided that, just as he could order the Union army to seize Confederate supplies, he could also authorize the army to emancipate slaves.

Emancipation offered a strategic benefit. The abolitionist movement was strong in Britain, and emancipation would discourage Britain from supporting the Confederacy. Emancipation was not just a moral issue; it became a weapon of war. **A**

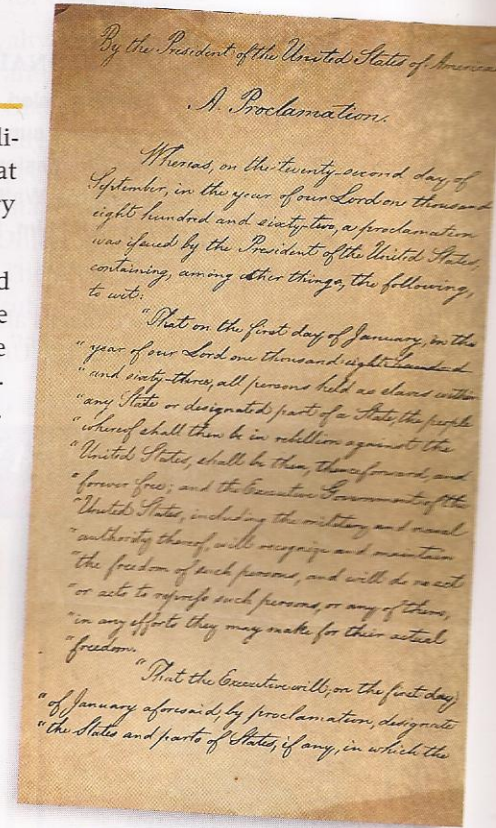
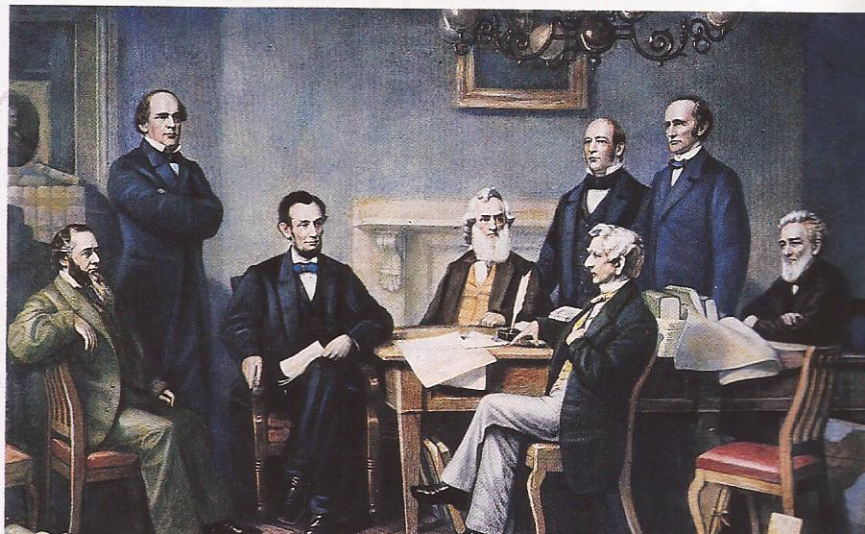
**EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION** On January 1, 1863, Lincoln issued his **Emancipation Proclamation**. The following portion captured national attention.

### from THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“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 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.”

Lincoln presents the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet, 1862. ▼

The Proclamation did not free any slaves immediately because it applied only to areas behind Confederate lines, outside Union control. Since the Proclamation was a military action aimed at the states in rebellion, it did not apply to Southern territory already occupied by Union troops nor to the slave states that had not seceded.



#### MAIN IDEA

#### Summarizing

What was the Emancipation Proclamation a part of Lincoln's military strategy?

**REACTIONS TO THE PROCLAMATION** Although the Proclamation did not have much practical effect, it had immense symbolic importance. For many, the Proclamation gave the war a high moral purpose by turning the struggle into a fight to free the slaves. In Washington, D.C., the Reverend Henry M. Turner, a free-born African American, watched the capital's inhabitants receive the news of emancipation.

**A PERSONAL VOICE** HENRY M. TURNER

**“Men squealed, women fainted, dogs barked, white and colored people shook hands, songs were sung, and by this time cannons began to fire at the navy yard. . . . Great processions of colored and white men marched to and fro and passed in front of the White House. . . . The President came to the window . . . and thousands told him, if he would come out of that palace, they would hug him to death.”**

—quoted in *Voices from the Civil War*

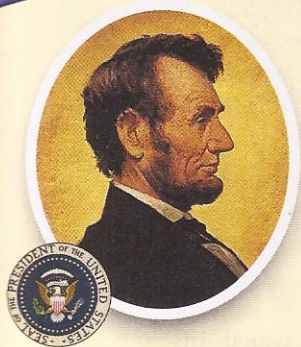
Free blacks also welcomed the section of the Proclamation that allowed them to enlist in the Union army. Even though many had volunteered at the beginning of the war, the regular army had refused to take them. Now they could fight and help put an end to slavery.

Not everyone in the North approved of the Emancipation Proclamation, however. The Democrats claimed that it would only prolong the war by antagonizing the South. Many Union soldiers accepted it grudgingly, saying they had no love for abolitionists or African Americans, but they would support emancipation if that was what it took to reunify the nation.

Confederates reacted to the Proclamation with outrage. Jefferson Davis called it the “most execrable [hateful] measure recorded in the history of guilty man.” As Northern Democrats had predicted, the Proclamation had made the Confederacy more determined than ever to fight to preserve its way of life.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, compromise was no longer an option. The Confederacy knew that if it lost, its slave-holding society would perish, and the Union knew that it could win only by completely defeating the Confederacy. From January 1863 on, it was a fight to the death. **B**

**KEY PLAYERS**



**ABRAHAM LINCOLN**  
1809–1865

Abraham Lincoln was born to illiterate parents, and once said that in his boyhood there was “absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education.” Yet he hungered for knowledge.

He educated himself and, after working as rail-splitter, storekeeper, and surveyor, he taught himself law. This led to a career in politics—and eventually to the White House. In Europe at that time, people were more or less fixed in the station into which they had been born. In the United States, Lincoln was free to achieve whatever he could. Small wonder that he fought to preserve the nation he described as “the last best hope of earth.”



**JEFFERSON DAVIS**  
1808–1889

Jefferson Davis, who was named after Thomas Jefferson, was born in Kentucky and grew up in Mississippi. After graduating from West Point, he served in the army and then became a planter. He was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1846 and again in 1856, resigning when Mississippi seceded.

His election as president of the Confederacy dismayed him. As his wife Varina wrote, “I thought his genius was military, but as a party manager he would not succeed.”

Varina was right. Davis had poor relations with many Confederate leaders, causing them to put their states’ welfare above the Confederacy’s.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Analyzing Effects**

**B** What effects did the Emancipation Proclamation have on the war?