

Abraham Lincoln and Wartime Reconstruction

April 13, 2011

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Lincoln in debate with Douglas:



I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races...

I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race.

Charleston, Illinois, September 1858

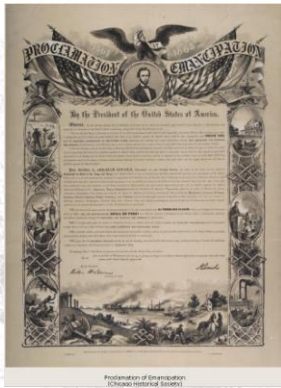


Proclamation of Emancipation
(Chicago Historical Society)

Emancipation Proclamation
takes effect January 1, 1863

"all the moral grandeur of a bill of
lading"

--- Richard Hofstadter (1948):



Proclamation of Emancipation
(Chicago Historical Society)

The Emancipation Proclamation
January 1, 1863

I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States,

by virtue of the power in me vested as Commander-in-Chief... and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion...

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 I further declare and make known, that such persons of suitable condition, will be received into the armed service of the United States...

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.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN



Proclamation of Emancipation
(Chicago Historical Society)

Limited scope shows that Lincoln
still pursuing a political
"Southern Strategy"

A pragmatic policy for fighting the
war

A (somewhat extended)"Free Soil"
policy.

An executive action, easily reversed
by courts or the next president.

It does not proclaim
"A New Birth of Freedom."

**Annual Message to Congress
December 8, 1863**

When Congress assembled a year ago the war had already lasted nearly twenty months...

the rebellion had been pressed back into reduced limits; yet the tone of public feeling and opinion, at home and abroad, was not satisfactory.

With other signs, the popular elections, then just past, indicated uneasiness among ourselves...

our commerce was suffering greatly by a few armed vessels...

The policy of emancipation, and of employing black soldiers, gave to the future a new aspect, about which hope, and fear, and doubt contended in uncertain conflict.

...[these were] **dark and doubtful days.**

a new birth of freedom;

*for us to be here dedicated to the great
tasks remaining before ^{us} that from these
honored dead we take increased devotion
to ^{that} the cause for which they here gave
the last full measure of devotion... that
we here highly resolve that these dead
shall not have died in vain; that the
nation shall have a new birth of freedom;
and that this government of the people, by
the people, for the people, shall not perish
from the earth.*

**Annual Message to Congress
December 8, 1863**

Eleven months having now passed, we are permitted to take another review.

[Military:] The rebel borders are pressed still further back, and by the complete opening of the Mississippi the country dominated by the rebellion is divided into distinct parts...

[African-American soldiers:] Of those who were slaves at the beginning of the rebellion, full one hundred thousand are now in the United States military service....

So far as tested, it is difficult to say they are not as good soldiers as any.

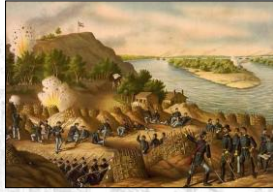
[The electorate has upheld the Union, and Lincoln:] ...the annual elections following are highly encouraging to those whose official duty it is to bear the country through this great trial.

Thus we have the new reckoning.

The crisis which threatened to divide the friends of the Union is past.

Why the New Birth of Freedom?
Military:

July 1863: Vicksburg...



...and Gettysburg

July 7, 1863:
Lincoln Greets the Turning Point of the War



(The serenade: a crowd, often accompanied by a brass band, visits an important person and calls for a speech)

July 7, 1863: Lincoln Greets the Turning Point of the War

July 7: How long ago is it? Eighty-odd years, since upon the Fourth day of July,
Nov 19: Four score and seven years ago

July 7: for the first time in the world, a union body of representatives
Nov 19: our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new Nation,

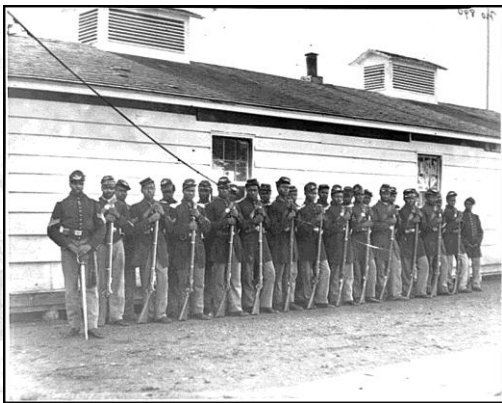
July 7: was assembled to declare
Nov 19: conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to

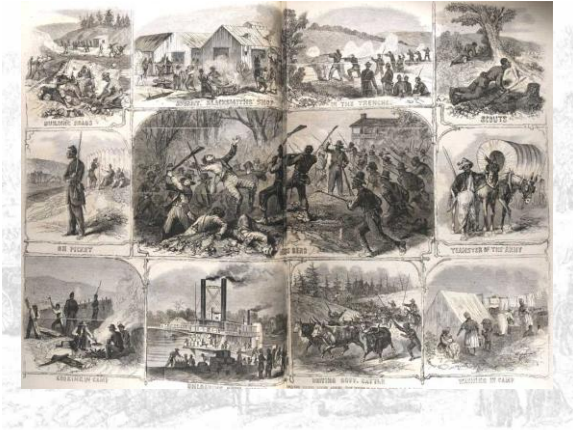
July 7: as a self-evident truth that all men were created equal. [Cheers.]
Nov 19: the proposition that all men are created equal. [Applause.]

Why the New Birth of Freedom?
African-American Soldiers:



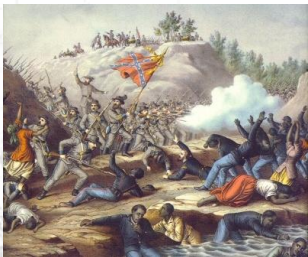








54th Massachusetts at Fort Wagner



Massacre at Fort Pillow,

Confederate troops massacre African American soldiers after they are taken prisoner.

"...all negro slaves captured in arms be at once delivered over to the executive authorities of the respective States to which they belong to be dealt with according to the laws of said States."
 ---Jefferson Davis, Confederate President

Why the New Birth? Elections:
Two key governor races for Republicans in
1863 and for Lincoln in 1864:

John Hay, Lincoln's secretary, makes his
report...



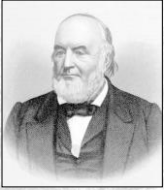
Brough of Ohio
(21 electoral votes 1864)



Curtin of Pennsylvania
(26 electoral votes 1864)

"Brough thinks that as yet in the Keystone State
The prospect is rather uncertain;
The fifth act is near, and we only wait,
Impatient, the rise of the Curtin"

---John Hay, Lincoln's
secretary



Brough of Ohio
(21 electoral votes 1864)



Curtin of Pennsylvania
(26 electoral votes 1864)



Why the New Birth?
Lincoln and Douglass

First Meeting, 1863:

Lincoln seeks help with
recruitment...

but Douglass seeks equal
pay for soldiers





Order of Retaliation

July 30, 1863:

"It is the duty of every government to give protection to its citizens, of whatever class, color, or condition."



Order of Retaliation

July 30, 1863:

"It is the duty of every government to give protection to its citizens, of whatever class, color, or condition."

14th Amendment, 1868:

"No state shall...deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws."

15th Amendment (1870):

"The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."



Second Meeting, 1864:

Lincoln fears war is lost and he will not be elected.

He seeks help bringing enslaved people North to freedom





Third Meeting, 1865:

White House gala after Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address.

Lincoln wants Douglass' Opinion:

"Mr. Lincoln, it was a sacred effort..."

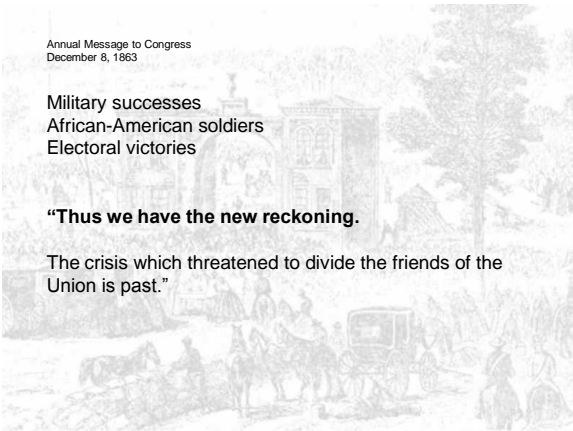


Annual Message to Congress
December 8, 1863

Military successes
African-American soldiers
Electoral victories

"Thus we have the new reckoning.

The crisis which threatened to divide the friends of the Union is past."

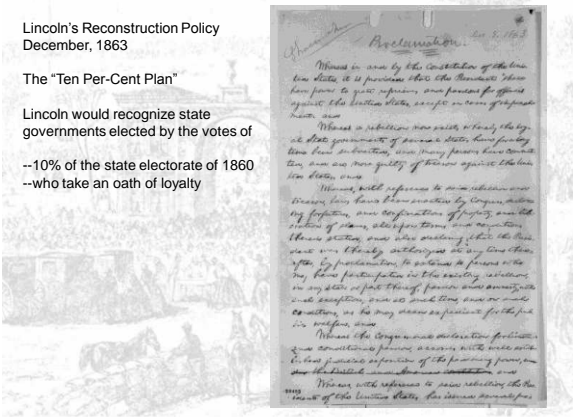
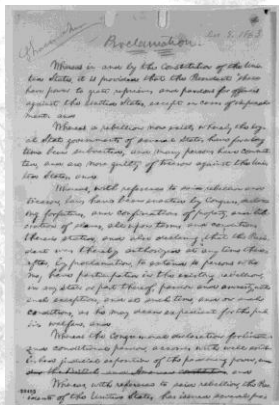


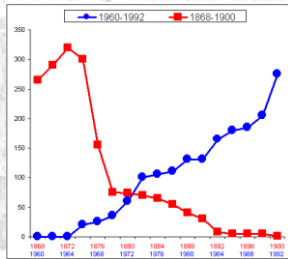
Lincoln's Reconstruction Policy
December, 1863

The "Ten Per-Cent Plan"

Lincoln would recognize state governments elected by the votes of

--10% of the state electorate of 1860
--who take an oath of loyalty





Number of Black Southern Legislators, 1868-1900 and 1960-1992

The New Birth of Freedom in the Second Inaugural:

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.



The New Birth of Freedom in Lincoln's last speech:

April 11, 1865

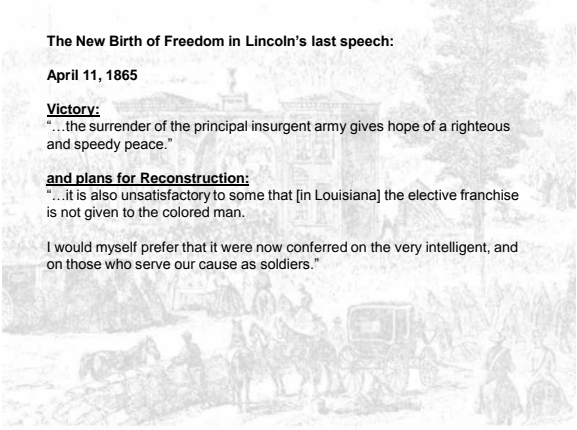
Victory:

"...the surrender of the principal insurgent army gives hope of a righteous and speedy peace."

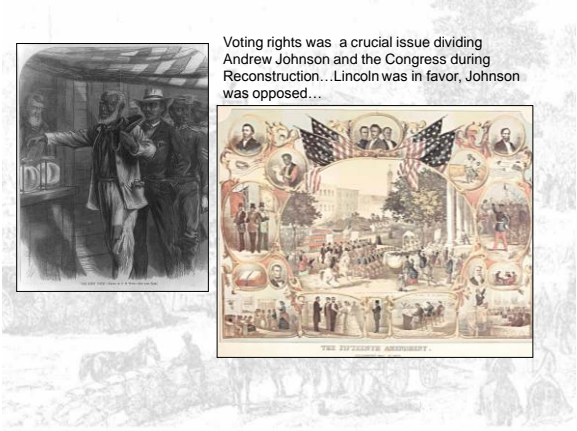
and plans for Reconstruction:

"...it is also unsatisfactory to some that [in Louisiana] 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."



Voting rights was a crucial issue dividing Andrew Johnson and the Congress during Reconstruction... Lincoln was in favor, Johnson was opposed...

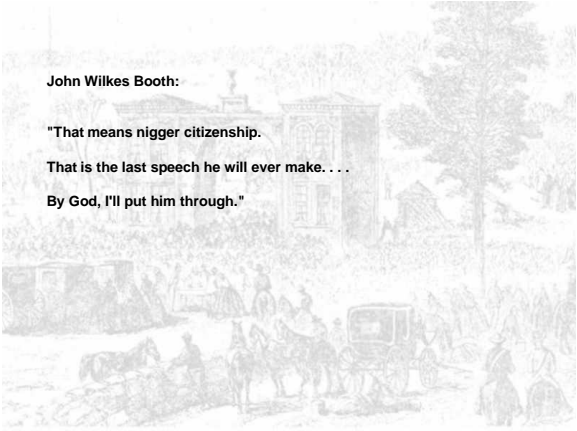


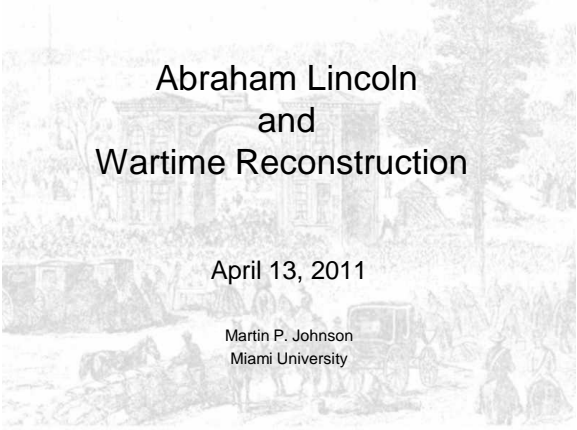
John Wilkes Booth:

"That means nigger citizenship.

That is the last speech he will ever make. . . .

By God, I'll put him through."





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and
Wartime Reconstruction

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