

# Emancipation Proclamation

**Creator:** Abraham Lincoln

**Date:** January 1, 1863

**Source type:** Government Document (Edited)

**Introduction:** On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the **Emancipation Proclamation**, which freed (emancipated) all enslaved people in the eleven Confederate states that were at war with the United States.



...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...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 [freed] 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** .

# General Benjamin Butler's Letter to Army Superiors

**Creator:** General Benjamin F. Butler

**Date:** May 27, 1861

**Source type:** Letter (Adapted)

**Introduction:** In this letter to superiors in the Union army, General Butler describes the military value of fugitive slaves in the Civil War. Butler wanted permission from the Lincoln administration to free those slaves who escaped into Union camps and offered their labor.



The Confederate inhabitants of Virginia are using their negroes in the **batteries**, and are preparing to send the women and children south. The escapees from the batteries are very numerous, and a group of escaped slaves came into my camp this morning. I have therefore **determined** to employ the **able-bodied** persons in the party.

I am informed that twelve of these negroes escaped from the construction of the **batteries** on Sewall's point, which this morning fired upon my troops as they passed by out of range. In the enemy's hands these negroes, when **able-bodied**, are of great importance to the enemy's attacks on us. Without them the batteries could not have been built for many weeks. As a military question it would seem to be a measure of necessity to **deprive** their masters of their services. How can this be done?



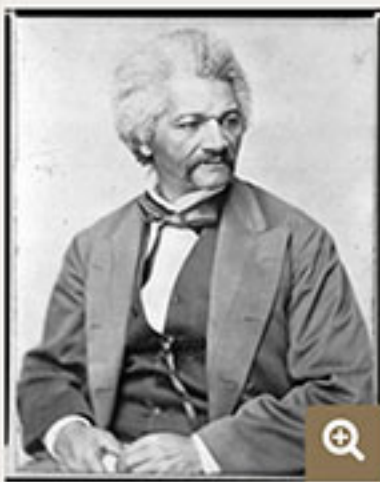
# A Meeting With President Lincoln

**Creator:** Frederick Douglass

**Date:** 1881

**Source type:** Autobiography (Adapted)

**Introduction:** In mid-1863, after President Lincoln had issued the **Emancipation Proclamation**, he invited abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass to the White House to speak with him. Douglass wrote about the meeting in 1881 in his autobiography *The Life and Times of Frederick Douglass*.



President Lincoln did me the honor to invite me to the Executive Mansion for a **conference** on the situation. I went most gladly. The main subject on which he wished to confer with me was how to **induce** the slaves in the rebel states **to come within the Federal lines**. Mr. Lincoln was alarmed by the increasing opposition to the war by people in the North, and by the mad cry against it because it was becoming a war about **abolition**. He was **apprehensive** that **a peace might be forced upon him** that would leave all who had not come within our lines still in slavery.

I was even more impressed by this **benevolent** consideration because he had said before, in answer to the peace **clamor**, that his object was to save the Union, with or without slavery. What he said on this day showed a deeper moral **conviction** against slavery than I had ever seen before in anything spoken or written by him. I listened with the deepest interest and **profoundest** satisfaction. At his suggestion, I agreed to organize a band of scouts, composed of colored men, to go into the rebel States, beyond the lines of our armies, to carry the news of emancipation and urge the slaves to come within our boundaries.

I refer to this conversation because I think it is conclusive evidence that the proclamation, so far as Mr. Lincoln was concerned, was not effected merely as a “necessity.”

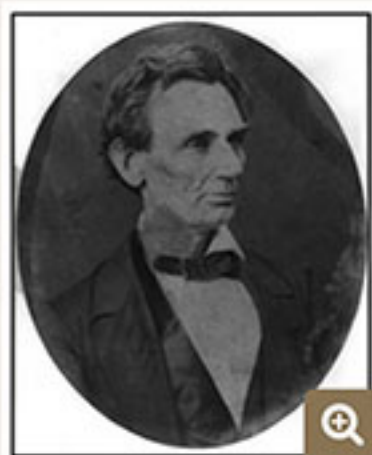
# Presidential Candidate Abraham Lincoln on Slavery

**Creator:** Abraham Lincoln

**Date:** March 6, 1860

**Source type:** Speech (Adapted)

**Introduction:** When Abraham Lincoln was running for President in 1860, he often gave speeches stating his personal belief that slavery was wrong and should not be extended into new American **territories**. He also explained his belief that the Constitution protected slavery in the states where it already existed.



**The question of Slavery** is the all absorbing topic of the day. The people of the whole nation agree that this question ought to be settled, and yet it is not settled.

Look at the **magnitude** of this subject! About one sixth of the whole population of the United States are slaves! The owners of these slaves consider them **property**. The slaveholder does not like to be considered a mean fellow, for holding that **species** of property, and hence he has to struggle within himself and sets about arguing himself into the belief that Slavery is right.

But to us in the North, it appears natural to think that slaves are human beings; men, not property; that some of the things, at least, stated about men in the Declaration of Independence apply to them as well as to us. We think Slavery a great **moral** wrong, and while we do not claim the right to touch it where it exists, we wish to treat it as a wrong in the **Territories**. In short, we think Slavery a great **moral**, social and political evil.