



THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION
By Abraham Lincoln
President of the United States of America:
A PROCLAMATION

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 whereof 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 supressing 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, Palquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terrebone, 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, Morthampton, 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-defence; and I recommend to them that, in all case 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.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

By the President: ABRAHAM LINCOLN

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

On Jan. 1, 1863, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln declared free all slaves residing in territory in rebellion against the federal government. This Emancipation Proclamation actually freed few people. It did not apply to slaves in border states fighting on the Union side; nor did it affect slaves in southern areas already under Union control. Naturally, the states in rebellion did not act on Lincoln's order. But the proclamation did show Americans-- and the world-- that the civil war was now being fought to end slavery.



Lincoln had been reluctant to come to this position. A believer in white supremacy, he initially viewed the war only in terms of preserving the Union. As pressure for abolition mounted in Congress and the country, however, Lincoln became more sympathetic to the idea. On Sept. 22, 1862, he issued a preliminary proclamation announcing that emancipation would become effective on Jan. 1, 1863, in those states still in rebellion. Although the Emancipation Proclamation did not end slavery in America--this was achieved by the passage of the 13TH Amendment to the Constitution on Dec. 18, 1865--it did make that accomplishment a basic war goal and a virtual certainty.

DOUGLAS T. MILLER

From: <http://www.americancivilwar.com/eman.html>



The Voting Rights Act of 1965

Excerpt

An Act to enforce the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act shall be known as the "Voting Rights Act of 1965".

Sec. 2. No voting qualification...shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color.

Teacher Background on the 1965 Voting Rights Act

By 1965 concerted efforts to break the grip of African American voter disfranchisement had been under way for some time, but had achieved only modest success overall and in some areas had proved almost entirely ineffectual. The murder of voting-rights activists in Philadelphia, Mississippi in 1964 gained national attention, along with numerous other acts of violence and terrorism. On March 7, 1965, state troopers orchestrated an unprovoked attack on peaceful marchers crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, en route to the state capitol in Montgomery. This atrocity provoked the President and Congress to overcome Southern legislators' resistance to voting rights reform. President Johnson issued a call for a strong voting rights law and hearings began soon thereafter on the bill that would become the Voting Rights Act.

Congress determined that the existing federal anti-discrimination laws were not sufficient to overcome the resistance by state officials to enforcement of the 15th Amendment. The legislative hearings showed that efforts by the Department of Justice to eliminate discriminatory election practices on a case-by-case basis in the federal courts had been unsuccessful in opening up the registration process. As soon as one discriminatory practice or procedure was proven to be unconstitutional and stopped, a new one was substituted in its place.

The legislation which President Johnson signed into law on August 6, 1965 temporarily suspended literacy tests, and provided for federal examiners (with the power to register qualified citizens to vote), to oversee elections in communities with records of voter discrimination.

Revised by BHH, from the following original source:



Introduction to Federal Voting Rights Laws

United States Department of Justice
Civil Rights Division

http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/intro/intro_b.htm



The Thirteenth Amendment

To the U.S. Constitution

Adopted in 1865

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States.



The Fifteenth Amendment

To the U.S. Constitution

Adopted in 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.



The Nineteenth Amendment

To the U.S. Constitution

Adopted in 1920

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 sex.