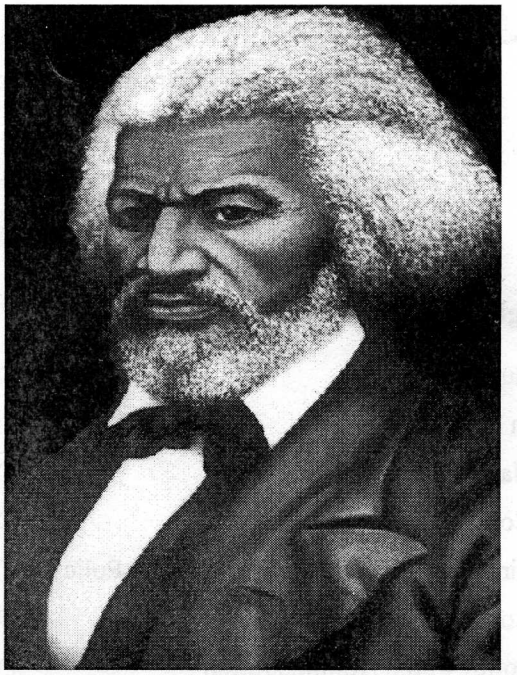

The Slaveholders' Rebellion

Frederick Douglass

Himrod, New York

Yates County Genealogical and Historical Society

Saturday June 30 at 4pm

Program

Readers

- Chevanne DeVaney — Director Multicultural Affairs at Keuka College
- Freeman Freeman — Clinical social worker in Penn Yan, NY
- Dorris Perryman — Adjunct professor at Keuka College and FLCC
- Dr. Alex Perryman — Assistant professor of finance and management at Keuka College

The speech will be read in eight parts.

1.	Part one	Introduction	Freeman Freeman
2.	Part two	Origin of War	Freeman Freeman
3.	Part three	The Nature of the Rebellion	Chevanne Devaney
4.	Part four	The Conflict Unavoidable	Chevanne Devaney
5.	Part five	The First Palable Departure from Right Policy	Chevanne DeVaney
6.	Part six	The Conduct of War	Dorris and Alex Perryman
7.	Part seven	The Policy of the Administration	Dorris and Alex Perryman
8.	Part eight	The Conclusion	Freeman Freeman

Part 1-The Introducton

FELLOW CITIZENS: Eighty-six years ago the fourth of July was consecrated and distinguished among all the days of the year as the birthday, of American liberty and Independence. The fathers of the Republic recommended that this day be celebrated with joy and gladness by the whole American people, to their latest posterity.

Probably not one of those fathers ever dreamed that this hallowed day could possibly be made to witness the strange and portentous Events now transpiring before our eyes, and which even now cast a cloud of more than midnight blackness over the face of the whole country. We are the observers of strange and fearful transactions.

Never was this national anniversary celebrated in circumstances more trying, more momentous, more solemn and perilous, than those by which this nation is now so strongly environed. We present to the world at this moment, the painful spectacle of a great nation, undergoing all the bitter pangs of a gigantic and bloody revolution.

We are torn and rent asunder; we are desolated by large and powerful armies of our own kith and kin, converted into desperate and infuriated rebels and traitors, more savage, more fierce and brutal in their modes of warfare, than any recognized barbarians making no pretensions to civilization.

In the presence of this troubled and terrible state of the country, in the appalling jar and rumbling of this social Earthquake, when sorrow and sighing are heard throughout our widely extended borders, when the wise and brave men of the land are everywhere deeply and sadly contemplating this solemn crisis as one which may permanently decide the fate of the nation I should greatly transgress the law of fitness, and violate my own feelings and yours, if I should on this occasion attempt to entertain you by delivering anything of the usual type of our 4th of July orations.

The hour is one for sobriety, thoughtfulness and stern truthfulness. When the house is on fire, when destruction is spreading its baleful wings everywhere, when helpless women and children are to be rescued from devouring flames a true man can neither have ear nor heart for anything but the thrilling and heart rending, cry for help.

Our country is now on fire. No man can now tell what the future will bring forth. The question now is whether this great Republic before it has reached a century from its birth, is to fall in the wake of unhappy Mexico, and become the constant theatre of civil war or whether it shall become like old Spain, the

mother of Mexico, and by folly and cruelty part with its renown among the nations of the earth, and spend the next seventy years in vainly attempting to regain what it has lost in the space of this one slaveholding rebellion.

Looking thus at the state of the country, I know of no better use to which I can put this sacred day, I know of no higher duty resting upon me, than to enforce my views and convictions, and especially to hold out to reprobation, the short sighted and ill judged, and inefficient modes adopted to suppress the rebels.

The past may be dismissed with a single word. The claims of our fathers upon our memory, admiration and gratitude, are founded in the fact that they wisely, and bravely, and successfully met the crisis of their day.

And if the men of this generation would deserve well of posterity they must like their fathers, discharge the duties and responsibilities of their age.

Men have strange notions now[a]days as to the manner of showing their respect for the heroes of the past. They everywhere prefer the form to the substance, the seeming to the real.

One of our Generals and some of our editors seem to think that the fathers are honored by guarding a well, from which those fathers may have taken water, or the house in which they may have passed a single night, while our sick soldiers need pure water, and are dying in the open fields for water and shelter.

This is not honoring, but dishonoring your noble dead. Nevertheless, I would not even in words do violence to the grand events, and thrilling associations, that gloriously cluster around the birth of our national Independence. There is no need of any such violence.

The thought of to-day and the work of to-day, are alike linked, and interlinked with the thought and work of the past. The conflict between liberty and slavery, between civilization ad barbarism, between enlightened progress and stolid indifference and inactivity is the same in all countries, in all ages, and among all peoples.

Your fathers drew the sword for free and independent Government, Republican in its form, Democratic in its spirit, to be administered by officers duly elected by the free and unbought suffrages of the people; and the war of to-day on the part of the loyal north, the east and the west, is waged for the same grand and all commanding objects.

We are only continuing the tremendous struggle, which your fathers and my father's began eighty-six years ago. Thus identifying the present with the past, I propose to consider the great present question, uppermost and all absorbing in all minds and hearts throughout the land.

I shall speak to you of the origin, the nature, the objects of this war, the manner of conducting, and its possible and probably results.

Part 2-Origin of the War

It is hardly necessary at this very late day of this war, and in view of all the discussion through the press and on the platform which has transpired concerning it, to enter now upon any elaborate enquiry or explanation as to whence came this foul and guilty attempt to break up and destroy the national Government.

All but the willfully blind or the malignantly traitorous, know and confess that this whole movement, which now so largely distracts the country, and threatens ruin to the nation, has its root and its sap, its trunk and its branches, and the bloody fruit it bears only from the one source of all abounding abomination, and that is slavery.

It has sprung out of a malign selfishness and a haughty and imperious pride which only the practice of the most hateful oppression and cruelty could generate and develop. No ordinary love of gain, no ordinary love of power, could have stirred up this terrible revolt.

The legitimate objects of property, such as houses, lands, fruits of the earth, the products of art, science and invention, powerful as they are, could never have stirred and kindled this malignant flame, and set on fire this rebellious fury.

The monster was brought to its birth, by pride, lust and cruelty which could not brook the sober restraints of law, order and justice. The monster publishes its own parentage.

Grim and hideous as this rebellion is, it's shocking practices, digging up the bones of our dead soldiers slain in battle, making drinking vessels out of their skulls, drumsticks out of their arm bones, slaying our wounded soldiers on the field of carnage, when their gaping wounds appealed piteously for mercy, poisoning wells, firing upon unarmed men, stamp it with all the horrid characteristics of the bloody and barbarous system and society from which it derived its life.

Of course you know, and I know that there have been and still are, certain out of the way places here at the north, where rebels, in the smooth disguise of loyal men, do meet and promulgate a very opposite explanation of the origin of this war, and that grave attempts have been made to refute their absurd theories.

I once heard Hon. Edward Everett entertain a large audience by a lengthy and altogether unnecessary argument to prove that the south did not revolt on account of the fishing bounty paid to northern fisherman, nor because of any inequalities or discriminations in the revenue laws.

It was the Irishman's gun aimed at nothing and hitting it every time. Yet the audience seemed pleased with the learning and skill of the orator, and I among the number, though I hope to avoid his bad example in the use of time.

There is however one false theory of the origin of the war to which a moment's reply may be properly given here. It is this. The abolitionists by their insane and unconstitutional attempt to abolish slavery have brought on the war. All that class of men who opposed what they were pleased to call coercion at the first, and a vigorous prosecution of the war at the present, charge the war directly to the abolitionists.

In answer to this charge, I lay down this rule as a basis to which all candid men will assent. Whatever is said or done by any class of citizens, strictly in accordance with rights guaranteed by the constitution, cannot be fairly charged as against the union, or as inciting to dissolution of the Union.

Now the slaveholders came into the union with their eyes wide open, subject to a constitution wherein the right to be abolitionists was sacredly guaranteed to all the people. They knew that slavery was to take its chance with all other evils against the power of free speech, and national enlightenment.

They came on board the national ship subject to these conditions, they signed the articles after having duly read them, and the fact that those rights, plainly written, have been exercised is no apology whatever for the slaveholders' mutiny and their attempt to lay piratical hands on the ship, and its officers.

When therefore I hear a man denouncing abolitionists on account of the war, I know that I am listening to a man who either does not know what he is talking about, or to one who is a traitor in disguise.

Part 3-The Nature of the Rebellion

There is something quite distinct and quite individual in the nature and character of this rebellion. In its motives and objects it stands entirely alone, in the annals of great social disturbances. Rebellion is no new thing under the sun. The best governments in the world are liable to these terrible social disorders. All countries have experienced them.

Generally however, rebellions are quite respectable in the eyes of the world, and very properly so. They naturally command the sympathy of mankind, for generally they are on the side of progress.

They would overthrow and remove some old and festering abuse not to be otherwise disposed of, and introduce a higher civilization, and a larger measure of liberty among men. But this rebellion is in no wise analogous to such.

The pronounced and damning peculiarity of the present rebellion, is found in the fact, that it was conceived, undertaken, planned, and persevered in, for the guilty purpose of handing down to the latest generations the accursed system of human bondage. Its leaders have plainly told us by words as well as by deeds, that they are fighting for slavery.

They have been stirred to this perfidious revolt, by a certain deep and deadly hate, which they warmly cherish toward every possible contradiction of slavery whether found in theory or in practice.

For this cause they hate free society, free schools, free states, free speech, the freedom asserted in the declaration of independence, and guaranteed in the constitution. Herein is the whole secret of the rebellion. The plan is and was to withdraw the slave system from the hated light of liberty, and from the natural operations of free principles.

While the slaveholders could hold the reins of government they could and did pervert the free principles of the constitution to slavery, and could afford to continue in the union, but when they saw that they could no longer control the union as they had done for sixty years before, they appealed to the sword and struck for a government which should forever shut out all light from the southern conscience, and all hope of Emancipation from the southern slave.

This rebellion therefore, has no point of comparison with that which has brought liberty to American, or with those of Europe, which have been undertaken from time to time, to throw off the galling yoke of despotism. It stands alone in its infamy.

Our slaveholding rebels with an impudence only belonging to themselves have sometimes compared themselves to Washington, Jefferson, and the long list of worthies, who led in the revolution of 1776, when in fact they would hang either of those men if they were no living, as traitors to slavery, because, they each and all, considered the system an evil.

Part 4-The Conflict Unavoidable

I hold that this conflict is the logical and inevitable result of a long and persistent course of national transgression. Once in a while you will meet with men who will tell you that this war ought to have been avoided.

In telling you this, they only make the truth serve the place and perform the office of a lie. I too say that this war ought never to have taken place.

The combustible material which has produced this terrible explosion ought long ago to have been destroyed. For thirty years the abolitionists have earnestly sought to remove this guilty cause of our troubles. There was a time when this might have been done, and the nation set in permanent safety. Opportunities have not been wanting.

They have passed by unimproved. They have sometimes been of a character to suggest they very work which might have saved us from all the dreadful calamities, the horrors and bloodshed, of this war. Events, powerful orators, have eloquently pleaded with the American people to put away the hateful slave system.

For doing this great work we have had opportunities innumerable. One of these was presented upon the close of the war for Independence; the moral sentiment of the country was purified by that great struggle for national life.

At that time slavery was young and small, the nation might have easily abolished it, and thus relieved itself forever of this alien element, the only disturbing and destructive force in our republican system of Government. Again there was another opportunity, for putting away this evil in 1789, when we assembled to form the Constitution of the United States.

At that time the anti-slavery sentiment was strong both in church and State, and many believed that by giving slavery no positive recognition in the Constitution and providing for the abolition of the slave trade, they had given slavery its death blow already.

They made the great mistake of supposing that the existence of the slave trade was necessary to the existence of slavery, and having provided that the slave trade should cease; they flattered themselves that slavery itself must also speedily cease.

They did not comprehend the radical character of the evil. Then again in 1819 the Missouri question gave us another opportunity to seal the doom of the slave system, by simply adhering to the early policy of the fathers and sternly refusing the admission of another State into the Union with a Constitution tolerating slavery.

Had this been done in the case of Missouri, we should not now be cursed with this terrible rebellion. Slavery would have fallen into gradual decay.

The moral sentiment of the country, instead of being vitiated as it is, would have been healthy and strong against the slave system. Political parties and politicians would not as they have done since, courted the slave power for votes and thus increased the importance of slavery.

Part 5-The First Palpable Departure from Right Policy

The date of the Missouri Compromise forms the beginning of that political current which has swept us on to this rebellion, and made the conflict unavoidable. From this dark date in our nation's history, there started forth a new political and social power.

Until now slavery had been on its knees, only asking time to die in peace. But the Missouri Compromise gave it a new lease of life.

It became at once a tremendous power. The line of thirty-six degrees, thirty minutes, at once stamped itself upon our national politics, our morals, manners, character and religion. From this time there was a south side to everything American, and the country was at once subjected to the slave power, a power as restless and vigilant as the eye of an escaping murderer.

We became under its sway an illogical nation. Pure and simple truth lost its attraction for us.

We became a nation of Compromisers.

It is curious to remark the similarity of national, to individual demoralization. A man sets out in life with honest principles and with high purposes inspired at the family hearthstone and for a time steadily and scrupulously keeps them in view.

But at last under the influence of some powerful temptation he is induced to violate his principles and push aside his sense of right. The water from the first moment is smooth about him, but soon he finds himself in the rapids. He has lost his footing.

The broad flood, resistless as the power of fate, sweeps him onward, from bad to worse; he becomes more hardened, blind and shameless in his crimes till he is overtaken by dire calamity, and at last sinks to ruin. Precisely this has been the case with the American people. No people ever entered upon the pathway of nations, with higher and grader ideas of justice, liberty and humanity than ourselves.

There are principles in the Declaration of Independence which would release every slave in the world and prepare the earth for a millennium of righteousness and peace.

But alas! We have seen that declaration intended to be viewed like some colossal statue at the loftiest altitude, by the broad eye of the whole world, meanly subjected to a microscopic examination and its glorious universal truths craftily perverted into seeming falsehoods.

Instead of treating it, as it was intended to be treated, as a full and comprehensive declaration of the equal and sacred rights of mankind, our contemptible negro-hating and slaveholding critics have endeavored to turn it into absurdity by treating it as a declaration of the equality of man in his physical proportions and mental endowments.

This gross and scandalous perversion of the true intents of meaning of the declaration did not long stand alone. It was soon followed by the heartless dogma, that the rights declared in that instrument did not apply to any but white men. The slave power at last succeeded, in getting this doctrine proclaimed from the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States.

It was there decided that "all men" only means some men, and those white men. And all this in face of the fact, that white people only form one fifth of the whole human family—and that some who pass for white are nearly as black as your humble speaker.

While all this was going on, lawyers, priests and politicians were at work upon national prejudice against the colored man. They raised the cry and put it into the mouth of the ignorant, and vulgar and narrow minded, that "this is the white man's country," and other cries which readily catch the ear of the crowd.

This popular method of dealing with an oppressed people has while crushing the blacks corrupted and demoralized the whites. It has cheered on the slave power, increased its pride and pretension, till ripe for the foulest treason against the life of the nation.

Slavery, that was before the Missouri Compromise couchant, on its knees, asking meekly to be let alone within its own limits to die, became in a few years after rampant, throttling free speech, fighting friendly Indians, annexing Texas, warring with Mexico, kindling with malicious hand the fires of war and bloodshed on the virgin soil of Kansas, and finally threatening to pull down the pillars of the Republic, if you Northern men should dare vote in accordance with your constitutional and political convictions.

You know the history; I will not dwell upon it. What I have said, will suffice to indicate the point at which began the downward career of the Republic. It will be seen that it began by bartering away an eternal principle of right for present peace. We undertook to make slavery the full equal of Liberty, and to place it on the same footing of political right with Liberty.

It was by permitting the dishonor of the Declaration of Independence, denying the rights of human nature to the man of color, and by yielding to the extravagant pretensions, set up by the slaveholder under the plausible color of State rights.

In a word it was by reversing the wise and early policy of the nation, which was to confine slavery to its original limits, and thus leave the system to die out under the gradual operation of the principles of the constitution and the spirit of the age. Ten years had not elapsed, after this compromise, when the demon disunion lifted its ugly front, in the shape of nullification.

The plotters of this treason undertook the work of disunion at that time as an experiment. They took the tariff, as the basis of action. The tariff was selected, not that it was the real object, but on the wisdom of the barber, who trains his green hands on wooden heads before allowing them to handle the razor on the faces of living men.

You know the rest. The experiment did not succeed. Those who attempted it were thirty years before their time. There was no BUCHANAN in the Presidential chair, and no COBBS, and FLOYDS in the Cabinet. CALHOUN and his treasonable associates were promptly assured, on the highest authority that their exit out of the Union was possible only by one way and that by way of the Gallows.

They were defeated, but not permanently. They dropped the tariff and openly adopted slavery as the ostensible, as well as the real ground of disunion. After thirty years of persistent preparatory effort, they have been able under the fostering care of a traitorous Democratic President, to inaugurate at last this enormous rebellion.

I will not stop here to pour out loyal indignation on that arch traitor, who while he could find power in the Constitution to hunt down innocent men all over the North for violating the thrice accursed fugitive slave Bill, could find no power in the Constitution to punish slaveholding traitors and rebels, bent upon the destruction of the Government.

That bad old man is already receiving a taste of the punishment due to his crimes. To live amid all the horrors, resulting from his treachery is of itself a terrible punishment.

He lives without his country's respect.

He lives a despised old man.

He is no doubt still a traitor, but a traitor without power, a serpent without fangs, and in the agony of his torture and helplessness will probably welcome the moment which shall remove him from the fiery vision of the betrayed and half ruined country.

Part 6-The Conduct of the War

To-day we have to deal not with dead traitors, such as James Buchanan, Howell Cobb, Floyd, Thompson and others, but with a class of men incomparably more dangerous to the country.

They are our weak, paltering and incompetent rulers in the Cabinet at Washington and our rebel worshipping Generals in the field, the men who sacrifice the brave loyal soldiers of the North by thousands, while refusing to employ the black man's arm in suppressing the rebels, for fear of exasperating these rebels: men who never interfere with the orders of Generals, unless those orders strike at slavery, the heart of the Rebellion.

These are the men to whom we have a duty to discharge to-day, when the country is bleeding at every pore, and when disasters thick and terrible convert this national festal day, into a day of alarm and mourning.

I do not underrate the power of the rebels, nor the vastness of the work required for suppressing them. Jefferson Davis is a powerful man, but Jefferson Davis has no such power to blast the hope and break down the strong heart of this nation, as that possessed and exercised by ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

With twenty millions of men behind him, with wealth and resources at his command such as might pride the heart of the mightiest monarch of Europe, and with a cause which kindles in every true heart the fires of valor and patriotism, we have a right to hold Abraham Lincoln, sternly responsible for any disaster or failure attending the suppression of this rebellion.

I hold that the rebels can do us no serious harm, unless it is done through the culpable weakness, imbecility or unfaithfulness of those who are charged with the high duty, of seeing that the Supreme Law of the land is everywhere enforced and obeyed. Common sense will confess that five millions ought not to be a match for twenty millions.

I know of nothing in the mettle of the slaveholder which should make him superior in any of the elements of a warrior to an honest Northern man.

One slaveholder ought not longer to be allowed to maintain the boast that he is equal to three Northern men: and yet that boast will not be entirely empty, if we allow those five millions much longer to thwart all our efforts to put them down.

It will be most mortifyingly shown that after all our appliances, our inventive genius, our superior mechanical skill, our great industry, our muscular energy, our fertility in strategy, our vast powers of endurance, our overwhelming numbers, and admitted bravery, that the eight or ten rebel slave States, sparsely populated, and shut out from the world by our possession of the sea, are invincible to the arms, of the densely populated, and every way powerful twenty free States.

I repeat, these rebels can do nothing against us, cannot harm a single hair of the national head, if the men at Washington, the President and Cabinet, and the commanding Generals in the field will but earnestly do their most obvious duty. I repeat Jeff. Davis and his malignant slaveholding Republic can do this union no harm except by the permission of the reigning powers at Washington.

I am quite aware that some who hear me will question the wisdom of any criticisms upon the conduct of this war at this time and will censure me for making them. I do not dread those censures. I have on many occasions, since the war began, held my breath when even the stones of the street would seem to cry out.

I can do so no longer. I believe in the absence of martial law, a citizen may properly express an opinion as to the manner in which our Government has conducted, and is still conducting this war. I hold that it becomes this country, the men who have to shed their blood and pour out their wealth to sustain the Government at this crisis, to look very sharply into the movements of the men who have our destiny in their hands.

Theoretically this is a responsible Government. Practically it can be made the very reverse. Experience demonstrates that our safety as a nation depends upon our holding every officer of the nation strictly responsible to the people for the faithful performance of duty. This war has developed among other bad tendencies, a tendency to shut our eyes to the mistakes and blunders of those in power.

When the President has avowed a policy, sanctioned a measure, or commended a general, we have been told that his action must be treated as final. I scout this assumption. A doctrine more slavish and abject than this does not obtain under the walls of St. Peter's. Even in the Rebel States, the Confederate Government is sharply criticized, and Jefferson Davis is held to a rigid responsibility.

There is no reason of right or of sound policy for a different course towards the Federal Government. Our rulers are the agents of the people. They are fallible men.

They need instruction from the people, and it is no evidence of a factions disposition that any man presumes to condemn a public measure if in his judgment that measure is opposed to the public good.

This is already an old war. The statesmanship at Washington with all its admitted wisdom and sagacity, utterly failed for a long time to comprehend the nature and extent of this rebellion. Mr. Lincoln and his Cabinet will have by and by to confess with many bitter regrets, that they have been equally blind and mistaken as to the true method of dealing with the rebels.

They have fought the rebels with the Olive branch. The people must teach them to fight them with the sword. They have sought to conciliate obedience. The people must teach them to compel obedience.

There are many men connected with the stupendous work of suppressing this slaveholding rebellion, and it is the right of the American people to keep a friendly and vigilant eye upon them all, but there are three men in the nation, from whose conduct the attention of the people should never be withdrawn: the first is President Lincoln, the Commander in chief of the army and navy. The single word of this man can set a million of armed men in motion:

He can make and unmake generals, can lift up or cast down at will. The other two men are MCCLELLAN, AND HALLECK. Between these two men nearly a half a million of your brave and loyal sons are divided. The one on the Potomac and the other on the Mississippi. They are the two extended arms of the nation, stretched out to save the Union.

Are those two men loyal? Are they in earnest? Are they competent? We have a right, and it is our duty to make these inquiries, and report and act in reference to them according to the truth.

Whatever may be said of the loyalty or competency of McClellan, I am fully persuaded by his whole course that he is not in earnest against the rebels that he is to-day, as heretofore, in war, as in peace a real pro-slavery Democrat. His whole course proves that his sympathies are with the rebels, and that his ideas of the crisis make him unfit for the place he holds.

He kept the army of the Potomac standing still on that river, marching and countermarching, giving show parades during six months. He checked and prevented every movement which was during that time proposed against the rebels East and West.

Bear in mind the fact that this is a slaveholding rebellion, bear in mind that slavery is the very soul and life of all the vigor which the rebels have thus far been able to throw into their daring attempt to overthrow and ruin this country.

Bear in mind that in time of war, it is the right and duty of each belligerent to adopt that course which will strengthen himself and weaken his enemy.

Bear in mind also that nothing could more directly and powerfully tend to break down the rebels, and put an end to the struggle than the Insurrection or the running away of a large body of their slaves, and the, read General McClellan's proclamation, declaring that any attempt at a rising of the slaves against their rebel masters would be put down, and put down with an iron hand.

Let it be observed too, that it has required the intervention of Congress, by repeated resolutions to prevent this General from converting the Army of the Potomac from acting as the slave dogs of the rebels, and that even now while our army are compelled to drink water from muddy swamps, and from the Pamunky river, forbidden by George B. McClellan to take pure water from the Rebel General LEE's well.

Let it be understood that Northern loyal soldiers, have been compelled by the orders of this same General, to keep guard over the property of a leading rebel, because of a previous understanding between the loyal, and the traitor General.

Bear in mind the fact that this General has, in deference to the slaveholding rebels, forbidden the singing of anti-slavery songs in his camp, and you will learn that this General's ideas of the demands of the hour are most miserably below the mark, and unfit for the place he fills.

Take another fact into account, General McClellan is at this moment the favorite General of the Richardsons, the Ben Woods, the Vallandighams, and the whole school of pro-slavery Buchanan politicians of the north, and that he is reported in the Richmond Dispatch, to have said that he hated to war upon Virginia, and that he would far rather war against Massachusetts.

This statement of the Richmond Dispatch in itself is not worth much, but if we find as I think we do find, in General McClellan's every movement an apparent reluctance to strike at Virginia rebels, we may well fear that his words have been no better than his deeds.

Again, take the battles fought by him and under his order, and in every instance the rebels have been able to claim a victory and to show as many prisoners and spoils taken as we.

At Ball's Bluff, McClellan's first battle on the Potomac, it is now settled, that our troops were marched up only to be slaughtered. Nine hundred and thirty of our brave northern soldiers were deliberately murdered, as much so as if they had each been stabbed, bayoneted, shot, or otherwise killed when asleep by some midnight assassin, for they were so ordered and handled, that they were perfectly harmless to their deadly foes, and helpless in their own defense.

Then the battle of Seven Pines, where General Casey's Division was pushed out like an extended finger four miles beyond the lines of our army, towards the rebels, as if for no other purpose than to be cut to pieces or captured by the rebels, and then the haste with which this same Division was censured by Gen. McClellan, are facts looking all the same way.

This is only one class of facts. They are not the only facts, nor the chief ones that shake my faith in the General of the Army of the Potomac.

Unquestionably, Time is the mightiest ally that the rebels can rely on. Every month they can hold out against the Government gives them power at home, and prestige abroad, and increases the probabilities of final success.

Time favors foreign intervention, time favors heavy taxation upon the loyal people, time favors reaction, and a clamor for peace. Time favors fevers, and pestilence, wasting and destroying our army. Therefore time, time is the great ally of the rebels.

Now I undertake to say that General McClellan has from the beginning so handled the Army of the Potomac as to give the rebels the grand advantage of time. From the time he took command of the Potomac army in August 1861 until now, he has been the constant cause of delay, and probably would not have moved when he did, but that he was compelled to move or be removed.

Then behold his movement. He moved upon Manassas when the enemy had been gone from there seven long days. When he gets there he is within sixty miles of Richmond.

Does he go on? Oh! No, but he just says hush, to the press and the people, I am going to do something transcendentally brilliant in strategy. Three weeks pass away, and knowing ones wink and smile as much as to say you will see something wonderful soon.

And so indeed we do; at the end of three weeks we find that General McClellan has actually marched back from Manassas to the Potomac, gotten together an endless number of vessels at a cost of untold millions, to transport his troops to Yorktown, where he is just as near to Richmond and not a bit nearer than he was just three weeks before, and where he is opposed by an army every way as strongly posted as any he could have met with by marching straight to Richmond from Manassas. Here we have two hundred and thirty thousand men moved to attack empty fortifications, and moved back again.

Now what is the state of facts concerning the nearly four months of campaign between the James and the York Rivers? The first is that Richmond is not taken, and in all the battles yet fought, the rebels have claimed them as victories.

We have lost between thirty and forty thousand men, and the general impression is that there is an equal chance that our army will be again repulsed before Richmond, and driven away.

You may not go the length that I do, in regard to Gen. McClellan, at this time, but I feel quite sure that this country will yet come to the conclusion that Geo. B. McClellan, is either a cold-blooded Traitor, or that he is an unmitigated military Impostor.

He has shown no heart in his conduct, except when doing something directly in favor of the rebels, such as guarding their persons and property and offering his service to suppress with an iron hand any attempt on the part of the slaves against their rebel masters.

Part 7-The Policy of the Administration

I come now to the policy of President Lincoln in reference to slavery. An Administration without a policy, is confessedly an administration without brains, since while a thing is to be done, it implies a known way to do it and he who professes his ability to do it, but cannot show how it is to be done, confesses his own imbecility.

I do not undertake to say that the present administration has no policy, but if it has, the people have a right to know what it is, and to approve or disapprove of it as they shall deem it wise or unwise.

Now the policy of an administration can be learned in two ways. The first by what it says, and the second by what it does, and the last is far more certain and reliable, than the first. It is by what President Lincoln has done in reference to slavery, since he assumed the reins of government that we are to know what he is likely to do, and deems best to do in the premises. We all know how he came into power.

He was elected and inaugurated as the representative of the anti-slavery policy of the Republican Party.

He had laid down and maintained the doctrine that Liberty and Slavery were the great antagonistic political elements in this country.

That the Union of these States could not long continue half free and half slave that they must in the end be all free or all slave.

In the conflict between these two elements he arrayed himself on the side of freedom, and was elected with a view to the ascendancy of free principles. Now what has been the tendency of his acts since he became Commander in chief of the army and navy?

I do not hesitate to say, that whatever may have been his intentions, the action of President Lincoln has been calculated in a marked and decided way to shield and protect slavery from the very blows which its horrible crimes have loudly and persistently invited.

He has scornfully rejected the policy of arming the slaves, a policy naturally suggested and enforced by the nature and necessities of the war.

He has steadily refused to proclaim, as he had the constitutional and moral right to proclaim, complete emancipation to all the slaves of rebels who should make their way into the lines of our army.

He has repeatedly interfered with, and arrested the anti-slavery policy of some of his most earnest and reliable generals.

He has assigned to the most important positions, generals who are notoriously pro-slavery and hostile to the party and principles which raised him to power.

He has permitted rebels to recapture their runaway slaves in sight of the capital.

He has allowed General Halleck, to openly violate the spirit of a solemn resolution by Congress forbidding the army of the United States to return the fugitive slaves to their cruel masters, and has evidently from the first submitted himself to the guidance of the half loyal slave States, rather than to the wise and loyal suggestions of those States upon which must fall, and have fallen, the chief expense and danger involved in the prosecution of the war.

It is from such action as this, that we must infer the policy of the Administration. To my mind that policy is simply and solely to reconstruct the union on the old and corrupting basis of compromise; by which slavery shall retain all the power that it ever had, with the full assurance of gaining more, according to its future necessities.

The question now arises, "Is such a reconstruction possible or desirable?"

To this I answer from the depths of my soul, no. Mr. Lincoln is powerful, Mr. Lincoln can do many things, but Mr. Lincoln will never see the day when he can bring back or charm back, the scattered fragments of the Union into the shape and form they stood when they were shattered by this slaveholding rebellion.

What does this policy of bringing back the unions imply?

It implies first of all, that the slave States will promptly and cordially, and without the presence of compulsory and extraneous force, co-operate with the free States under the very constitution, which they have openly repudiated, and attempted to destroy.

It implies that they will allow and protect the collection of the revenue in all their ports.

It implies the regular election of the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives and the prompt and complete execution of all the Federal laws within their limits.

It implies that the rebel States will repudiate the rebel leaders, and that they shall be punished with perpetual political degradation.

So much it implies on the part of the rebel States. And the bare statement, with what we know of the men engaged in the war, is sufficient to prove the impossibility of their fulfillment while slavery remains.

What is implied by a reconstruction of the union on the old basis so far as concerns the northern and loyal States?

It implies that after all we have lost and suffered by this war to protect and preserve slavery, the crime and scandal of the nation, that we will as formerly act the disgusting part of the watch dogs of the slave plantation, that we will hunt down the slaves at the north, and submit to all the arrogance, bluster, and pretension of the very men who have imperiled our liberties and baptized our soil with the blood of our best and bravest citizens.

Now I hold that both parties will reject these terms with scorn and indignation.

Having thus condemned as impossible and undesirable the policy which seems to be that of the administration you will naturally want to know what I consider to be the true policy to be pursued by the Government and people in relation to slavery and the war.

I will tell you: Recognize the fact, for it is the great fact, and never more palpable than at the present moment that the only choice left to this nation is abolition or destruction.

You must abolish slavery or abandon the union. It is plain that there can never be any union between the north and the south, while the south values slavery more than nationality.

A union of interest is essential to a union of ideas, and without this union of ideas, the outward form of the union will be but as a rope of sand.

Now it is quite clear that while slavery lasts at the south, it will remain hereafter as heretofore, the great dominating interest, overtopping all others, and shaping the sentiments, and opinions of the people in accordance with itself.

We are not to flatter ourselves that because slavery has brought great troubles upon the south by this war, that therefore the people of the south will be stirred up against it. If we can bear with slavery after the calamities it has brought upon us, we may expect that the south will be no less patient.

Indeed we may rationally expect that the south will be more devoted to slavery than ever. The blood and treasure poured out in its defense will tend to increase its sacredness in the eyes of southern people, and if slavery comes out of this struggle, and is retaken under the forms of old compromises, the country will witness a greater amount of insolence and bluster in favor of the slave system, than was ever shown before in or out of Congress.

But it is asked, how will you abolish slavery? You have no power over the system before the rebellion is suppressed, and you will have no right or power when it is suppressed. I will answer this argument when I have stated how the thing may be done.

The fact is there would be no trouble about the way, if the government only possessed the will. But several ways have been suggested.

One is a stringent Confiscation Bill by Congress.

Another is by a proclamation by the President at the head of the nation.

Another is by the commanders of each division of the army. Slavery can be abolished in any or all these ways.

There is plausibility in the argument that we cannot reach slavery until we have suppressed the rebellion. Yet it is far more true to say that we cannot reach the rebellion until we have suppressed slavery. For slavery is the life of the rebellion.

Let the loyal army but inscribe upon its banner, Emancipation and protection to all who will rally under it, and no power could prevent a stampede from slavery, such as the world has not witnessed since the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea.

I am convinced that this rebellion and slavery are twin monsters, and that they must fall or flourish together, and that all attempts at upholding one while putting down the other, will be followed by continued trains of darkening calamities, such as make this anniversary of our national Independence, a day of mourning instead of a day of transcendent joy and gladness.

But a proclamation of Emancipation, says one, would only be a paper order. I answer so is any order emanating from our Government.

The President's proclamation calling his countrymen to arms was a paper order.

The proposition to retake the property of the Federal Government in the Southern States was a paper order.

Laws fixing the punishment of traitors are paper orders.

All Laws, all written rules for the Government of the army and navy and people, are 'paper orders,' and would remain only such were they not backed up by force, still we do not object to them as useless, but admit their wisdom and necessity.

Then these paper orders carry with them a certain moral force which makes them in a large measure self-executing. I know of none which would possess this self-executing power in larger measure than a proclamation of Emancipation.

It would act on the rebel masters, and even more powerfully upon the slaves.

It would lead the slaves to run away and the masters to Emancipate, and thus put an end to slavery.

The conclusion of the whole matter is this: The end of slavery and only the end of slavery is the end of the war, the end of secession, the end of disunion, and the return of peace, prosperity and unity to the nation.

Whether Emancipation comes from the North or from the South, from Jefferson Davis or from Abraham Lincoln, it will come alike for healing of the nation, for slavery is the only mountain interposed to make enemies of the North and South.

Part 8-Conclusion

FELLOW CITIZENS: let me say in conclusion.

This slavery begotten and slavery sustained, and slavery animated war, has now cost this nation more than a hundred thousand lives, and more than five hundred millions of treasure.

It has weighed down the national heart with sorrow and heaviness, such as no speech can portray.

It has cast a doubt upon the possibility of liberty and self Government which it will require a century to remove.

The question is, shall this stupendous and most outrageous war be finally and forever ended? Or shall it be merely suspended for a time, and again revived with increased and aggravated fury in the future?

Can you afford a repetition of this costly luxury?

Do you wish to transmit to your children the calamities and sorrows of to-day? The way to either class of these results is open to you.

By urging upon the nation the necessity and duty of putting an end to slavery, you put an end to the war, and put an end to the cause of the war, and make any repetition of it impossible.

But, just take back the pet monster again into the bosom of the nation, proclaim an amnesty to the slaveholders, let them have their slaves, and command your services in helping to catch and hold them, and so sure as like causes will ever produce like effects, you will hand down to your children here, and hereafter, born and to be born all the horrors through which you are now passing.

I have told you of great national opportunities in the past[;] a greater [one] than any in the past is the opportunity of the present.

If now we omit the duty it imposes, steel our hearts against its teachings, or shrink in cowardice from the work of to-day, your fathers will have fought and bled in vain to establish free Institutions, and American Republicanism will become a hissing and a by-word to a mocking earth.

Appendix

Frederick Douglass Biography

Frederick Douglass (1818 -1895) was the most prominent African-American leader of the 19th century. A fiery orator, dedicated editor, bestselling author, and presidential advisor, Douglass crusaded for human rights as an abolitionist, a strong advocate for women's suffrage, and a voice for social justice. Douglass was born into slavery as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey to an African slave mother and white father in Tuckahoe, Maryland in the month of February, 1818. He was separated from his mother when he was only a few weeks old and was raised by his grandparents.

When he was six years old, his grandmother took him, without warning, to his master's plantation to live. At age eight, he was sent to live with his master's relatives, Hugh and Sophia Auld. Sophia started to teach him to read and write as a child, in violation of state laws. He escaped slavery at age 20, married, and later moved to Massachusetts. He adopted the name "Douglass" and began to speak on behalf of abolitionism. Eventually, he embarked upon a three year speaking tour of northern cities, building public support for the abolitionist cause, by educating audiences about the evils of slavery with his powerful rhetorical style of speech.

In 1845, Douglass wrote his first autobiography and called it Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. Written to address the righteousness of the abolitionists' movement, this moving book told of his struggle to gain his freedom. He identified his owner by name, and his book became a national bestseller. With his identity revealed, Douglass was forced into exile in England in order to avoid capture by slave traders. In 1846, British antislavery friends purchased his freedom.

Douglass returned to the United States in 1847, moved to Rochester, New York, and established his own abolitionist newspaper called The North Star. Douglass' children helped publish the four-page newspaper. As the abolitionist movement gained strength in the 1850s, Douglass became more directly involved with the Underground Railroad. Harriet Tubman and other "conductors" often stayed at Douglass' home en route to Canada.

The notorious Dred Scott decision of 1857, in which the Supreme Court ruled that black people had no rights under the United States Constitution, infuriated Douglass and deepened the national debate over slavery.

Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in 1860. In 1861, the Civil War began after eleven southern states seceded from the Union in part as a response to Lincoln's promise to limit slavery's expansion. Douglass perceived the Civil War as a moral crusade to free slaves and establish a true democracy. During the war, Douglass traveled around the country calling on Lincoln to end the

practice of slavery and enroll black troops in the war effort. After Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, Douglass helped recruit black soldiers for the Union Army.

Douglass continued to advise Lincoln throughout the Civil War, and advocated for constitutional amendments that would ban slavery and provide blacks a legally guaranteed place in society. With the North's victory, Douglass saw these goals realized: The 13th Amendment banned slavery, the 14th Amendment gave citizenship to everyone born in the United States, and the 15th Amendment granted voting rights to males over the age of 21. (Women did not gain the right to vote until 1920 with the passage of the 19th Amendment.)

After the war, Douglass held a number of government posts. President Rutherford Hayes appointed Douglass the Federal Marshal of Washington D.C. in 1877. In 1889, Douglass became Minister to Haiti, a position he held for two years. During the 1890s, Douglass returned to the lecture circuit in order to condemn lynchings occurring across the country and "Jim Crow" laws that limited the rights of blacks, both part of a new wave of racism sweeping the South. Douglass died on February 20, 1895, after attending a meeting advocating women's suffrage.

Frederick Douglass sought to embody three keys for success in life:

- Believe in yourself
- Educate yourself and prepare for any opportunity
- Use the power of spoken and written language to effect positive change for yourself and society

Douglass said, "What is possible for me is possible for you." By taking these keys to leading a successful life and making them his own, Frederick Douglass created a life of honor, respect, and compassion that would never have been possible without the fundamental liberties he worked so tirelessly to attain. Frederick Douglass' life of remarkable service is a testimony to the influence that one person can have on the lives of others.

The Missouri Compromise

The Missouri Compromise was an agreement passed in 1820 between the pro-slavery and anti-slavery factions in the United States Congress, involving primarily the regulation of slavery in the western territories. It prohibited slavery in the former Louisiana Territory north of the parallel 36°30′ north except within the boundaries of the proposed state of Missouri. Prior to the agreement, the House of Representatives had refused to accept this compromise, and a conference committee was appointed.

A bill to enable the people of the Missouri Territory to draft a constitution and form a government preliminary to admission into the Union came before the House of Representatives in Committee of the Whole, on February 13, 1819. James Tallmadge of New York offered an amendment (named the

Tallmadge Amendment), that forbade further introduction of slaves into Missouri, and mandated that all children of slave parents born in the state after its admission should be free at the age of 25. The committee adopted the measure and incorporated it into the bill as finally passed on February 17, 1819, by the house. The United States Senate refused to concur with the amendment, and the whole measure was lost.

During the following session (1819–1820), the House passed a similar bill with an amendment, introduced on January 26, 1820 by John W. Taylor of New York, allowing Missouri into the union as a slave state. The question had been complicated by the admission in December of Alabama, a slave state, making the number of slave and free states equal. In addition, there was a bill in passage through the House (January 3, 1820) to admit Maine as a free state.

Jefferson Davis

Jefferson Finis Davis (June 3, 1808 – December 6, 1889) was an American statesman and leader of the Confederacy during the American Civil War, serving as President of the Confederate States of America for its entire history. Davis was born in Kentucky to Samuel and Jane (Cook) Davis. After attending Transylvania University, Davis graduated from West Point and fought in the Mexican–American War as a colonel of a volunteer regiment. He served as the United States Secretary of War under Democratic President Franklin Pierce. Both before and after his time in the Pierce administration, he served as a Democratic U.S. Senator representing the State of Mississippi. As a senator, he argued against secession, but did agree that each state was sovereign and had an unquestionable right to secede from the Union.

On February 9, 1861, after Davis resigned from the United States Senate, he was selected to be the provisional President of the Confederate States of America; he was elected without opposition to a six-year term that November. During his presidency, Davis took charge of the Confederate war plans but was unable to find a strategy to stop the larger, more powerful and better organized Union. His diplomatic efforts failed to gain recognition from any foreign country, and he paid little attention to the collapsing Confederate economy, printing more and more paper money to cover the war's expenses. Historians have criticized Davis for being a much less effective war leader than his Union counterpart Abraham Lincoln, which they attribute to Davis being overbearing, controlling, and overly meddlesome, as well as being out of touch with public opinion, and lacking support from a political party (since the Confederacy had no political parties). His preoccupation with detail, reluctance to delegate responsibility, lack of popular appeal, feuds with powerful state governors, inability to get along with people who disagreed with him, neglect of civil matters in favor of military ones—all these shortcomings worked against him.

After Davis was captured on May 10, 1865, he was charged with treason. Although he was not tried, he was stripped of his eligibility to run for public office; Congress posthumously lifted this restriction in 1978,

89 years after his death. While not disgraced, he was displaced in Southern affection after the war by the leading Confederate general Robert E. Lee. However, many Southerners empathized with his defiance, refusal to accept defeat, and resistance to Reconstruction. Over time, admiration for his pride and ideals made him a Civil War hero too many Southerners, and his legacy became part of the foundation of the postwar New South. [6] In spite of his former status as the president of the Confederacy, Davis began to encourage reconciliation by the late 1880s, telling Southerners to be loyal to the Union.

General George McCellan

George Brinton McClellan (December 3, 1826 – October 29, 1885) was a major general during the American Civil War and the Democratic Party candidate for President in 1864. He organized the famous Army of the Potomac and served briefly (November 1861 to March 1862) as the general-in-chief of the Union Army. Early in the war, McClellan played an important role in raising a well-trained and organized army for the Union. Although McClellan was meticulous in his planning and preparations, these characteristics may have hampered his ability to challenge aggressive opponents in a fast-moving battlefield environment. He chronically overestimated the strength of enemy units and was reluctant to apply principles of mass, frequently leaving large portions of his army unengaged at decisive points.

McClellan's Peninsula Campaign in 1862 ended in failure, with retreats from attacks by General Robert E. Lee's smaller Army of Northern Virginia and an unfulfilled plan to seize the Confederate capital of Richmond. His performance at the bloody Battle of Antietam blunted Lee's invasion of Maryland, but allowed Lee to eke out a precarious tactical draw and avoid destruction, despite being outnumbered. As a result, McClellan's leadership skills during battles were questioned by President Abraham Lincoln, who eventually removed him from command, first as general-in-chief, then from the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln offered this famous evaluation of McClellan: "If he can't fight himself, he excels in making others ready to fight." Indeed, McClellan was the most popular of that army's commanders with its soldiers, who felt that he had their morale and well-being as paramount concerns.

General McClellan also failed to maintain the trust of Lincoln, and proved to be frustratingly derisive of, and insubordinate to, his commander-in-chief. After he was relieved of command, McClellan became the unsuccessful Democratic Party nominee opposing Lincoln in the 1864 presidential election. His party had an anti-war platform, promising to end the war and negotiate with the Confederacy, which McClellan was forced to repudiate, damaging the effectiveness of his campaign. He served as the 24th Governor of New Jersey from 1878 to 1881. He eventually became a writer, defending his actions during the Peninsula Campaign and the Civil War.

The majority of modern authorities assess McClellan as a poor battlefield general. However, a small faction of historians maintain that he was a highly capable commander, whose reputation suffered unfairly at the hands of pro-Lincoln partisans who needed a scapegoat for the Union's setbacks. His legacy

therefore defies easy categorization. After the war, Ulysses S. Grant was asked to evaluate McClellan as a general. He replied, "McClellan is to me one of the mysteries of the war."

Clement Vallandigham

Clement Laird Vallandigham (1820–1871) was an Ohio unionist of the Copperhead faction of anti-war, pro-Confederate Democrats during the American Civil War. He served as a U.S. representative from Ohio from 1858-1863. He grew to infamy as a sharp critic of Abraham Lincoln, and faced a military court for "uttering disloyal sentiments", and was sentenced to prison. He was then exiled to the Confederate States, where he then left and entered Canada. While in Canada, he attempted to run for the office of governor of Ohio. After the war, Vallandigham returned to Ohio and again practiced law. During a trial, Vallandigham accidentally shot himself, and died of his wounds.

Benjamin Wood (1820-1900)

New York Daily News

President Lincoln attempted to use public patronage to recruit Democratic allies. But, noted historian Allan Nevins, "he could be as hostile to enemies like New York Peace Democrat Ben Wood as they were to him..." Benjamin Wood was the brother of prominent New York politician Fernando Wood and was Fernando's sometime partner in the shipping business. Wood bought the New York Daily News in 1861 and immediately turned it into the newspaper voice of Fernando's Democratic political organization and an anti-war voice for Peace Democrats. Bill Kauffman wrote in American Enterprise that "Ben was no less colorful than Fernando: He ran lotteries, wrote a pro-secession novel, and helped inspire the city's anti-draft riots." And he was not caught up — as many other Democrats were — in the pro-War fervor that characterized the weeks after the bombardment of Fort Sumter on April 12.

When the New York State Democratic Committee met in early August, Benjamin Wood was a rare voice against rallying behind the Union movement. The newspaper was always anti-Lincoln and frequently blatantly racist. Even before Wood bought, the Daily News editorialized in the 1860 campaign if that Mr. Lincoln was victorious, "we shall find negroes among us thicker than blackberries swarming everywhere." The anti-Lincoln rhetoric continued to flow freely at the Daily News in the early months of the Civil War. " insurrections, wholesale confiscations and authorized anarchy as a necessary portion of the immediate future."

General Henry Halleck

Henry Wager Halleck (January 16, 1815 – January 9, 1872) was a United States Army officer, scholar, and lawyer. A noted expert in military studies, he was known by a nickname that became derogatory, "Old Brains." He was an important participant in the admission of California as a state and became a

successful lawyer and land developer. Early in the American Civil War, he was a senior Union Army commander in the Western Theater and then served for almost two years as general-in-chief of all U.S. armies. He was "kicked upstairs" to be chief of staff of the Army when Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, Halleck's former subordinate in the West, whose battlefield victories did much to advance Halleck's career, replaced him in 1864 as general-in-chief for the remainder of the war.

Halleck was a cautious general who believed strongly in thorough preparations for battle and in the value of defensive fortifications over quick, aggressive action. He was a master of administration, logistics, and the politics necessary at the top of the military hierarchy, but exerted little effective control over field operations from his post in Washington, D.C. President Abraham Lincoln once described him as "little more than a first rate clerk."