

# Emancipation 1861 to 1863

## 1st Place, Best Lesson Plan Contest 2011-2012

*By Karen Richey*

Tracing shifts in public opinion from 1861 to 1863

**Grade Level:** Middle School and High School

**Approximate length of time:** The lesson can be conducted in two to three class periods; one to two days for document analysis and an additional day for completing the writing task.

### **Goals:**

Students will gain an understanding of how ideas about emancipation evolved as the American Civil War entered its second year.

### **Objectives:**

Students will be able to discuss how opinions (as reflected in articles from the Sacramento Bee and the Sacramento Daily Union) regarding emancipation changed from 1861 when the American Civil War began, to 1863 when the Emancipation Proclamation took effect.

### **Materials Used:**

All materials used can be downloaded with the lesson plan on the right side of the page.

Historical Context

Key Terms

*Sacramento Bee* primary source documents A-F

Primary source analysis questions

Writing task grading rubric

### **Guiding Question:**

How did Sacramentans' opinions about emancipation change from 1861 to 1863?

### **Procedure:**

**Vocabulary Development**

A list of key terms has been provided. Guide students in a careful reading of each document. Students should first use context clues as they read to discover the meaning of important words and phrases. Students may also use classroom resources such as a dictionary, a thesaurus, or their textbook to define important terms.

### **Document Analysis and Discussion**

Students read each document independently and attempt to answer the questions that follow. The analysis (and a second read-through) can be done in pairs, within small groups or as a whole-class activity. The teacher should closely monitor student understanding and continuously return to the guiding question, “How did Sacramentans’ opinions about emancipation change from 1861 to 1863?”

### **Assessment**

Students write a paragraph explaining how opinions about emancipation changed from 1861 to 1863 when the Emancipation Proclamation took effect. In order to successfully complete the task, students must use a citation from Document A and compare it to a citation from at least two of the other documents. A suggested rubric follows the documents.

### **Modifications:**

Write a newspaper article, journal entry, or letter describing Sacramento’s Emancipation celebrations. Write from the perspective of someone living at the time.

## **Historical Context**

According to the 1860 census, San Francisco and Sacramento counties contained almost one-third of California's African American population, yet fewer than 500 African Americans lived in Sacramento at this time.<sup>1</sup> One will not find the voices or opinions of the African American community represented in either of Sacramento's daily newspapers. The newspapers' coverage of emancipation centered on its impact upon the war, not about the individual men and women affected. "Colored residents" are mentioned; newspapers reported that the colored residents celebrated emancipation, a colored military company was organized in San Francisco, but these residents were never identified by name.<sup>2</sup>

Historians now agree that slavery was a primary cause of the war. Emancipation, however, was not a primary goal of most of the loyal white citizens when the war began. Preserving the union and maintaining a democratic republic were the reasons most Union men gave for fighting in 1861.<sup>3</sup> In the fall of that year, the *Sacramento Union* noted that abolitionists who anticipated the end of slavery "as one of the consequences of this rebellion...are doomed to disappointment."<sup>4</sup> There was considerable public debate about the United States' policy toward slaves as Union commanders moved into Confederate territory and slaves left their masters for the safety of Union lines. Questions of constitutionality and the original goals of the war were overridden by the immediate question of what the government's policy should be toward these individuals christened "contrabands" of war by Union General Benjamin Butler. As the war progressed, Unionists began to see emancipation as both of tool for winning the war and a necessary step in ensuring the future survival of the Union. The evolution in Unionists' thinking regarding emancipation can be traced through the newspapers' coverage of slavery, emancipation, and the enrollment of African American soldiers in the Union army.

---

<sup>1</sup>Rudolph M. Lapp, "The Negro in Gold Rush California." *The Journal of Negro History* 49, no. 2, (April 1964): 84.

<sup>2</sup>"New Emancipation Day," *Sacramento Daily Union*, December 29, 1862, page 3, column 1. "Colored Company," *Sacramento Daily Union*, June 22, 1863, page 4, column 3.

<sup>3</sup>See the following for discussions of emancipation and Union; David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001), Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War*, and Chandra Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> *Sacramento Daily Union*, October 5, 1861, page 2, column 2.

## **Key Terms**

abolition

subjugate

military necessity

Secessionists

decorum

emancipation

annihilate

“pregnant with consequences”

treason

## Focus Activity

Use the following excerpts from an article in the *Sacramento Daily Union* to engage students' interest in the topic of emancipation. The article makes some provocative statements that should generate discussion.

### Document A

We assume that the total abolition of African slavery in the United States is socially and physically an impossibility. Its attempt would result in the annihilation of the black race. The two races cannot live together upon terms of equality, and as a natural and inevitable consequence, the superior would subjugate, reduce the inferior again to slavery, or totally annihilate it. To liberate four millions of ignorant and half-civilized negroes among those who formerly owned them, could not terminate otherwise than in a war of extermination. To remove them from the coun-

Therefore, those who anticipate the abolition of slavery as one of the consequences of this rebellion, if there are any such in the country, are, in our judgment, doomed to disappointment. It may, and probably will, result in the total destruction of the political power of slavery in the United States. It will never again rise to a position, as a political element, which will enable it, as in times past, to control and direct the policy and destiny of the nation.

source: *Sacramento Daily Union*, October 5, 1861

Help the students analyze Document A using the following questions;

1. What strong descriptive words are used in the source?
2. When and where was the source written or produced?
3. What type of document is this?
4. Is this source a primary or secondary source?
5. What was different about this time from ours?
6. Who is the intended audience of the source?
7. What are the *Sacramento Union* editors' opinions about emancipation in 1861?

### Task

Students will analyze each of the following documents and compare them with Document A. Each document will be examined for evidence of how white citizens' opinions about emancipation changed from 1861 to 1863.

### **Document B**

The announcement that General Hunter has issued a proclamation in which he proclaims martial law in his military department and freedom to slaves as a military necessity, is a fact pregnant with consequences. It was unex-

That every rebel in the South who has taken up arms against the National Government ought to lose his negro property is a proposition few loyal men will dispute, and if the fight continues for a year or two longer—or until the issue is presented of the Union without slavery or disunion with slavery, the Union will be maintained and slavery will perish. But be-

effected in a century of agitation. The Secessionists have proved the most terrible of Abolitionists; they are destroying that kind of property at the rate of hundreds weekly. The very men who would have destroyed the Union, if in their power, to protect, as they claimed, the institution of slavery, have forced the nation into a war which has nearly destroyed the value of that kind of property. It is stated by telegraph

source: *Sacramento Daily Union*, May 19, 1862

## Document B: Analysis Questions

1. When and where was the source written or produced?
2. What type of document is this?
3. Is this source a primary or secondary source?
4. What was different about this time from ours?
5. Who is the intended audience of the source?
6. How is this source different from Document A?
7. Why might the length of the war determine the fate of slavery in the United States?
8. What opinions regarding emancipation do the *Union*'s editors express in May of 1862? How can you use this source to answer the question, "How did Sacramentans' opinions about emancipation change from 1861 to 1863?"

## Document C

The main feature of the news by telegraph from the East is the proclamation by President Lincoln. Sixteen months after the inauguration of the rebellion, while the sound of the enemy's cannon is heard in the vicinity of the National Capital, and the rebels are exultingly proclaiming that the institution of slavery is the chief support of the revolutionary movement, the decree is issued, in the exercise of the war power, which makes the penalty of persistence in treason the abolishment of slavery. In addition to this announcement, we have the assurance that the Confiscation law is to be fully enforced, and a strict compliance with the new article of war, forbidding the return of fugitive slaves to their masters by persons in the military and naval service of the United States, will be required. If aught had been needed to

source: *Sacramento Daily Union*, September 24, 1862

### Document C: Analysis Questions

1. When and where was the source written or produced?
2. What type of documents is this?
3. Is this source a primary or secondary source?
4. What was different about this time from ours?
5. Who is the intended audience of the source?
6. How is this source different from Documents A and B?
7. What opinions regarding emancipation do the *Union*'s editors express in September of 1862? How can you use this source to answer the question, "How did Sacramentans' opinions about emancipation change from 1861 to 1863?"



## Document D

NEW EMANCIPATION DAY.—We are informed that the colored citizens of Sacramento have resolved to celebrate the coming New Year's Day, in honor of the President's proclamation of emancipation, which is to go into effect on that day. What the celebration will be, we cannot say. A meeting recently held was about equally divided between a festival (alias a supper and dance) and "preaching and praying" in the church on Seventh street. Whether victory will perch on the banners of the extreme right or the left wing, or whether, as on the first of August last, there will be a "double-headed" celebration, time will determine.

source: *Sacramento Daily Union*, December 29, 1862

### Document D: Analysis Questions

1. When and where was the source written or produced?
2. What type of document is this?
3. Is this source a primary or secondary source?
4. What was different about this time from ours?
5. Who is the intended audience of the source?
6. How is this source different from the other sources?
7. How can you use this source to answer the question, "How did Sacramentans' opinions about emancipation change from 1861 to 1863?"

## Document E

PROCLAMATION SALUTES.—At eleven o'clock A. M. on New Year's Day a salute of one hundred guns was fired on the levee, between J and K streets, as an indorsement of the anticipated proclamation of President Lincoln, emancipating the slaves of the secession States. The brass six-pounder recently brought up from Benicia was used for the purpose. A salute had been fired with the same gun at midnight at Camp Union to welcome in the new year. Although we have not as yet any information direct of the proclamation having been issued, it will be seen by the telegraphic intelligence this morning that there is but little room for doubt that the President has boldly and manfully redeemed the great pledge made to his countrymen three months ago, and stricken a direct and fatal blow at the cause of all our national troubles.

source: *Sacramento Daily Union*, January 3, 1863

### Document E: Analysis Questions

1. When and where was the source written or produced?
2. What type of document is this?
3. Is this source a primary or secondary source?
4. What was different about this time from ours?
5. Who is the intended audience of the source?
6. How is this source different from Document A?
7. What opinions regarding emancipation do the *Union*'s editors express in January of 1863? How can you use this source to answer the question, "How did Sacramentans' opinions about emancipation change from 1861 to 1863?"

## Document F

**CHEERING THE PROCLAMATION**—On Saturday night, when the crowd of residents and strangers who were waiting in the reading room of the Orleans for the extra had learned its contents a F.F. Fargo arose and proposed three cheers for the proclamation. They were given with huzzas of joy, which welled up loudly from the public heart, the finest chords of which had been so delicately yet so powerfully touched. In two minutes thereafter we heard a young man, who is a stranger here, say in private conversation to a friend, “What a change! If four years ago, any man had dared, in this room and in this crowd, to make such a proposition, he would have been kicked from the house and probably thrown from the river. Now every man rejoices at it – at least no one objects, and I did not see any who refused to cheer. And war has made all this change.” We may also state in this connection, that the colored population were deeply moved by it, and kept up their Saturday night’s rejoicings to a late-hour in many places, observing the utmost decorum.

source: *Sacramento Bee*, January 5, 1863

## Document F: Analysis Questions

1. When and where was the source written or produced?
2. What type of document is this?
3. Is this source a primary or secondary source?
4. What was different about this time from ours?
5. Who is the intended audience of the source?
6. How is this source different from Document A?
7. How can you use this source to answer the question, “How did Sacramentans’ opinions about emancipation change from 1861 to 1863?”

## Writing Task

Write a paragraph describing how opinions about emancipation changed from 1861 when the American Civil War began to 1863 when the Emancipation Proclamation took effect. Use information from Document A as evidence of how Sacramento's white citizens were thinking about emancipation in 1861. Then, use evidence from at least two other documents to show how thinking about emancipation changed as the war continued.

Rubric

Category	Mastery	Proficient	Basic	Below Basic
Organization	Paragraph contains an introduction that includes a background, definition, and thesis. Sentences are well developed and organized with evidence that supports thesis	Paragraph contains most elements of an introduction that includes a background, definition and thesis. Sentences are mostly well developed with evidence that supports thesis.	Paragraph may lack elements of an introduction. Sentences are recognizable but may not be well developed and may not support thesis. Organization and development is adequate.	Paragraph lacks elements of an introduction. May lack thesis. Sentences may not be recognizable or are poorly organized and developed.
Documents	Uses Document A and 2 other documents (B, C, or E) effectively to support thesis. Documents are correctly cited.	Uses Document A and at least 1 other document (B, C, or E) somewhat effectively and mostly accurately. Cites documents accurately.	Contains limited reference to documents. Interpretation may be inaccurate or irrelevant to thesis. Citations missing or inaccurate.	Make no reference to documents or interpretation shows a lack of familiarity with documents.
Analysis	Demonstrates analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of evidence. Provides logical analysis of evidence to support thesis.	Shows some analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of evidence. Includes some analysis of evidence with limited insight.	Limited analysis. Analysis may be irrelevant to argument.	No analysis. Provides a summary or retelling of events.
Mechanics	No grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors	Few grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors	Several grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors	Many grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors.

## Sources

### Timeline of Events Related to Emancipation

source: Freedmen and Southern Society Project, "Chronology of Emancipation during the Civil War." University of Maryland. <http://www.history.umd.edu/Freedmen/chronol.htm> (accessed March 21, 2012)

Newspaper articles from the Sacramento Bee and Sacramento Union come from the collections of the Center for Sacramento History. Senior Archivist Patricia Johnson supervised my research at the Center and gave me permission to use the articles in the lesson plan I am submitting.

Patricia J. Johnson, Senior Archivist Center for Sacramento History  
916-808-7074  
[pjohnson@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:pjohnson@cityofsacramento.org)