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“THE BALLOT IS STRONGER THAN THE BULLET”: THE ISSUE OF RACE IN
THE 1864 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN

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ABSTRACT

The election of 1864, though of utmost importance to the Union's ultimate success in the Civil War and the existence of the United States, is not a topic often discussed in American historiography. Even when historians, particularly William F. Zornow, do write of the election, they often do not put emphasis on some of the most significant and controversial issues of the time, race and slavery; others, like David E. Long, seem to put too much emphasis on the topics, seeing slavery as the most important issue in the election campaign. In order to determine the true role of race and slavery rhetoric in the 1864 presidential election campaign, one examined letters, speeches, and other documents written, given, and distributed by both parties during the campaign. By doing so, it can be concluded that race and slavery, though included in many of these sources, were not pertinent issues for either party – but particularly the Republicans – in their attempts to influence voters and win the election.

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Chapter 1 - The Question at Hand: Zornow vs. Long

Abraham Lincoln and the 1864 presidential election campaign is a topic often discussed and analyzed in American historiography, with topics ranging from the votes of soldiers in the field to the role of compromise with the South. One topic visibly missing from most of the literature, however, is race, that issue that had torn apart the nation for so long. Given the importance placed on this election and the sheer mass of slavery and race issues included within other historical writings focusing on the time period, one is hard-pressed to understand why race was not more of a focus in studies of the election. Regardless of the answer, one realizes that there is a serious gap in the historiography, a gap that can attempt to be filled by first looking to two important works about the election campaign: *Lincoln and the Party Divided*, written by William F. Zornow in 1954, and *The Jewel of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln's Re-election and the End of Slavery*, written by David E. Long in 1994. Through studying the issues both authors deemed important to the election campaign, one will be able to reconcile the differences in opinion of the authors and begin to uncover what questions must be answered in order to discover the role – or lack thereof – of race rhetoric in the 1864 campaign, and the reasons for its exclusion.

Before studying the information and interpretations within William F. Zornow's *Lincoln and the Party Divided*, one must first understand the importance of the time in which it was written. When this book was published, much of the literature that delves more deeply into the election and the issues surrounding it had not yet been written; the theories about the campaign that had been around since the election – namely, theories

that did not involve race – were still the ones that were the most accepted and the most discussed. Whether this was because historians did not want to discuss the issue, or did not think that it was important enough, one cannot know. Regardless of motive, however, it is important to note that this book – and particularly its exclusion of race – was not unique in the 1950s, but instead representative of a larger pattern present in much of the other historiography.¹

In Zornow’s book, race is not mentioned as a deciding factor in the election campaign of either candidate. The author first writes about these issues specifically in his chapter “The October States,” where he discusses the October state elections in Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, which were important because “it was generally felt that whichever party carried the October elections in these three states would also emerge triumphant in the presidential election in November.”² According to Zornow, the issues most used and discussed in campaigning for October elections were the votes of the soldiers, the war – particularly the success or failure of the Union Army in specific battles – and alleged domestic treason. Because the results of these elections were seen as bellwethers for the results of the coming November elections, the issues deemed important to the elections can also be seen as issues that would be important to the larger presidential election.

In the other chapter in which Zornow discusses major issues in the campaign, the author once again lists soldier votes as a major focal point of the election; though “only in Connecticut and New York did the soldiers’ vote affect the outcome of the election,” the

¹ David E. Long, *The Jewel of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln’s Re-election and the End of Slavery* (Stackpole Books, 1994), xvii.

² William F. Zornow, *Lincoln and the Party Divided* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), 190.

author writes of both parties putting a large emphasis on it.³ Zornow also cites those ideas that were pertinent to the lives of urban laborers as important issues in the campaign.⁴ According to him, Lincoln understood the importance of appealing to these urban laborers, and wrote a document in March 1864 to the Workingmen's Association of New York in relation to the issues most pertinent to them, focusing particularly on showing the workers "that the South was waging a war which was basically an attack upon the rights of all workingmen."⁵ Republicans also spoke greatly of a struggle between aristocracy and democracy, with Southern planters characterized in campaign literature as the aristocracy; mention of this struggle, however, was apparently brought up only occasionally in the campaign. Speaking of Southern planters in these terms rather than in terms of their roles in slavery does not seem to be an intentional way to evade the slavery issue. Instead, it appears as if Zornow believed that it was much more important to note the relation of Southern planters to labor rights rather than to slavery; the concern at this time was not the plight of African-Americans in slavery, but instead the "Slave Power" and the dangerous aristocracy it represented. The chapter also includes examples of Democratic appeals to laborers, showing that the issue was truly seen as influential and important in the campaign.

The final – and perhaps the most important – campaign issue discussed in *Lincoln and the Party Divided* was the ethnicity of the voters, with Zornow focusing on it in terms of which ethnic group voted for the candidate of which party. According to him, "the Irish and German [voters] seemed to have favored McClellan," but the Germans

³ Zornow, 202.

⁴ Zornow, 205.

⁵ Zornow, 205.

were nevertheless still targeted by the Republicans in their campaign.⁶ Zornow places special importance on the efforts of both parties – including publishing documents written in German and claiming that the current administration “was rigging draft quotas so that only Germans would have to go” – to win German votes, showing that he believed that both parties found the ethnicity of voters to be one of the most important factors in determining the election.⁷ One also realizes how important the author deemed ethnicity through his extended discussion of German support for Lincoln in 1860, even looking at specific counties in order to fully dissect the election results. Through studying *Lincoln and the Party Divided* and examining the issues Zornow deemed most important to the 1864 presidential election, one realizes that race was conspicuously absent in the author’s analysis.

In David E. Long’s book about the election, however, Long – while making some good points – may have gone too far in his analysis of the use of race in the 1864 election. Long’s *The Jewel of Liberty: Abraham Lincoln’s Re-election and the End of Slavery* offers a different perspective on the use of race, particularly by the Democrats, as a campaign tool in the 1864 election. According to the Preface, Long believed that “the 1864 election was the most important electoral event in American history,” yet had been, in a way, glossed over by historians in favor of discussing the Civil War.⁸ To him, the one historian that focused on this important election was William Zornow, whose work Long even used in writing his own book; however, Long said that Zornow – and all other historians of his generation – “portrayed slavery as unimportant in bringing about the

⁶ Zornow, 211.

⁷ Zornow, 211.

⁸ Long, xvii.

conflict and emancipation as an accidental and not-so-important result.”⁹ Historians of the later generation had much different interpretations of war issues, however, putting a much greater emphasis on the role of slavery rhetoric in influencing voters. Long is one of these historians, and focused on the various slavery-related issues and incidents that were present during Lincoln’s presidency and all the way up to the election.

One of these issues – perhaps the most telling one discussed by Long in his book – is the topic of miscegenation. In December 1863, a pamphlet entitled *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro*, appeared. The pamphlet, which was published without an author’s name, was at first sent only to “prominent antislavery leaders,” along with a letter requesting a response and opinion of the pamphlet and the issues discussed in it.¹⁰ Though one would initially believe that the pamphlet, because it was published and sent out by members of the Democratic Party, contained arguments against miscegenation and its alleged negative impacts, it actually contained quite the opposite. Instead of blatantly using the threat of miscegenation as a tool to incite fear of a Republican victory, the pamphlet discussed miscegenation, a term that it coined, in a positive light. Topics in what Long termed “a disorganized, nonsensical piece of work that rambled from one absurd generalization to another” included arguments about the mental, physical, and moral superiority of those of mixed race; about the inferiority of Irish-Americans to African-Americans and the suggestion that the two groups should intermarry; about the attraction of Southern white women to African-American men; and especially about the extreme importance of the

⁹ Long, xvii.

¹⁰ Long, 153.

1864 election both to the well-being of African-Americans and to the outcome of the Civil War.¹¹

This last point was very significant to the author of the pamphlet, particularly because, according to Long, “the goal of the government in prosecuting the war” was a divisive issue between Lincoln and the Radical members of his party, and the author wanted it to continue dividing the Republicans.¹² To Lincoln, emancipation was a part of war, a way for him to carry out what he saw as his main purpose as President: the restoration of the Union. The author of *Miscegenation* asserted instead that the war was undoubtedly being fought for the freedom of the blacks and the opportunity for the mixing of races, and that battles would continue after the Civil War if African-Americans were not given these opportunities at the war’s end. This idea was of the utmost importance to the overall goal of *Miscegenation*: the convincing of the Republican readers and voters both that the question of miscegenation should be a part of the 1864 election and that Lincoln and the Republicans were supporters of the issue and the proposals within the pamphlet.

By this time, one should be well aware that a loyal Republican was not the author of *Miscegenation*, as its rhetoric would lead him to believe. Instead, the pamphlet was written by David Goodman Croly and George Wakeman of the *New York World*, an anti-abolitionist, Democratic newspaper. These men obviously did not believe in what they wrote in it, but instead published it in order to “get leading Abolitionists and Republicans to endorse the principles in the tract and particularly to applaud the concept of

¹¹ Long, 155.

¹² Long, 156.

miscegenation as a means for improving the state of the nation.”¹³ They then planned to use the positive responses of these abolitionists and Republicans against them, publishing them within the Democratic press and greatly damaging 1864 Republican prospects, not only in the White House, but in all areas of government – in other words, creating a hoax. They knew that this press would damage prospects because of the highly emotional nature of the issue of race within American society at the time, as well as previous evidence of the effect of race issues on the American people. One especially important piece of previous evidence was the “strong rejection of Republican candidates in much of the lower North in the 1862 election”; the election came soon after Lincoln’s initial Emancipation Proclamation, showing that racial prejudice could have a huge effect within “the polling place.”¹⁴

The authors also knew that the praise of the plan and of the pamphlet would have negative impact on many American voters. The first aspect of the pamphlet, aside from the general racial prejudice, that the authors knew would rile up voters was the comparison of the Irish-Americans to the African-Americans. In *Miscegenation*, the authors asserted that the Irish had undergone decay, and were inferior to the African-Americans: “they [the Irish] were a more brutal race and lower in civilization than the negro...the Irish are coarse-grained, revengeful, unintellectual, with very few of the finer instincts of humanity...”¹⁵ They also asserted that the creation of progeny between the two would result in positive gains for the Irish, words that Croly, being an Irishman himself, knew would provoke fury within the Irish community, which was comprised of

¹³ Long, 154.

¹⁴ Long, 155.

¹⁵ Long, 156.

hundreds of thousands of voters. Another aspect of the pamphlet included to stir the passions of voters was the claim that Southern wives and daughters derived delight from being in the presence of their African-American slaves. Many of the racial prejudices against African-Americans stemmed from this notion, particularly from the fear of white men that their wives and daughters would be in physical contact with the slaves.

Knowing this, the authors made these statements about the attraction of white women to African-American men in order to take advantage of the prejudice and fear to defeat the Republicans in the election.

Though Croly and Wakeman published the pamphlet in an attempt to receive written abolitionist support for the policy of miscegenation and further undermine Lincoln's efforts to win the 1864 election, they received fewer responses than they had hoped. They did receive letters of support from abolitionists such as Lucretia Mott and Sarah and Angelina Grimké but only one letter, that from Dr. James McCune Smith, actually contained a positive response to miscegenation as a political plank on which the Republicans should run. They did not receive responses from the most important abolitionists; however, many abolitionists nevertheless brought much attention to the new term "miscegenation," and even helped the Democrats, though unknowingly, by advertising the pamphlet in their newspapers. In some of these papers, particularly in the *Anglo-African Review*, edited by Dr. McCune Smith, miscegenation was extolled as being an ideal subject for the Republican Party to advocate in the election; however, given the fact that Dr. McCune Smith was also one of the only abolitionists to respond enthusiastically to the proposed use of miscegenation as a tool to win the election, one must be careful in generalizing and assuming that the ideas within his paper were

representative of those within the other abolitionist papers. In fact, it was quite the opposite: “no other newspaper or periodical had expressed an opinion,” just as none of the other responding abolitionists had paid attention to or supported putting the idea of miscegenation into the party platform.¹⁶ With this lack of support came a waning of the idea of linking miscegenation to an important Republican, particularly Abraham Lincoln, and therefore losing him support in the election.

From the time of the release of *Miscegenation*, Croly, though one of the masterminds of the pamphlet, was strangely quiet on the subject; his newspaper, the *World*, was also quiet, not even mentioning the pamphlet or the term “miscegenation” – instead choosing to use “amalgamation,” the old term. Though one may not believe this lack of rhetoric within the newspaper about race to be important – after all, one has already established that many important people and newspapers during the election chose not to discuss race as part of the campaign, both because of other, more important issues and because of the taboo of the subject. However, the *World* was not one of those newspapers, and instead “throughout 1862-63 had reveled in racist rhetoric”; why, then, did Croly suddenly change his tune?¹⁷

Perhaps he did not, at least fully. Perhaps he simply changed his manner of petitioning and gaining indirect support for the Democrats: now, he attempted to use other important Democrats to his advantage, having them bring the issue to the forefront and keep the conflict alive. One of these Democrats was Ohio Congressman Samuel Sullivan Cox, who, on February 17, 1864 gave an impassioned speech on the floor of the House of Representatives regarding the book and the supposed plans of the Republicans

¹⁶ Long, 159.

¹⁷ Long, 161.

contained within it. In the speech, he spoke of the responses of the abolitionists to the pamphlet, saying that they “advertised and urged” the doctrine discussed within.¹⁸ He said that while the Republicans and abolitionists once denied that they favored citizenship and rights for African-Americans, it was now obvious that they did favor it, particularly when it was most advantageous to themselves. The most important statement of the speech, and the real crux of his argument, was his statement made in regards to what the publishing of the pamphlet supposedly meant about the Republican Party: “the party is moving steadily forward to perfect social equality of black and white, and can only end in this detestable doctrine of Miscegenation!”¹⁹ After this speech was made, it was widely circulated, starting with its publication in the Democratic newspaper *The Constitutional Union*; after the speech, the Democrats became energized once more, especially because they had a new issue through which perhaps – at least so Long believes – they could get support nationwide.

When examining the use of the miscegenation pamphlet and the incidents that resulted from the publishing of the pamphlet, one must not forget that the whole thing was meant to be an elaborate hoax. Though there is evidence that Cox knew that the pamphlet was a hoax, and that Croly and Wakeman were behind it, as well as that the men had knowingly written the pamphlet as a hoax, one can still view the incident as an important way to gauge the influence of race as an issue during the 1864 election. While the men intentionally created the pamphlet as a hoax, through the strategic points they chose to include – such as the comments about the Irish – as well as the sending of the pamphlet to important abolitionists, one would conclude that the men were not just

¹⁸ Long, 160.

¹⁹ Long, 161.

intending for this to be a practical joke, but instead wanted true political results. Cox, by giving the speech on the floor of the House, was not just playing into the hoax – though he knew that it was one – but instead was trying to inflame passions and cause political fervor and change. From this fact, one can confidently conclude that this incident was purposely used by some Democrats in order to try to bring race to the forefront of the campaign and make it an important election issue.

Though the Democrats did most of the talking regarding the subjects of race and miscegenation, some Republican rhetoric, particularly that used by Horace Greeley in a March issue of the New York *Tribune*, also helped stir the flames surrounding the issue. This rhetoric, though not intended to do so by Greeley and the Republicans, helped the Democrats by giving them exactly what they wanted: a response that made it appear as if the Republicans approved of miscegenation and agreed with the plan laid forth in the pamphlet. In Greeley’s editorial, he wrote of the recent emergence of an obsession with miscegenation, and the fact that the race prejudice present in the United States was “the result of a cruel and systematic degradation.”²⁰ In addition, he said that he believed that every man was made out of the same blood, and that no one had the right to stop a couple of mixed race from getting married.

This, of course, was exactly the response Croly and the Democrats wished for when they published the manuscript, and they wasted no time in attacking Greeley and the *Tribune*. Attacks came from many different newspapers: the *Daily News* said that miscegenation was now “doctrine and dogma of the Republican Party,” and even the Republican *New York Times* said that the *Tribune* supported and pushed miscegenation.

²⁰ Long, 64.

Not only did these papers lambaste the supposed views of the Republicans within the pamphlet, but they also printed various stories, some or all of which may also have been hoaxes, that attacked African-Americans and appealed to some of the same prejudices and fears as did *Miscegenation*. These stories, produced by both Democrats and Copperheads, ranged from stories of white abolitionist teachers giving birth to “mulatto babies,” an approved marriage between a white daughter of a farmer and an African-American laborer, the condoned marriage of society women to African-American men, the charge of a rape of a white woman by an African-American man, and more.²¹

Individual men, in addition to newspapers, also played a part in this outrageous rhetoric: Dr. John H. Van Evrie, in particular, was an outspoken figure during this time, publishing books such as *Subgenation: The Theory of the Normal Relations of the Races*, and subtitled *An Answer to Miscegenation*. According to Long, Van Evrie published this book as a response to the programs proposed in *Miscegenation*, and modeled his book, particularly its “half-truths, generalization, and illogical conclusions,” after the previous pamphlet.²² Among other statements in the book, Van Evrie said that slavery did not exist in the Southern states, because slavery could not exist between people of a “superior and inferior race, such as the white and black in the United States.”²³ He used this idea, as well as his idea of miscegenation, which was seen as Lincoln’s tool, as indicative of a monarchy, and subgenation as a democracy, to urge the Democrats to action in nominating a Democratic candidate who would push forward the idea of subgenation and democracy. As evidenced by the publishing of his book, Van Evrie attempted to make

²¹ Long, 166.

²² Long, 169.

²³ Long, 169.

racism an important part of the 1864 presidential campaign and tie the Republicans to miscegenation; it must be noted, however, that Van Evrie was hardly representative of the Democratic Party and its ideals as a whole. In fact, in Forrest Wood's *Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction*, the author spoke a great deal about Van Evrie's fanaticism. In particular, Wood called Van Evrie a bigot and described many of his actions, such as "contriving an elaborate scheme to prove that mulattoes became sterile after the fourth generation" and publishing books and pamphlets like *Negros and Negro "Slavery"* and "Free Negroism," that proved that he was a blatant racist and an extreme member of the party.²⁴

Like Van Evrie, the Democrats' "most important goal was Lincoln's defeat," which they attempted to carry out through the twisting of Lincoln's words into something that would rile up the voters and turn them against him and his party.²⁵ Perhaps unluckily for the Democrats, Lincoln had taken to avoiding any political speech or event that would appear to be partisan, leaving the Democratic Party very little rhetoric from which to work. Though this silence was a problem for the campaign plans of the Democrats, the party still found something to criticize by doing what they seemed to be able to do best in these circumstances – twisting seemingly unrelated words to fit their own interests and prejudices. Using a March 1864 written response by Lincoln to the New York Workingmen's Democratic Republican Association, the Democrats seized upon Lincoln's declaration that the war was not just about perpetuating slavery, but instead about the rights of all people who worked, saying that Lincoln was putting African-

²⁴ Forrest Wood, *Black Scare: The Racist Response to Emancipation and Reconstruction* (University of California Press, 1968), 66.

²⁵ Long, 170.

Americans and working people, particularly the Irish, in the same class. They took these ideas to mean that Lincoln had officially announced the doctrine of miscegenation: according to the New York *Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*, “the beastly doctrine of the intermarriage of black men with white women was being openly and publicly avowed and indorsed [sic] and encouraged by the President of the United States.”²⁶

Though the Democrats appeared to think that race was an important and powerful issue upon which to wage a campaign, through two important incidents that occurred later in the year, one would be led to believe that race was only brought up as an issue when it was convenient, and when there was nothing else upon which to lean. The first of these “incidents” was the waning – both in intensity and amount – of racist rhetoric during the summer of 1864. This was due to two things in particular: the lack of military progress within the war and the interparty battles between Radical and conservative members of the Republican Party. Both of these things, when written about by the Democrats, worked to undermine Republican chances in the election; additionally, at this time, the Democrats tried to tone down the rhetoric of race within their campaign in order to present themselves as the calm and stable party. The second incident that showed that the Democrats used race within their campaign only when it was convenient was the fall of Atlanta directly after the end of the Chicago Democratic Convention; because the people once again saw the Republicans in a positive light, the Democrats, particularly the Democratic Central Campaign Committee, began once again to speak of miscegenation. In particular, the committee published a leaflet called “Miscegenation and the Republican

²⁶ Long, 171.

Party,” which reprinted many of the ideas within *Miscegenation*, but with a greater focus on Lincoln’s supposed support of the idea.²⁷

Van Evrie also took part in this renewed race fervor, writing and releasing “Campaign Broadside No. 1 – The Miscegenation Record of the Republican Party” toward the end of the campaign; many other Democratic organizations also issued to voters racist publications, including *The Lincoln Catechism, An Argument on the Ethical Position of Slavery in the Social System, and Its Relation to the Politics of the Day*, and *A Voice From the Pit*, the last of which accused the Republican Party’s platform of advocating “Subjugation. Emancipation. Confiscation. Domination. Annihilation. Destruction, in order to produce Miscegenation!”²⁸ The re-emergence of these pamphlets, as well as the waning of race rhetoric as other problems emerged within the Republican Party, demonstrate the true strategy of Democrats when it came to using race within the 1864 presidential campaign: race was only a campaign issue when there was no other “dirt” to be dug on the Republicans, when the Democrats had no other plausible or influential route to take to get to the hearts and prejudices of American voters. Even had the Democrats attempted to use racist rhetoric while the Republicans were at their weakest, however, it does not appear as if there would have been enough success within this strategy to allow the party to defeat Lincoln, particularly because the president and his party seemed to be largely unaffected by any of the Democratic propaganda at the time.

Through examining both of these important works about the issues surrounding the 1864 election, one realizes that there is not nearly enough – or the right kind – of

²⁷ Long, 172.

²⁸ Long, 173.

literature analyzing the issues of race and slavery in the 1864 presidential election campaign. Though clearly an influential book, Zornow's *Lincoln and the Party Divided* never placed any importance on slavery as an issue on which to base any part of a campaign; Long's *The Jewel of Liberty*, on the other hand, seemed to make the issue of race *too* important. That is, he used every mention of race or slavery that occurred from Lincoln's first election campaign in 1860 until the 1864 campaign as a way to show just how important the issues were to the upcoming election and how prevalent they were in the campaign. Though he did give some very good examples – the miscegenation crisis, for instance – one is led to believe that had there really been as much use of slavery and race tactics as the author claimed, this would not have been the first book to include much of it. Therefore, what is lacking in the historiography surrounding the issues of race and slavery in the election is a thorough, bipartisan, and relatively moderate account and analysis of the amount and use of rhetoric regarding these issues; this will be accomplished using many different sources, particularly letters to and from Republican candidate Abraham Lincoln and Democratic candidate George McClellan, campaign pamphlets sent out by both parties, and speeches made by members of the parties.

Chapter 2: The Democratic Use of Race and Slavery

In examining the miscegenation hoax, one must keep in mind that when it occurred, the Democrats knew neither their presidential candidate nor their platform, and that by the time of the election, the incident had been all but forgotten. Therefore, one must look to Democratic speeches and documents released nearer to the election in order to determine the true use of race in the campaign; the party distributed the majority of their campaign rhetoric after the late August selection of George B. McClellan, Jr., former Civil War Union general, as Democratic candidate for president. The selection, which was made at the Chicago Democratic convention, held between August 29 and August 31, 1864, was met with opposition from anti-war Democrats: though McClellan accepted the nomination, he did not agree with the party's anti-war platform.²⁹ This opposition played a large role in the campaign – according to Zornow's "McClellan and Seymour in the Chicago Convention of 1864," the convention occurred amidst the presence of "a deep rift which had been developing in the Democratic Party for many months between the peace and war factions."³⁰ It may, in fact, even have been what ultimately lost McClellan the election. Perhaps even more importantly than the conflict's impact on the result of the election was its impact on the Democratic campaign, where its resolution often took precedence over any other issue.

²⁹ Mr. Lincoln's White House, "George B. McClellan," The Lincoln Institute and The Lehrman Institute, 3 Apr 2011

<<http://www.mrlincolnwhitehouse.org/inside.asp?ID=137&subjectID=2>>.

³⁰ William F. Zornow, "McClellan and Seymour in the Chicago Convention of 1864," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* Winter 1950: 282-295.

Though the Democrats were prone to bringing up issues of race and slavery when they felt it necessary, there was one place where these issues were conspicuously absent: within the Democratic Party platform. There were five resolutions in the platform, none of which remotely mentioned slavery, instead focusing on the cessation of the hostilities of the war, the aim of the Democratic Party to preserve the Union and the rights of the states, the support the party had for the soldiers currently fighting in the war, and other seemingly minor matters.³¹ There were many possible reasons why slavery was not included; regardless of reason, however, the lack of slavery rhetoric in the platform, given the Democrats' usual willingness to employ it when they deemed it necessary, is significant.

Though some – particularly those members of the Democratic Party who were more willing to bring slavery into the mix – would have seen this exclusion of slavery as an oversight, others believed that it had some serious implications. One of these people was John Brough, the governor of Ohio, who spoke of his views on the Chicago Democratic platform in his speech “The Defenders of the Country and its Enemies: The Chicago Platform Dissected,” given September 3, 1864 in Circleville, Ohio. Brough, once a member of the Democratic Party, was supporting Lincoln in his re-election efforts, and gave the speech in order to make a case against the Democrats and ensure Lincoln's election; Brough made sure to emphasize how significant he believed the election to be, equating the importance of its outcome with any of the battles of the Civil War. In order to garner support for the Republicans, he spoke specifically of the Chicago Democratic Platform, attempting to bring to light its problems and inconsistencies, one of which was

³¹ “Citizens: Read, Ponder, and Reflect!”, 1864
<<http://www.archive.org/stream/readponderreflect00chicrich#page/n0/mode/2up>>.

its lack of the customary slavery rhetoric of the Democrats. According – quite mockingly, it seems – to the governor, the 1864 Democratic convention was the first in which there was no talk of African-Americans: “This is the first National Convention of the Democratic Party that I ever knew where the irrepressible negro was smothered in the room of the Committee on Resolutions.”³² To Brough, this was because the Democrats – who had previously felt the need to mention slavery at almost every campaign stop – were becoming more educated in matters relating to slavery rhetoric within campaigns. The governor, however, was quick to point out that not speaking about slavery did not mean the Democrats were not thinking about it in every statement that they made. To him, the reason they did not speak about it was because they could not find any way to talk about it without appearing to be talking about it: “after looking the dictionary through, they could not find any language in which they could disguise that colored individual, so the people would not see him; therefore, they concluded to bury him out of sight.”³³ Additionally, he said that the Democrats knew that, like himself, the views of the American people – and of Lincoln – were that the war should not be continued to free every slave, but that slavery should no longer exist within the Union or be brought into its new territories. To him, “they [the Democrats] do not dare say what they think, lest peradventure they might lose a few votes.”³⁴

This document is one of the most important and revealing to answer the question of the presence of race and slavery issues within the presidential campaign. In it, Brough brought up many of the points that had remained unspoken – but were undoubtedly in the

³² John Brough, *The Defenders of the Country and its Enemies: The Chicago Platform Dissected* (Cincinnati: Gazette Co. Printing House, 3 Sept. 1864), 15.

³³ Brough, 15.

³⁴ Brough, 16.

minds of many Republicans – during the campaign; one cannot be sure whether he brought these points to light because he thought slavery was an important issue to include within the campaign, or because he wanted to discredit the Democrats. If he was indeed attempting to discredit them, there were also two different ways in which he could have been trying to do so: he wanted voters to turn against the Democrats because they were untruthful and conniving in their party platform, or he wanted voters to turn against the Democrats because the party still found slavery to be an important issue. Regardless of exact motive, Brough obviously believed that slavery was an important issue to discuss in the election, whether it was because he knew it would rile voters up, or because he felt it was actually an important issue in the nation at the time.

Another important document to consider when examining the use of race and slavery rhetoric within the campaign for the 1864 election is General McClellan's letter, dated September 8, 1864 from Orange, New Jersey, accepting his nomination for Democratic candidate for president. Being a military man, the general filled much of his letter with war rhetoric, writing of the Civil War's stated cause, what he believed was its true cause, and how the war could be ended. In addition to ideas about the war, he also wrote about the Constitution and the economy, though not to the same extent to which he wrote about the war, which is to be expected, given his occupation and war experience. Though these things are important, one of the most important aspects of the letter one needs to consider is actually something that is not even there. That is, there is not one mention of slavery or race within this letter. This lack of slavery rhetoric is just as telling about the role of race in McClellan's campaign as including slavery rhetoric in it would have been; with race being such an important issue in the United States at the time, one

must wonder whether ignoring race in this letter was an intentional move. Though McClellan did have a few opportunities to write about race, particularly when discussing the cause of the war – he said it was waged for “the preservation of our people” – McClellan opted to speak about other issues that he apparently deemed more important³⁵.

The omission was surely a campaign tactic: knowing that slavery was a controversial issue in the country, he could be intentionally ignoring any talk of it to improve his campaign prospects. However, one must consider this issue further before drawing a conclusion, especially because McClellan’s views, coming from one of the presidential candidates, are most telling of the true issues of the campaign. Later in the same letter, McClellan referred to the Democratic convention, saying that if any rebel state wanted to rejoin the Union, it should be allowed in and restored with its full constitutional rights. Though McClellan made some statements that showed that ideas within some parts of his letter did not directly follow the expressed statements of the convention – “let me add what I doubt not was, although unexpressed, the sentiment of the Convention” – one can still conclude that much of what McClellan wrote in the letter *was* based upon what was said there.³⁶ Because he was now officially a spokesman for the Democratic Party, McClellan was basically required to follow exactly along with the statements in the party’s just-released platform, which had no mention of slavery. Had he spoken of an issue – particularly an issue as tempestuous as slavery or race – not mentioned in the Convention, and particularly not within the party platform, there may have been serious discord within the party and serious confusion among the voters.

³⁵ George McClellan, 8 Sept. 1864, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

³⁶ McClellan, 8 Sept. 1864.

Additionally, during the time McClellan was writing the acceptance speech, he was dealing with issues between various factions of his own party that were fighting “over the prime consideration of whether or not a previous recognition of the Union by the Confederate States should be an indispensable condition of the proposed armistice [with the South],” according to Charles R. Wilson’s “McClellan’s Changing Views on the Peace Plank of 1864.”³⁷ This was not a small issue, but instead appeared to consume McClellan’s thoughts between his nomination and his writing of the acceptance letter, as well as during his entire campaign. Because he had to attempt to reconcile the two competing factions of his party – the anti- and pro-war men – it is not surprising that he did not speak of slavery in his letter, especially given that it was not included in the party platform, and therefore did not necessarily need to be addressed. After understanding these facts, one comes to the conclusion that, while McClellan’s avoidance of the issue of slavery still makes it clear that it actually *was* an issue in the election, it was almost certainly the choice of the Democratic Party – who wrote their platform before nominating McClellan – to omit the issue, though the other issues McClellan was dealing with at the time also need to be considered. Thus, once again, the Democratic leaders, and not McClellan, who until he was nominated had not seemed to place a priority on slavery, were the ones who were indirectly trying to make the subject a campaign issue.

The Democratic use of slavery as a campaign issue is demonstrated in the “Address of the Honorable George Ticknor Curtis,” given in Philadelphia on September 30, 1864 and distributed as a “Campaign Document, No. 10.” Curtis, who joined the Democratic Party after the dissolution of the Whig Party, stated at the very beginning of

³⁷ Charles R. Wilson, “McClellan’s Changing Views on the Peace Plank of 1864, *The American Historical Review* 38 (April 1933): 498-505.

his speech that he was invited to speak about the issues involved in the 1864 presidential election; from this statement and from the fact that the printed version of the speech is labeled a “campaign document,” one recognizes that this was intended to be an important and influential part of the 1864 campaign. From the beginning, he also made clear that he agreed to give the speech in order to spread a positive word about McClellan and his ideas. Though Curtis spoke highly of McClellan in much of the speech, his discussion of slavery later in his speech focused mainly on Lincoln and the wrongs he committed related to the institution within the United States, a pattern oft-repeated within Democratic campaign literature related to race and slavery.

In his statements about slavery, Curtis focused on its role in the conclusion of the war, and particularly of Lincoln’s conditions of peace. According to Curtis – who made clear that he was aware that he could not possibly know the true purposes of Lincoln’s actions or statements – it was absurd to believe that Lincoln did not, in his speeches about the war, “make the abandonment of slavery *one of three* conditions on which he is willing to have a restoration of the Union.”³⁸ Instead, in his opinion, Lincoln required the abolition of slavery as a condition of peace with the Confederacy just as much as he required the “restoration of peace and integrity of the union,” and made no effort – nor wanted – to hide this fact from the people.³⁹ Going a step further, Curtis stated that this issue – that is, Lincoln’s requirement that slavery be abolished before the war was ended – was the sole issue separating the president and the Democratic Party; this statement alone puts slavery front and center as the main determining factor of the election, which

³⁸ George T. Curtis, *Address of the Honorable George Ticknor Curtis* (New York, 30 Sept. 1864), 8.

³⁹ Curtis, 8.

was based heavily on issues pertaining to the war. The statement also served as a way of transitioning into the contrast between Lincoln's views and the views of McClellan – as a representative of the Democrats – on the role of slavery in ending the war. According to Curtis, the only condition McClellan had for the restoration of the Union was one that had nothing to do with slavery, but instead simply for the Southern states to be willing to come back into the Union.

From this, Curtis jumped to a conclusion that was sure to provoke an impassioned response from his audience: “For the attainment of Mr. Lincoln’s object [peace through the abolition of slavery], it is but rational to suppose that absolute and complete subjugation of the white race is essential.”⁴⁰ What he meant by this was that Lincoln’s condition was one that white Southerners would never accept; because of this, the war would conclude only with the subjugation of the Confederacy rather than with negotiation. To Curtis, it was quite possible that the South would not consent to the abolition of slavery, and would fight against any type of civil government that included this abolition. He believed that this would lead to civil unrest and a permanent state of war within the country “until you can introduce a new white population, and even then you must constantly interfere to settle the question as to which race is to be the predominant one.”⁴¹ In drawing this conclusion, Curtis was obviously attempting to strike fear into the hearts of his audience, fear that was based especially on the racism of the people. What better way to garner votes for McClellan – or, more fittingly, take votes from Lincoln – than to exploit racist fears and tie them to the continuation of war, something that no one in the country wanted? Curtis concluded this section of his speech

⁴⁰ Curtis, 8.

⁴¹ Curtis, 9.

by using what appeared to be another popular Democratic tactic, at least in this campaign: he tried to placate the Republicans by saying that he was actually completely in favor of the abolition of slavery, which most Republicans greatly supported. To mesh this idea with the actual Democratic policies, he said that instead of abolition itself, what he was against was the use of unacceptable measures, particularly those that “put at hazard that important principle of local self-government,” to bring about the desired abolition.⁴² In saying this, Curtis appealed to the Republicans by suggesting that he did not oppose abolition itself, and appealed to the Democrats by nevertheless saying that he was still not going to support the abolition measures.

In an address by James Gallatin before the Democratic Union Association in New York City, given October 18, 1864 and entitled “George B. McClellan as a Patriot, a Warrior, and a Statesman,” Gallatin appeared to forego the usual Democratic tendency to push slavery onto the Republicans, and instead spoke of McClellan’s views on the institution in order to garner support for the candidate. Particularly, he spoke of these views under the heading “Gen. McClellan’s Plan of Putting Down the Rebellion,” where he boldly stated that the candidate “showed how to deal with it [slavery] constitutionally and effectually.”⁴³ To him, McClellan had always been straightforward and constant in his sentiments and plans for ending the war and dealing with slavery. As an example, Gallatin referred to the candidate’s nomination acceptance speech, in which he spoke of his straightforward – at least to Gallatin – policy that emphasized the re-establishment of the Union through whatever means possible. Very importantly, he also spoke of the

⁴² Curtis, 9.

⁴³ James Gallatin, *George B. McClellan as a Patriot, a Warrior, and a Statesman* (n.p., 18 Oct. 1864), 8.

consistency of McClellan's platform in regard to slavery, which he said was that he would do what he could to abolish slavery as long as the way in which it was abolished was in complete accordance with the Constitution, an idea very similar to that of Curtis. These statements served two very important purposes: the first, to demonstrate to the voters – not just the Democrats, but everyone – that McClellan was not some heartless or immoral being, and that he was in favor of the abolition of slavery. Instead, he could be perceived as a steward of the Constitution, as a man unwilling to sacrifice the country's founding principles for an issue that was so highly contested. The second purpose that the statements served was to lay the groundwork for an attack of Lincoln and the Republicans, whose plan of action, which was “fickle, changing, and ever-varying,” was supposedly in direct contrast to that of McClellan and the Democrats.⁴⁴ According to Gallatin, Lincoln was prone to change his stance on slavery, particularly in terms of its role in ending the war; at times, the president would demand the abolition of slavery in exchange for peace with the South, but at others, he would allow his aides to offer the South a chance to return to the Union without slavery's abolition. Therefore, to Gallatin, McClellan would be the best man to save and to subsequently run the country.

Gallatin's statements about slavery made up a minority of his speech – and were, in fact, not given a section of their own, but instead appeared in one about the conclusion of the war. Simply having the topic in the speech at all is still important. It is especially important that the judge chose to speak of McClellan's stances on slavery in relation to the war, because it shows that tying those two contentious topics together was a major strategy of the Democrats within the war, and not just something a few rogue members

⁴⁴ Gallatin, 9.

did to draw attention to their speeches. Though this is significant, it does not override the lack of slavery rhetoric in this speech; in fact, unlike many of the other Democrats, Gallatin stopped short of “miscegenation”-type extreme race-baiting and even, like Curtis, in a very limited way seemed to be endorsing the ending of slavery.

The Democratic Party’s role in distributing campaign literature on race and making slavery an issue in the campaign can be seen in the speech of Jeremiah S. Black, a member of the party and a former Attorney General and Secretary of State. The speech, entitled “The Doctrines of the Democratic and Abolition Parties Contrasted; Negro Equality; The Conflict between ‘Higher Law’ and the Law of the Land,” was given at the Hall of the Keystone Club in Philadelphia on October 24, 1864. Even before beginning to analyze the arguments made in the speech, one must understand how relevant the speech was to the election, and to what extent it could serve as campaign literature. According to the pamphlet, which provides a short introduction to the speech, Black’s speech began by stating that “these were serious times, and he would give some of the grave reasons which made him believe that the security of individual rights and the safety of the country itself from utter destruction, depended on the election of General McClellan.”⁴⁵

To make the election appear even more urgent, Black stated that unlike in the past, current elections did not address issues that were merely in the interest of the country, but instead addressed issues that were vital to the survival of the government and the liberty of the people. He believed that one of the groups most capable of destroying this liberty was the “abolition party,” whom he called “the enemy.”⁴⁶ To him, the party,

⁴⁵ Jeremiah S. Black, *The Doctrines of the Democratic and Abolition Parties Contrasted* (Philadelphia, 24 Oct. 1864), 6.

⁴⁶ Black, 6.

once small and local, had grown in size and influence, with the Republican Party now assenting to every measure taken by the abolitionists: “Abolitionism is omnipotent in Congress – it controls the Executive with absolute sway – it commands an army whose numbers are counted by hundreds of thousands – it is preying at will upon the prostrate body of the nation.”⁴⁷

In contrast, Black stated that the supposedly evil “abolition party” differed remarkably – perhaps more than anything had ever before differed – in sentiment, opinion, and principle from his own Democratic Party, and that his party dissented from the “abolition party” on every political matter, particularly in terms of the object and purpose of the United States government. He went even further in describing it, saying that “we [the parties] are as wide asunder as the poles of the earth,” and giving numerous examples of people or governments, such as “the Congress of 1776 from the ministry of George the Third,” who, though vastly different, were still less different than the abolitionist and Democratic parties of his time.⁴⁸ Through showing these alleged differences, Black was obviously attempting to establish an absolute rift between the parties to demonstrate to voters that voting for the Democrats was a way to ensure that abolitionists and their supposedly disruptive ideas would not be at the core of the federal government.

Black continued, alleging that the abolitionists tried to debate almost all of the fundamental laws within the Constitution, attempting to either get rid of or alter them so that they meant something entirely different. From this, he moved on to the role of the federal government in state matters: while the Democrats believed that states were

⁴⁷ Black, 2.

⁴⁸ Black, 2.

sovereign and should be the ones to decide what was best for them, the abolitionists believed that the federal government had the right to dictate the actions of the state governments. Black continued the use of hyperbolic rhetoric in reference to this point, saying that if a state would ignore the order by the federal government to change any of its laws, the abolitionists would believe that that state “deserved to be punished by having its fields laid waste, its towns burnt, its men butchered, its women and children driven houseless, homeless and starving into the woods.”⁴⁹

In illustrating his point, Black stated that Lincoln had announced that the Civil War could not end until some of the states abandoned some of their laws and adopted those that were better liked – whatever Black meant by that – by the president and the Republicans. Continuing his hyperbolic claims, the judge attempted to demonstrate “how emphatic and thorough their [the Republicans] contempt” for the states’ rights doctrine was by saying that “they [the Republicans] think it perfectly proper to tear a sovereign State into pieces by main force and cast the bleeding parts to enemies and strangers, whilst they are yet warm and quivering with the agony of the separation,” once again casting the Republicans as the villains.⁵⁰ Additionally, Black gave an example of the federal government trampling on the rights of states – in this case, Maryland – other than those in rebellion. In Maryland, “a decree [had] been made that the State Government shall be wholly revolutionized”; according to Black, four-fifths of Maryland’s citizens were against the change. However, he said that “by means of brute force, and a system of test-oaths, prescribed at Washington, the State Government is entirely taken out of the people’s hands, and all political power put into the keeping of not only a small, but a

⁴⁹ Black, 2.

⁵⁰ Black, 2.

venal and false minority.”⁵¹ Black also appealed to these voters through his claim that, through these actions, the Republican government in power at the time had shown itself to be not a republican one, but instead one bordering on aristocratic. The inclusion and elaboration of this difference in views between the two competing parties is important to both the race question and the election: slavery was obviously a controversial issue at the time, and saying that the abolitionists and Republicans were against the rights of states to essentially govern themselves – one of the issues at the crux of the war rhetoric – was obviously an attempt to receive votes for the Democrats. His use of this idea to win votes demonstrates his view that this issue, which pertained directly to the issue of slavery, was important to the election, and therefore that slavery rhetoric itself was an important tool to use.

Black both alluded to slavery much more and focused more directly on race than most other speeches by the Democrats during the time. For example, he said that another major point about which he believed the Democratic and abolitionist parties differed was this: the perceived inherent inferiority of African-Americans to whites, and the supposed effects it had on the country. According to Black, the Democrats believed that there was, “by the permission of God’s providence,” an inherent distinction between African-Americans and whites – particularly in their mental characteristics, physical characteristics, and color – that caused African-American inferiority to whites.⁵² To him, it was not only the Democrats who believed this claim; in fact, in his opinion, the abolitionists were the only ones – even when African-Americans are considered – who disagreed with it. Importantly, in discussing this idea, Black appealed to his audience

⁵¹ Black, 2.

⁵² Black, 2.

members, stating, “I suppose there is no man here who does not know the difference between a white man and a negro”; in saying this, he tied the people in the audience to the Democratic Party’s ideas, making it appear as if both groups’ thoughts were one and the same and that the Democrats were fighting for what the voters believed.⁵³

Black also attempted to garner the support of voters through an appeal to history and the founding principles of the country. When the nation was formed, he said, the white men who did so “framed a government to be controlled exclusively by themselves and their own posterity,” a government in which those men would “share their privileges” with other white men, but not with men of any other race, and in which “they [the white men] never would [share those privileges].”⁵⁴ The African-Americans, then, were not given political rights by these men, but only the protections that Black believed to be due to them as members of a supposedly inferior race. In direct contrast to these ideas, the judge then discussed the views of the abolitionists on this subject. In severely contrasting the views of the abolitionists with those of the Founding Fathers of the United States – which he was sure to do in the next part of his speech – Black was speaking directly to the nationalism and loyalty of the voters, two sentiments that no voter would want to be accused of being without during the war. From all of this, one can almost certainly conclude that the judge was trying to equate voting for the abolitionists with being disloyal to the country and to its cause.

According to Black, the abolitionists believed that African-Americans had a “natural right” to political, social, and legal equality, and “insultingly preferred negroes

⁵³ Black, 3.

⁵⁴ Black, 3.

to white men.”⁵⁵ Though fleeting, the judge also made a reference to their supposed theories of miscegenation, stating that the views were “too disgusting to be mentioned.”⁵⁶ Though he claimed to believe that miscegenation should not even be spoken of within his speech, his inclusion of the issue at all must have some importance. When viewed in conjunction with the miscegenation incident, in fact, it is absolutely crucial in examining the role race rhetoric played within the speech and in the entire Democratic campaign. If Black had truly not wanted to bring the issue of miscegenation into his speech, he need not have mentioned it at all. Instead, he mentioned it in respect to the “abolition party,” whose members, if one refers back to the miscegenation incident, were the victims of the Democratic miscegenation scam. Though one cannot be positive that Black was aware that the Democrats published the pamphlet as a hoax in an effort to turn voters against the Republicans, knowledge of the hoax was relatively widespread throughout members of the Democratic Party, and therefore was likely known to the judge. Given this fact, and given the fact that many of the voters present at the speech were surely not aware that the whole thing was a hoax, Black’s reference to miscegenation seems to have been entirely intentional, made in order to receive more votes based upon the racism of his audience.

In continuing his explanation of the “abolition party’s” view on African-Americans, Black stated that the Republicans currently in government believed that African-Americans were citizens and therefore gave them the rights, particularly of “holding office and exercising public authority” over the citizens, previously only afforded to whites.⁵⁷ In addition, he pointed to the fact that African-Americans were

⁵⁵ Black, 3.

⁵⁶ Black, 3.

⁵⁷ Black, 3.

allowed to vote in the states that were “thoroughly abolitionized,” and that their votes would add to the votes of white men “with negro principles,” and, in his opinion, “trample down the true white man who is faithful to the rights of his race.”⁵⁸ Through these statements, Black was obviously attempting to appeal to the racism of the voters. This is particularly evident when he said that abolitionists, if they had their way, would also give African-Americans within all other states equal rights, in the process stripping away the rights, land and otherwise, of white men and giving them to African-Americans. Black was intentionally using race within this speech as a tool to play on the fears and emotions of the white voters and to gain their votes in the upcoming election. The judge also used the voters’ fear as a campaign tool later in his speech, using John Brown and his raid at Harper’s Ferry as a way to turn the voters against the Republican Party. He did this by describing the man as a treacherous and conspiratorial murderer who was yet lauded by the abolitionists – “poets and orators...clergymen and politicians...senators, governors and statesmen of every class” alike – as a man more honorable and admirable than “the greatest benefactors of the human race.”⁵⁹ To Black, this was because they viewed him not only as working for the Higher Law, but also as being “like themselves, a deadly enemy to the Government, Constitution, and laws of the land.”⁶⁰ He made sure to add what may have been the scariest part of all for voters: the fact that it was not just the radicals of the party, but the most supposedly level-headed among them, even Lincoln himself, who honored Brown and believed in his principles, though there is no evidence

⁵⁸ Black, 3.

⁵⁹ Black, 7.

⁶⁰ Black, 7.

that Lincoln actually expressed any admiration whatsoever for Brown.⁶¹ Through this, Black was obviously attempting to make voters fear another Republican term in office, especially through appealing to their racism.

Though Black was obviously using racism as a campaign tactic, in his next statements, he clearly attempted to show that this racism was completely warranted. Based upon his prior points, as well as the pattern of Democratic race rhetoric during the campaign, one can hypothesize that the judge was attempting to appeal to members of both parties by toeing the line on racism – that is, by saying that his racist claims were not due to prejudice, but justified by nature. In order to show this, he stated, a bit confusingly, that whites would have no problem with equality between the races if it were possible to elevate African-Americans to the same level as whites. However, he was quick to add that equality was inherently not possible: “you can degrade the white man to the level of the negro – that is easily done – but you cannot lift the negro up to the white man’s place.”⁶² He was also quick to refer back to the Founding Fathers, saying that if equality were to occur, it would only be upon the degradation of the white race, a degradation that could have ruined the founders of the country at the time of its establishment. In order to avoid this, Black argued that

respect for the memory of our ancestors; fidelity to the rights of our children; our own interests and the interests of the civilized world, require us to keep and maintain this Government in the hands of white men, and to repudiate with abhorrence every measure which is calculated to bring upon us the shame and the infamy of a voluntary descent to negro equality.⁶³

⁶¹ Abraham Lincoln Online, “Cooper Union Address,” 22 March 2011
< <http://showcase.netins.net/web/creative/lincoln/speeches/cooper.htm> >.

⁶² Black, 3.

⁶³ Black, 3.

As he was prone to do, the judge once again appealed to history in his statements regarding the 1860 election: he stated that in that year, voters “had their choice...between the government of their fathers...on one hand...and on the other a Higher Law inconsistent with the Government.”⁶⁴ By electing Lincoln, said Black, the voters had chosen a Higher Law. This concept was first introduced in an 1850 Congressional debate by William H. Seward, a New York senator and important antislavery figure, in which he claimed that “there is a higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain...we are His [the Creator’s] stewards, and must so discharge our trust as to secure in the highest attainable degree their happiness.”⁶⁵ In his opinion, the Higher Law could not exist alongside the actual law because of its dogmatic, intolerant, and reckless nature. To him, the country need only look at current circumstances to realize the negative effects – including “disaster, disgrace and discord” – of choosing the abolitionists and their Higher Law.⁶⁶ To combat these effects, Black said that there was one simple solution: vote for McClellan in the upcoming election. Only by doing that, by voting the abolitionists out of office, would the people guarantee for themselves justice, order, and protection: “I am as thoroughly and profoundly convinced now, that peace and Union will be the result of McClellan’s election as I was four years ago that disunion and civil war would be the consequence of Lincoln’s.”⁶⁷

As his final argument for electing McClellan, Black turned to the subject that he must have known would cause the greatest uproar against the “abolition party” and in

⁶⁴ Black, 6.

⁶⁵ “William Henry Seward’s Higher Law Speech,” 23 March 2011
<<http://eweb.furman.edu/~benso/docs/seward.htm>>.

⁶⁶ Black, 6.

⁶⁷ Black, 7.

favor of McClellan: the continuation and winning of the war. He implied that the Democrats tried to avoid the war by reasoning with both the Southern states and, particularly, Lincoln and the “abolition party.” He put specific importance on his attempt to reason with Lincoln and his party in order to portray the Democrats in direct opposition to the Republicans, particularly in terms of the war; by essentially saying that the Republicans could have stopped the war but did not, Black was almost sure to gain at least a few more votes for his party. What’s more, he boldly stated that if McClellan were elected, “the brutal atrocities which have disgraced us in the eyes of the civilized world, would be wholly discontinued”; in particular, he seemed to be referencing Brown’s raid, which he had previously – though falsely – said that Lincoln had approved of.⁶⁸ One of Lincoln’s biggest offenses, Black said, was his firing of McClellan; if the Union was to be restored, the president must reinstate the general, and the people must cast their votes for him in November.

Judge Black’s speech, with its rhetoric about race, war, and the differences between the abolitionist and Democratic parties, is an important representation of the eagerness of Democrats to use race and slavery to their advantage in the 1864 election campaign. Black knew how to push all the buttons of the voters, particularly by bringing to the forefront their fears of African-American insurrection and of African-Americans taking away what whites believed were their rights as given to them by the Founding Fathers; he also did this by referring to the “abolition party” and the Republican Party as one and the same, and therefore tying the radical anti-slavery measures of the abolitionists to Lincoln and the Republicans. By tying race and slavery to almost every

⁶⁸ Black, 7.

possible important issue of the time, particularly the proceedings of the war, Black made sure that race would be in the mind of voters as they chose their next president. He also made sure that his audience members knew that his speech was meant to have a direct influence on the election, particularly in his direct appeals to McClellan's strengths and to what he could do for the country if elected. Through reading this speech, one is made truly aware of what the Democrats were willing to do to win the election, and the importance they were willing to put on race *if necessary*.

Though they did it in varying degrees, the Democrats undoubtedly used race and slavery rhetoric in the 1864 presidential election. There was not one main reason for their willingness to employ these issues, showing that they did not use race and slavery because they *actually* believed that they were constant, important issues that needed to be addressed in the campaign and that needed to be considered by all voters when making their decision. Instead, they seemed to emphasize these issues in some of their speeches and campaign documents only when they had nothing else – such as battle losses that they could blame on the other party – from which to gain support or, more precisely, take support away from the Republicans. They did so in many ways, including using race baiting and fear mongering; equating Lincoln with the radical “abolition party” and their policies; pandering to the Republicans through making McClellan appear to be in favor of abolition; and more. To them, speaking about race was not a necessity, but instead a tactic used only when they felt it could serve them best or when they had nothing else upon which to rely to win the election for McClellan.

To be sure, there was a spectrum of opinion in the Democratic Party about race and slavery issues and the importance of these issues to the election campaign; the

speeches by Gallatin, Curtis, and Black are representative of this spectrum. Gallatin was the most moderate of the men in his use of slavery rhetoric in the election, only speaking of the subject briefly and mostly in relation to the war, rather than as an issue in and of itself. Additionally, he was different than many other Democrats involved in the campaign because he focused on McClellan's views on slavery to gain voter support rather than on attacking Lincoln's views and actions about this topic. Having given the least aggressive of the Democratic speeches discussed, Gallatin is also representative of a larger pattern of much less sensational Democratic rhetoric that began to appear after the nomination of McClellan in late August; in fact, he could even be seen as willing to see slavery abolished under the right circumstances, showing just how moderate he was on the issue. Like Gallatin, Curtis – located in the middle of the spectrum – spoke of McClellan's views of slavery; however, unlike Gallatin, Curtis also attacked Lincoln's views on the issue, particularly in terms of the war. Also unlike Gallatin, Curtis undoubtedly wanted his audience to know that slavery was an issue that was important to the election, and was not afraid to engage in race-baiting and fear-mongering. These tactics were also used by Black, who was at the extreme end of the spectrum, both in the urgency he placed on the issue in regard to the election and in his tendency to make radical and hyperbolic statements about it. In order to get his point across, Black seemingly employed all the tactics he possibly could, appealing to history, race fears, the radicalism of the abolitionists, and even miscegenation. In examining Democratic campaign rhetoric as a whole, then, it is necessary to recognize the spectrum of opinion and use of slavery rhetoric by the Democrats; from this, one can conclude that Black was on the extreme end, and that even though he tried to make slavery one of the most

important issues, the Democratic Party in general did not believe that it was important to discuss in order to win the election, and only tried to use it when there was no other controversial issue – particularly the war – upon which to focus and campaign.

Chapter 3: Abraham Lincoln's Unwillingness to Use Race and Slavery

In the months leading up to the election, Abraham Lincoln, author of the Emancipation Proclamation and supposed friend to African-Americans, was attempting to bring the war to an end and to restore the Union as the Democrats were busy waging their campaign for McClellan's election. Though not one to back down from the opportunity to speak on behalf of African-American rights, the president – for reasons not entirely known – became almost completely silent on the issue after he was nominated as the Republican presidential candidate at the Baltimore Republican Convention, held from June 7 to June 8, 1864. There was little opposition to Lincoln's nomination.⁶⁹ This lack of opposition on the part of the Republicans, however, would not necessarily translate into a lack of opposition by voters, which is perhaps why Lincoln did not speak much of race in his interactions with his constituents.

Though many African-Americans saw Lincoln as a great emancipator, there are not many letters known to be written by or directly on behalf of the group themselves, except for the occasional letter by an African-American soldier in the field. However, there is at least one important exception to this idea: the correspondence written on behalf of the "Loyal Colored People of Baltimore" by both R. Stockett Mathews and James W. Tyson, an article in the *Washington Daily Morning Chronicle*, and a response by Lincoln during the presentation of the Bible to him.

⁶⁹ "Republican National Political Conventions, 1856-2008," The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. <www.loc.gov/rr/main/republican_conventions.pdf>.

In the first letter, written July 6, 1864 by R. Stockett Mathews of Baltimore, the man requested on behalf of a Baltimore African-American committee the presence of Lincoln at a ceremony to present him with a special Bible “as an expression of their gratitude to you for what you have done in behalf of their race.”⁷⁰ Included with the letter is a clip from the *Baltimore American*, which also includes the details of the inscription of the Bible, which calls Lincoln both the “friend of universal freedom” and the “great champion of Emancipation.”⁷¹ In the second letter, written August 26, 1864, James W. Tyson wrote Lincoln again to ask when a convenient time would be to attend the Bible presentation ceremony. Though the letter contains little more than this request, Tyson also mentioned that the “colored people of Baltimore” wanted to give Lincoln the Bible “as an evidence of their regard and gratitude.”⁷² The fact that Lincoln was written to three different times about the presentation of the Bible is a telling piece of evidence in and of itself: not only does it show that the committee was very interested in giving Lincoln the Bible and believed strongly in his role as emancipator and friend to African-Americans, but it also shows that Lincoln, for whatever reason, was hesitant to receive the Bible from the committee.

Though Lincoln did issue the Emancipation Proclamation, and was seen as a friend to African-Americans and as a strong supporter of the Union, which appeared to carry with it the promise of emancipation, during the year of this election there was not much concrete evidence of Lincoln’s concerted effort to fight against slavery, at least

⁷⁰ R. Stockett Mathews to Abraham Lincoln, 6 July 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁷¹ “Presentation to the President,” *Baltimore American*, 6 July 1864.

⁷² James W. Tyson to Abraham Lincoln, 26 Aug. 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

openly. Due to this lack of evidence, it is especially surprising not only that the Bible incident occurred, but also that it is so well-documented, not only in letters, but also in a newspaper account.

According to a September 11, 1864 *New York Times* article entitled “Presentation of a Bible to the President,” a committee composed of Rev. A.W. Wayland, Rev. S.W. Chase, Rev. W.H. Brown, Wm. H. Francis, and Albert G. Carroll presented the Bible to President Lincoln in his office at the Executive Mansion on the afternoon of September 7, 1864. Within this *Times* article is included a September 7 clip from the *National Republican*, describing the events of the presentation. According to the article, R. Stockett Matthews of the Third Electoral District of Maryland introduced each man to Lincoln, after which time Rev. Chase gave a short speech. In this speech, Chase expressed the gratitude of the committee to Lincoln for his “humane part toward the people of our race.”⁷³ In doing so, he bestowed upon Lincoln the support of African-Americans in fighting the war to defend the country, and said that the Bible was being presented to him “as a token of respect to you for your active part in the cause of emancipation.”⁷⁴ After this, and after Lincoln gave his reply, the president was given the Bible, which included on its cover “a design representing the President in the act of removing the shackles from a slave.”⁷⁵ Upon being presented the gift, Lincoln examined it, said he was pleased, and left, shaking hands once again with all the members of the committee.

⁷³ “Presentation of a Bible to the President,” *National Republican*, 7 Sept. 1864.

⁷⁴ *National Republican*, 7 Sept. 1864.

⁷⁵ *National Republican*, 7 Sept. 1864.

From these accounts, and especially from Lincoln's "Reply to Loyal Colored People of Baltimore upon Presentation of a Bible," one realizes that, while Lincoln did not necessarily identify the emancipation of slavery or the ending of racism as an issue to consider in his re-election, he still did seem to believe that it was an important issue that needed to be addressed, even if only through accepting a Bible from a committee of African-Americans. In this reply, the President, though not saying much, did reiterate his longstanding "sentiment...that all mankind should be free."⁷⁶ Additionally, he spoke very briefly and generally about the fact that his past actions had shown this sentiment, and that he had tried to help mankind as best as he thought he could. Though he did not speak expressly about slavery, not even mentioning it by name in the response, one can draw the conclusion, especially because he was addressing a committee of African-Americans, that he intended for those people to take his comments as being related to slavery.

When examining this incident and the president's comments made during it, however, one must also realize that the presentation of the Bible was not an event that would be highly publicized at the time. Not only was the Civil War still raging, but the issue of race, especially when tied to Lincoln, was also a very contentious one, and publishing an article about the president accepting a Bible from a committee of African-Americans was probably not at the top of the list of things a newspaper thought was in its best interest. Lincoln would have known that the event would not be written about, which leads one to question even more greatly his motives in accepting the Bible: if there would be no opportunity for public reaction, positive or negative, to the event, then was he

⁷⁶ Abraham Lincoln, "Reply to Loyal Colored People of Baltimore upon Presentation of a Bible," 7 Sept. 1864, in Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, N.J., Rutgers University Press, 1953-5), 7: 543.

really just accepting the Bible because he felt it was the right thing to do? This seems unlikely, given the fact that he accepted the Bible the month before the presidential election, when he must have had many other important issues to take care of. Though he met with the committee in the White House rather than traveling to Baltimore, the time this may have saved is still not enough to explain any part of his motives for the meeting. He also certainly did not accept the Bible in order to gain any sort of support in the upcoming election from the African-Americans, who were still denied the right to vote almost everywhere. Due to the fact that Lincoln did not write anything on this meeting, one must simply speculate that he had some other motives unrelated to the election for accepting the Bible from the committee, motives of which one cannot be sure. The incident is nevertheless important in examining the role that race played in the 1864 election, even though it appears as if the incident ultimately was not part of “campaigning” and had no effect on election results.

The reply that Lincoln gave to the “loyal colored people of Baltimore” on September 7, 1864 also gives much insight into the capacity to which Lincoln spoke of slavery during the months before the 1864 election; it is also interesting to view the reply by Lincoln in relation to his views and speeches on slavery and racism both before and after the election.⁷⁷ Through studying his ideas in non-election years in comparison to his ideas, and particularly his seeming lack of willingness to express those ideas, during the 1864 election period, one can try to identify the reasons Lincoln acted – or did not act – in this manner. Did he not talk about slavery or race in 1864 because he simply did not feel as if it was necessary in the present circumstances, especially because the Civil War

⁷⁷ Lincoln, 7 Sept. 1864.

was still occurring? Did he simply not find the right opportunity to discuss his views, or was he afraid that they would harm his re-election chances? One possible explanation for his not speaking out about these subjects during the time before the election, and particularly for not speaking out at this particular Bible presentation incident, was that it was, in 1864, when the incident occurred, a presidential custom not to campaign for reelection. Perhaps he did not speak more about race and slavery during this time because he did not want to exploit this opportunity for his own personal gains, especially because the African-American committee was giving him a gift to show their gratitude. Making the situation more complicated, however, is the fact that Lincoln most likely knew that the event would receive little to no press attention, and therefore should have felt more or less free to talk about his opinions on race or slavery. Then why didn't he? One must look deeper into past events and speeches in Lincoln's presidency to try to understand his views on race and slavery, and subsequently to figure out whether his behavior leading up to the 1864 was unusual, and if not speaking about race was a tactical part of gaining support.

In trying to understand Lincoln's motives in not speaking a great deal about his views on slavery and race within his reply to the presentation of the Bible, one must also consider his August 14, 1862 "Address on Colonization to a Deputation of Colored Men," which, like the Bible incident, was also to a group of African-Americans during an election year, but in which Lincoln explicitly stated his anti-slavery views. In this address, given in the White House to a committee of African-American men, the president proposed colonization for the African-American people of the United States; according to him, he did not propose this because he was anti-African-American rights,

but instead because he felt as if African-Americans would have a better chance of being given fair opportunities, which they deserved, if they had their own separate colony in South America. The two most important views present in this speech are that Lincoln believed that African-Americans are treated very badly in the United States, mostly because of the institution of slavery, as well as that African-Americans deserved to be treated better than they were at the time. To Lincoln, the group was “suffering, in my judgment, the greatest wrong inflicted on any people.”⁷⁸ He stated that, even if African-Americans became free, they would not be equal to whites, and would therefore be better off moving somewhere else and starting their own colony. In this, the reader understands that Lincoln did believe that African-Americans should be free, and at least deserved to be given equal rights, whether they actually would or not. In the speech, the president also said that he believed that slavery had very “evil effects on the white race,” and that “without the institution of slavery and the colored race as a basis, the war could not have an existence.”⁷⁹

Through this speech, given during the time of midterm elections under circumstances relatively similar to those of when the Bible incident occurred, one must ask even more questions about why Lincoln did not share these obviously strong views on slavery and race during the Bible incident, particularly because he was once again with an audience of African-American people, whom he did not often have the opportunity to address. At this point, one of the only plausible conclusions in answering this question is, as was mentioned before, the fact that he did not want to exploit the opportunity given to him in the Bible presentation, especially because of the presidential

⁷⁸ Andrew Delbanco, *The Portable Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Viking, 1992), 265.

⁷⁹ Delbanco, 266.

anti-campaigning custom. However, one may also look at this speech with a more critical eye. Was Lincoln being sincere in his beliefs, or was he just putting forth these ideas in order to get the African-American people out of the United States? He was obviously not trying to get their support for the midterm elections, because African-Americans did not have the vote; perhaps, then, he said these things because he felt that expressing these sentiments would be the way to win the African-American people over and to make them move. If this is so, or if Lincoln had any other motives rather than expressing his own true beliefs about race and slavery, his not speaking about these two topics in the 1864 campaign was not actually a tactic, but instead just a natural tendency.

One important source from which the reader can gain much insight about the 1862 speech and about the view of African-Americans at the time is an article by Frederick Douglass entitled “The President and His Speeches,” published in his September 1862 edition of *Douglass’ Monthly*. Though the article is already important simply because it was written by the most prominent African-American abolitionist during the time the speech was given, it is even more significant because Douglass was seen as an authority on slavery issues. In the article, there are two main topics that are of special importance to the discussion of Lincoln’s true view of race and slavery during his presidency, and of his motives to speak about these topics: the hypocrisy he saw as evident within the colonization speech and the supposed truth about Lincoln’s views on slavery and race.

Douglass first described what Lincoln said in his speech, particularly that the president believed that inherent differences between African-Americans and whites made it impossible for them to live together; therefore, colonization was the best solution for

both races. Additionally, Douglass also focused on what he saw as Lincoln's claim that the presence of African-Americans within the country caused the Civil War; he says this claim, as well as the rest of what was said in the speech, showed "all his [Lincoln's] inconsistencies, his pride of race and blood, his contempt for Negroes and his canting hypocrisy."⁸⁰ Though one must look more deeply into Douglass' accusations in order to draw any sort of conclusion about their accuracy, it is important, before analyzing the arguments, to remember that Douglass was an ardent abolitionist; because he was so heavily involved in this movement, many of his views about race and slavery may have been biased. Additionally, he may also have believed that anyone who was not directly in support of the abolitionist movement was against it; therefore, Lincoln's tendency to not speak out greatly against slavery, regardless of his views, may have automatically put him on the wrong side of Douglass.

Regardless of any of these possible biases, in order to determine the importance of the Bible incident and very little other rhetoric about slavery or race during the 1864 election, the rest of Douglass' article needs to be examined. After describing the basic parts of Lincoln's speech, Douglass argued against those that he had the most problems with, particularly the assertion that the presence of African-American people in the United States caused the war. Douglass wrote, in his refutation, that one need not be a president, Republican or Democrat, or even a particularly smart person to realize that the presence of African-Americans was not the cause of the war. In his opinion, Lincoln was well aware of incidences of people of different races in other countries, such as those in Central and South America, living in peace together, as well as of the fact that any of the

⁸⁰ Frederick Douglass, "The President and His Speeches," *Douglass' Monthly*, Sept. 1862.

civil wars occurring in those countries were not due in any part to fighting between those races. According to Douglass, “Mr. Lincoln further knows or ought to know at least that Negro hatred and prejudice of color are neither original nor invincible vices, but merely the offshoots of that root of all crimes and evils – slavery.”⁸¹ To him, if African-Americans had not been forced to come to the United States, but instead had immigrated of their own accord, there would be no stigma or prejudice against these people as well as the assumption that whites and African-Americans were naturally incompatible.

Though Douglass found Lincoln’s arguments illogical and wrong, he nevertheless wrote in this article that, given the president’s actions within his administration up to that time, they were not at all surprising. Douglass also asserted that the statements made in the colonization speech

confirm the painful conviction that though elected as an anti-slavery man by Republican and Abolition voters, Mr. Lincoln is quite a genuine representative of American prejudice and Negro hatred and far more concerned for the preservation of slavery, and the favor of the Border Slave States, than for any sentiment of magnanimity or principle of justice and humanity.⁸²

In explaining this conviction, Douglass gave many different examples of Lincoln’s hypocrisy in terms of his beliefs about slavery, particularly the instances when he spoke out against slavery, but at the same time showed more support for the institution than he did for “the very cause of liberty to which he owes his election.”⁸³ Douglass finally moved to criticizing the actual way in which Lincoln gave his speech: not only did he criticize the frank tone of the speech, calling it a “thin mask,” but he also criticized what he saw as a lack of humanity within the speech, and a lack of true willingness to help the

⁸¹ Douglass, Sept. 1862.

⁸² Douglass, Sept. 1862.

⁸³ Douglass, Sept. 1862.

condition of the African-Americans, as well as a desire to get the speech over with as quickly as possible and simply appease the African-American men.⁸⁴

Through solely examining Douglass' analysis and criticisms of Lincoln's colonization speech, the reader can draw one basic conclusion about the motives for the president's participation in the Bible incident: he was attempting to take advantage of his position as president to get people to listen to him and place importance on a topic that they would usually ignore. According to Douglass, the colonization speech "if delivered by any other than the President of the United States, would attract no more attention than the funny little speeches made in front of the arcade by our friend John Smith, inviting customers to buy his razor strops."⁸⁵ If one is to believe these statements, as well as the ones made regarding Lincoln's hypocrisy, it would appear as if Lincoln met with the "loyal colored people of Baltimore" in order to garner some support during the 1864 election.⁸⁶ However, given what is known about campaign traditions coupled with the lack of press attention given to the Bible incident, this conclusion is tenuous at best. Rejecting this conclusion, however, does not necessarily mean that press attention was not his motivation for giving the colonization speech; if it was, then why was it not his motivation for the Bible presentation? Both incidents occurred during Lincoln's presidency, both were made at the time of elections, and both involved speeches to African-Americans. The only true difference between the two incidents was the president's willingness to make explicit statements about race and slavery within them,

⁸⁴ Douglass, Sept. 1862.

⁸⁵ Douglass, Sept. 1862.

⁸⁶ Mathews, 6 July 1864.

but we have up to this point not established the reason for this difference. The question, then, still remains unanswered.

After examining Lincoln's statements and actions regarding race and slavery during the 1864 election campaign, one draws the conclusion that the use of race rhetoric was not part of the campaign plan of Lincoln and the Republicans. Not to say that slavery issues were not important to Lincoln and the party; one cannot be entirely sure what the president's true views were on this topic. What one *can* be sure of is that regardless of Lincoln's views, he did not believe that slavery or race issues should be used in his campaign, regardless of whether or not he believed they were important issues for the country. Though difficult to fully grasp his true motives, Lincoln's behavior – or lack of behavior – in the Bible presentation incident demonstrates that he deemed it better for his election chances if he did not make slavery an important issue in his campaign. Making the task of deciphering Lincoln's ideas about the use of race in the election campaign even more difficult is the tradition of an incumbent president not campaigning for himself; given this fact, it is important to examine speeches and writings of Republicans other than Lincoln himself to determine the view of the entire party on the use of race and slavery in the campaign.

Chapter 4: The People's View on Race

Citizens' and Politicians' Sentiments in The Abraham Lincoln Papers

From the time Lincoln was first elected president in 1860, he was met daily with correspondence from his constituents and fellow government officials; this correspondence continued through the 1864 election, and can provide some insight into the most important issues of the campaign. In the months leading up to the election, the president received letters from voters throughout the Union, including soldiers, African-Americans, women, and more. Though there were hundreds of letters sent to Lincoln, a few topics, particularly political and military advice, requests for appointment to office, the soldiers' vote, and military affairs in various states, were especially popular. Among all these letters *were* a few that made specific mention of race or slavery; by reading these letters and discovering that even *they* did not make a strong case for race being an important issue in the election campaign, one can be sure that this conclusion is well founded.

Through reading the letters to President Lincoln from September 1, 1864 until the presidential election on November 8, 1864, one can learn a great deal about many of the political and military affairs surrounding the election. The subject of race, as well as slavery, though both highly contested at the time of the election, were noticeably absent from almost all of the correspondence from this time period. Many of the letters to President Lincoln dealt with recommendations for office, civilian and military support for

Lincoln in the upcoming election, and other general matters; some, however, though not explicitly mentioning slavery, seemed to indirectly refer to the concept without actually mentioning it outright. This could be for many reasons, not least of all the fact that slavery was such a contested issue at the time, and one that, depending on whether one was a Republican or a Democrat, could prove difficult to bring up during the election. Though one of the resolutions in the Republican platform – which also included statements regarding the approval of Lincoln and his actions, gratitude to the soldiers, and agreement with the government on its position to not compromise with the rebels – was that slavery was an idea inconsistent with democracy, Republicans often still appeared to try to avoid speaking directly of slavery whenever they could during the course of the election.⁸⁷

In the correspondence to Lincoln during the week of September 1, there was only one letter that dealt directly with slavery: dated September 4, 1864, Milton Sutliff's letter talked of Sutliff's dedication to the anti-slavery movement, and of the support that Lincoln would have from anti-slavery members of his home state of Ohio. He wrote to warn Lincoln of a few men who he felt may not support the president in the upcoming election because of his anti-slavery stance, but assured him that those men, and men of the like, "will be few indeed."⁸⁸ While this was the only letter in this week pertaining directly to slavery, there was also one by Abraham Lincoln on this same date, written to Eliza P. Gurney, that referred to the institution. To Gurney, a Quaker, the president wrote in evenhanded but noncommittal terms, saying that he knew the Friends were in a tough

⁸⁷ "The 1864 Republican Party Platform," 5 Apr 2011

<<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?documentprint=1472>>.

⁸⁸ Milton Sutliff to Abraham Lincoln, 4 Sept. 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

position – they opposed both slavery and the war – but not saying anything specific about ending either the war or slavery. Though minor, Lincoln’s use of the word “oppression” rather than the word “slavery” is significant, and seemed to be a deliberate choice.⁸⁹ The other significant part of this letter is the statement that “for those appealing to me on conscientious grounds, I have done, and shall do, the best I could and can, in my own conscience, under my oath to the law.”⁹⁰ Although Lincoln could not, by the customs of the era, campaign for himself, this may be the closest he came to it during the entire election; he did not seem to be pandering to one side, though, and instead was assuring voters that he would act on his morals – though never actually saying what they were – but only insofar as his acts would be within the law.

As the election drew nearer, the issues of race and slavery began to appear more often within the correspondence to President Lincoln, but they were still not main issues, and the president still was not any more straightforward in his beliefs. Though one cannot be entirely sure of the reasons for this lack of race rhetoric, motives could include a decision to correspond about things deemed more important to the election than race, a desire to bypass race and slavery because of the possible controversy they could cause in getting Lincoln reelected, or simply the general disinterest of the citizens in ending slavery or overcoming race differences. In order to understand why there was a lack of correspondence on this topic, one must examine the letters that *did* talk about it; in doing this, one can see that even few letters that mentioned it did not mention it enough for it to be considered an important topic in the election campaign.

⁸⁹ Abraham Lincoln to Eliza P. Gurney, 4 Sept. 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁹⁰ Lincoln, 4 Sept. 1864.

From September 7 to September 21, 1864, there were a handful of letters written either to or by Lincoln that make at least a brief mention of slavery; the first is a September 8 letter from Eliza P. Gurney, replying to the September 4 letter from Lincoln. In the letter, Gurney spoke of slavery, though – like Lincoln – not by name, instead calling it “oppression” and “the holding of our fellow men in cruel bondage.”⁹¹ She went on to say that the Friends “earnestly desire their [slaves’] enfranchisement from the galling chains imposed upon them by their hard taskmasters,” yet she did not ever really speak of Lincoln’s part in this liberation; neither did she appeal to him for help on this issue.⁹² Instead, she spoke of how faith in God was the only way in which slavery could be overcome, which makes sense in the context of the letter: her main motivation in writing to the president was to tell him that he had the Quakers’ support, particularly on the issue of slavery, and that she was grateful for his consideration of their beliefs about the war. Therefore, one can be positive that her mention of slavery in the letter was only a small outpouring of her moral and religious views, rather than a plea for help in the question of ending slavery or any sort of concern for Lincoln’s campaign.

A final letter, this time written to Francis P. Blair, Sr. by John M. Forbes dated September 18, and likely referred to Lincoln by Blair’s son, Montgomery Blair, the Postmaster General, only mentioned slavery in one small line. Instead of speaking about slavery as an institution by itself that must be overthrown, he instead used slavery and emancipation as one example of a bigger group of American institutions that required success, writing, “We have now a far bigger issue than the mere Emancipation of the

⁹¹ Eliza P. Gurney to Abraham Lincoln, 8 Sept. 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁹² Gurney, 8 Sept. 1864.

Negro but really including it – the success of free Institutions for our own Country and for all the world.”⁹³ The inclusion of slavery in this relatively long letter as only one example of a larger phenomenon does not seem to imply that slavery by itself was seen, at least to Forbes, as an important issue in the 1864 election. Due to the fact that he did at least mention it in the letter, however, one can assume that his lack of other references to slavery is not due to his fear of speaking of slavery at all; if he did not want to even bring the subject up, he did not have to mention it at all.

From September 22, 1864 until the election in October, race fervor – if it can even be termed that – did not suddenly increase as one may predict would happen near the end of an important presidential election. In fact, there was only one letter written to Lincoln that mentioned race and slavery, and only peripherally at that. Dated September 24, 1864, the letter was written by Josephine S. Griffing, an abolitionist, a member of the Western Anti-Slavery Society, and an agent for the National Freedmen’s Relief Association. In this letter, she wrote about a plan that she was proposing – and about which she had apparently spoken to the president – that would give freedmen asylum in Northern and Eastern states, which would “require employmt [sic] and immediate relief.”⁹⁴ In addition, she wrote of her intent to present her plans to the governors of Northern states and the meetings that she had already had with important members of the government, and included the plans that she had proposed and planned to propose to the governors.

In the enclosure, Griffing began by stating the necessity of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the fact that everyone, North and South, believed that “the suppression

⁹³ John M. Forbes to Francis P. Blair, Sr., 18 Sept. 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

⁹⁴ Josephine S. Griffing to Abraham Lincoln, 24 Sept. 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

of Rebellion and Emancipation must go hand in hand till Union liberty and peace are finally restored.”⁹⁵ She continued, saying that Emancipation had caused the Freedmen to lose what protection they were provided by slavery, and to now be basically helpless, without food, shelter, or clothing. In addition, she brought up the importance of colored troops to the Union Army, and the fact that they had been relatively well taken care of by the government, as well as by “the Freedmen’s Relief Associations and Commissions the Missionary societies and contributions from the Benevolent Public at home and abroad.”⁹⁶ These two factors, along with increased emancipation due to more Union victories, caused Griffing to conclude that the loyal states’ governments would have to be more active in providing support for the new freedmen. To do so, she proposed that any state willing should offer asylum to as many freedmen as they needed or could handle; additionally, she recommended the appointment of an agent to monitor the conditions of Freedmen within the states as well as the feelings of other Americans in these states in terms of cooperation with her earlier proposals. She wrote that she felt that this action by the states, as well as support from other groups like churches, would help the national government, which was using most of its resources in fighting the war.

Griffing’s letter, while definitely the most focused on race out of the letters thus far, did not appear to focus on the moral grounds of the anti-slavery debate, but instead was more concerned about the view of African-Americans by Northerners and the role they could play in the economy. She wanted the white citizens of the North to see the freedmen as an asset, not a detriment. Though most Northerners were against the institution of slavery, many were nevertheless racist, and would have preferred the newly

⁹⁵ Griffing, 24 Sept. 1864.

⁹⁶ Griffing, 24 Sept. 1864.

freed African-Americans to stay in the South. Through showing that the freedmen would not cause problems, and would instead work and provide money for the North, Griffing could make many Northerners more accepting of the African-Americans than they would have been otherwise.

Although Griffing appeared to care about the well-being of the freedmen, she also seemed, like many of the other people within the United States at the time, to view most things in terms of the war; though she obviously wanted to help the freedmen, she also wanted to take the burden off of the national government so that it could focus its entire attention on the war: “At this crisis of the war, it must be seen that the responsibilities of the Government to the Army, are great and imperious – and its duties inconceivable to the common mind.”⁹⁷ In addition, she wrote of the unsurpassable involvement of Freedmen in the army, and of the fact that most of them would probably “be required in the conclusion of our National struggle.”⁹⁸ She could have proposed many other plans of action other than the states and other organizations providing assistance, but instead she chose the plan of action that would take the most burden off of the already struggling and war torn national Union government. Just like her feelings on race, it appears as if Griffing did not care which Northern state would provide aid to the Freedmen, but was instead just interested in the best outcome for the national government.

Though the letters by Gurney and Griffing included some of the most numerous – though not necessarily the most relevant – references to race and slavery within this correspondence, letters from women about these topics were rare during this time period. Though women could not be an important part of the government at the time, these two

⁹⁷ Griffing, 24 Sept. 1864.

⁹⁸ Griffing, 24 Sept. 1864.

letters demonstrate that they could still attempt to influence elections, even without being able to vote in them; they could particularly attempt to affect change through volunteer work, through their religious organizations, and through writing letters, as Gurney and Griffing did. Why, then, did more women – seen as the moral sex – not write to Lincoln, especially because he appeared to be at least a bit more willing to discuss slavery in moral terms?

Although campaigning for the election did not truly begin until the fall of 1864 – after both candidates had been nominated – letters discussing issues pertinent to the presidential election, especially race and slavery, were already being written to Lincoln in 1863 and discussed in political circles, particularly because Senatorial elections were occurring in New York during that time. Though these letters were written a year before the election, they are necessary to consider when examining the role of race within the election campaigns of 1864, both because they referred to issues that were still being discussed as the election drew nearer, and because they were written by important members of the government about topics that remained relevant and widespread until the election. In particular, there were two letters written in 1863 that are important to analyze: the first, dated October 25, was written by Henry Wilson, a founder of the Free Soil Party and a dedicated abolitionist who served as chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs during the Civil War. During his time as chairman, he also “urged...Lincoln to declare emancipation and accept freedmen into the ranks of the

Union army”]; all these things demonstrate that Wilson’s letter, written to Lincoln, is very important to study in examining race rhetoric in the campaign.⁹⁹

In his letter, which focused on politics in New York, Wilson talked about his efforts in campaigning for the Republican Party, and particularly about the idea of raising more men for the Union Army. He said that the Democrats were trying to appear more patriotic by supporting the raising of more soldiers, and that many Americans were asking why more African-American soldiers were not being called into the army. He then explained that he knew the reason for the lack of a call for these men was that there was no adequate leader “in the border states and in the conquered portions of the rebel states [to] raise men with great rapidity – fill our armies and distroy [sic] slavery.”¹⁰⁰

Wilson, like Griffing, seemed to be attempting to make African-American freedom and residency in the North more appealing to white Northerners. In making his argument, he was trying to show that African-American enlistment in the military would lower the numbers of white men required to fight, and perhaps – if African-American conscription was high enough – even end the draft. Wilson’s roles in founding the Free Soil Party and in serving as chairman in the Committee of Military Affairs make it difficult to try to figure out his motives in writing this letter and the type of influence he was trying to have on the campaign. Viewing Wilson’s statements in terms of his role as abolitionist, one could say that he was trying to appeal to the racism of voters in order to achieve his own goal – that is, the abolition of the slaves and the acceptance of those newly freed people within Northern society, and that this abolition of slavery was the

⁹⁹ United States Senate, “Biography of Henry Wilson,” 15 March 2011
<http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/art/artifact/Sculpture_22_00018.htm#bio>.

¹⁰⁰ Henry Wilson to Abraham Lincoln, 25 Oct. 1863, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

most important thing to him. Viewing them in terms of his role in the Committee, however, one could say that he was particularly interested in freeing the slaves because it would help the military and the white men who were currently enlisted. Regardless of which motive was actually his, there is no doubt that Wilson cared about the welfare of African-Americans, especially because he underlined the phrases “fill our armies and distroy slavery” and “free and slave, showing that he viewed the two as especially important.”¹⁰¹ The question here, however, is how important he deemed this issue to the *campaign*, not how much he cared about African-American rights. From the ambiguity of his motives for freeing slaves as well as his comment that these matters would be settled “when the pressure of the elections are over” – showing that the resolution of slavery-related problems was not critical – one can infer that he did not believe this issue was one to be included within the campaign.¹⁰²

One other important aspect of Wilson’s letter, though very subtle, was his mention of the speeches and actions of Montgomery Blair, Postmaster-General, which Wilson said were turning many people against Lincoln, and which others were also concerned about. In a November 21, 1863 letter from Thurlow Weed to William H. Seward, Secretary of State under Lincoln, Weed also mentioned the actions of Blair; in this case, these things played a more important – though still relatively minuscule – part in the letter. In it, Weed spoke about political affairs, particularly in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, and about his encounter with Dean Richmond, a leader of New York’s Democratic Party. In his description of this meeting, Weed referred to a “Programme for finishing Rebellion,” which, according to the footnotes of his letter, was

¹⁰¹ Wilson, 25 Oct. 1863.

¹⁰² Wilson, 25 Oct. 1863.

Weed's own plan for "A More Vigorous Prosecution of the War," proposed in November 1863.¹⁰³ This program was intended to bring the Union back to the way it was before secession and the war – Weed wanted a coalition of both parties – so it did not include the idea of emancipation. This lack of race or slavery rhetoric within the plan caused many staunch abolitionists to worry, particularly that Lincoln would be so influenced by Weed so as to "leave open the possibility of the revocation of the Emancipation Proclamation" within his 1863 Annual Message.¹⁰⁴ One such abolitionist was Senator Zachariah Chandler from Michigan, who, on November 15 of the same year, sent Lincoln a letter denouncing Weed's message.

In the letter, Chandler tried to convince Lincoln not to listen to Weed and his plans for many reasons. The first he gave is that in his months of experience "upon the stump" in Illinois, Ohio, and New York he did not find one Republican or "real War Democrat" out of the 200,000 plus that he spoke with who supported – in what way he did not say – Weed or Blair.¹⁰⁵ He also wrote of the speakers who were present in New York during the campaign, none of whose message Chandler believed had been approved of by Weed. Chandler also tried to convince Lincoln that these men were to be trusted because he said that they, along with the Emancipation Proclamation, were the ones who carried New York and Ohio for the Republicans. Building on this, he said that if Lincoln's administration would cooperate, they would be able to gain the support of every state in the South: "the Slave holders must go down with their Rebellion and every

¹⁰³ Thurlow Weed to William H. Seward, 21 Nov. 1863, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹⁰⁴ Weed, 21 Nov. 1863.

¹⁰⁵ Zachariah Chandler to Abraham Lincoln, 15 Nov. 1863, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

man who upholds or Sympathizes with them goes down.”¹⁰⁶ He continued, saying that Lincoln had the capacity and the means to take over the current situation, and that there were organizations within the border and free states that had over one million voters who supported Lincoln. To him, not one of those voters supported men like Weed or Blair, and so he felt that they were of no use to the party; in fact, he cited the fact that he and his fellow party members carried almost every state based upon Lincoln’s Proclamation, and therefore that Lincoln should continue speaking the abolitionist-approved message, and that the radical Republicans were Lincoln’s true supporters.

Lincoln’s response to Chandler came five days later, on November 20, 1863; in it, he did not seem concerned in the slightest about the “threat” posed by Weed, and said that he had indeed recently met with former governor Edwin D. Morgan of New York and Thurlow Weed. He continued, saying that when speaking to the men, neither had mentioned the idea of Lincoln’s putting conservative sentiments into his 1863 Annual Message. The president finished the short response with the statement that he was glad that he had not done anything wrong to harm his election results, and that he “hopes to ‘stand firm’ enough to not go backward, and yet not go forward fast enough to wreck the country’s cause.”¹⁰⁷ Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this letter was its tone: Lincoln appeared to intentionally put some humor into his statements to Chandler, particularly when he said that he was happy that he had not, “by native depravity, or undue evil influences, done anything bad enough to prevent the good result [winning the

¹⁰⁶ Chandler, 15 Nov. 1863.

¹⁰⁷ Abraham Lincoln to Zachariah Chandler, 20 Nov. 1863, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

election].”¹⁰⁸ One can posit that Lincoln included this humor possibly because he thought Chandler’s fears were irrational, or possibly because he felt the whole issue – and all the attention being put on it – was ridiculous. Therefore, looking at this response, as well as at the original letter by Chandler, can provide some insight into the role of race during the 1864 campaign.

Though written a full year before the election, the letters show that there were indeed people during this time period who believed that slavery was an important enough issue to bring up in regards to election success. Judging from Chandler’s letter, however, these people seemed to be mostly ardent anti-slavery men, and therefore cannot be seen as indicative of the general population. Obviously, the radical wing of the party would want slavery and race to be important issues within any type of political act, whether it be a local speech, an Annual Message, or an election campaign; because of this, everything such people said in relation to slavery has to be weighed carefully, especially during the tumultuous time in which the letter was written. A caveat to this idea, however, is that Chandler was a Senator, and so obviously had some influence with his constituents and with the president. Therefore, his pushing the anti-slavery issue might have had much more sway with Lincoln than had it been some abolitionist. The question here, though, is not how much support this issue had, but instead how big of an issue it was made in the 1864 campaign, which cannot be determined through reading Chandler’s letter. Lincoln’s response may be more telling – though he alluded to race and slavery issues, it was only very laterally, and in response to Chandler’s concerns. Other than that, he more or less brushed off the issue, saying that he hoped he would not do anything else to jeopardize

¹⁰⁸ Lincoln, 20 Nov. 1863.

his election chances, but not specifically mentioning any one thing that he would do that could do so, let alone make slavery an issue in the election campaign. It is important to note, however, that public opinion at the time was racist, even in the North; in writing his response, Lincoln did not want to dodge the issue of slavery, but he also did not want to get ahead of public opinion, adding another dimension to his omission of race and slavery in his response.

Another important aspect of the two 1863 letters to Lincoln was the reference to the racist actions and speeches – one in particular – of Postmaster General Montgomery Blair. This speech was entitled “On the Revolutionary Schemes of the Ultra Abolitionists, and in Defence of the Policy of the President,” and was given at the Unconditional Union Meeting in Rockville, Maryland on October 3, 1863.¹⁰⁹ Both Weed and Chandler referred to the anti-abolitionist ideas discussed in the speech in their letters to Lincoln, with Chandler viewing these ideas in a negative light. In the sections about abolitionism in his speech, Blair mostly spoke about the “efforts of the ultra Abolitionists to blot out the Southern States and receive them back only as Territories of the Union.”¹¹⁰ Importantly, however, he did say that the abolitionists planned to create “a caste of another color by amalgamating the black element with the free white labor of our land,” which would lead to both a “hybrid race” and a “hybrid Government.”¹¹¹ This was an appeal to the racial fears of the citizens to get them to vote for Lincoln and what Blair saw as his more conservative – meaning not subscribing to abolitionist policies – Republican Party, and is

¹⁰⁹ Montgomery Blair, “Speech of the Hon. Montgomery Blair,” Oct. 1863, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.

¹¹⁰ Blair, Oct. 1863.

¹¹¹ Blair, Oct. 1863.

especially important given the Democratic miscegenation hoax. Blair thus anticipated the idea of the hoax as a way of attacking the radical wing of the Republican Party.

After examining these 1863 letters, as well as the relevant letters to Lincoln in 1864, still cannot fully determine the amount of race and slavery rhetoric in the election. Therefore, it is also necessary to examine other Republican documents and speeches that included these topics, particularly those included in Lincoln's personal papers. One such document is a printed broadside entitled "Slavery and the Next President," published by Baker & Godwin in October 1864. The author – though nameless – was obviously in favor of Lincoln's victory, and so framed the necessity of this victory in terms of the abolition of slavery. Though the author began the broadside with a discussion of the candidates in the upcoming election, in order to understand the great influence slavery had over the author, particularly in terms of the election, it is necessary to look first at the arguments the author made about the concept of slavery and its role in the Civil War. The first major idea the author brought up in regard to slavery is the fact that the institution, as defined by the laws of many states in the Confederacy, gave slaves the same status as animals: "he is the same as a horse or a cart; he cannot marry, nor claim his children, he cannot be guilty of theft, just as dogs or horses cannot marry or steal."¹¹²

He believed that these laws that gave the slaves the status of animals also took away their moral nature; additionally, he stated that if this is true, then it brought up the question of what the exact qualities were that made men moral. The author answered this question, saying that those who could distinguish between good and evil acts, or between the truth and lies were moral, and since slaves could do that, then they, too, should be

¹¹² "Slavery and the Next President," Oct. 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

considered as moral beings, not just as objects. He continued trying to determine the perceived inferiority of the slave, saying that many believed that it stemmed from other differences between African-Americans and whites. What are these differences, though, and the qualities that supposedly made someone civilized? He said that African-Americans loved their families and home, were able to buy and sell, could understand language, feel the oppression of slavery, and more; if these were all the qualities that made someone civilized but still did not prove that African-Americans were the same as whites, then what would? Finally, the author stated that in looks, African-Americans were seen by many as similar to animals; to him, however, African-Americans could “apply language,” were therefore moral, and were therefore *not* animals.¹¹³

After this, the author spoke about the other evils of slavery besides the stereotypes placed upon African-Americans by whites, and of what these evils and prejudices showed about the whites. One of the most important of these evils had to do with the fact that slaveholders were not allowing African-Americans the opportunity to become educated. The author aptly termed this evil the whites’ “willful blindness,” and said that it showed both the capacity of the African-Americans to learn and the fear of the white owners of this capacity.¹¹⁴ He also said that, though the slaveholders may not have recognized the capabilities of the African-Americans and the similarities between the slaves and themselves, the fact that the slaves worshiped and did the deeds of God meant that, to Him, they were the same. Why, then, he asked, shouldn’t everyone else view the issue in the same manner? The answer to this question, he said, was another question asked by slaveholders: if slavery existed in ancient, patriarchal times, why should it not continue

¹¹³ “Slavery and the Next President,” Oct. 1864.

¹¹⁴ “Slavery and the Next President,” Oct. 1864.

into the future? To this the author answered that standards of both morality and religion had progressed since those times, and, subsequently, that anyone who believed that slavery should exist did not “live up to the highest standard of morality,” as well as that “the crime of maintaining slavery is the crime of making a brother a slave.”¹¹⁵

From all of these ideas, the author came to a conclusion: “slavery as it exists in these United States is the greatest, the most excessive wrong that can be tolerated by a Christian nation.”¹¹⁶ Adding to this conclusion, he also posited that slavery may have died out gradually had the South not rebelled, and that slavery was one of the main causes of this rebellion and of the resulting war. The only way for the war to be won and the Union to be restored was the “total extinction of slavery,” a solution that would only be possible if “every patriot” fulfilled his “duty not only to convince himself, but others” of that fact.¹¹⁷ The only one of the presidential candidates within the 1864 election, according to the author, who was able to fulfill this duty and reform the morality of the people, was Lincoln, who he said had already done a great deal for the abolition of slavery within the country: “If Mr. Lincoln is sound on no other point, and this is the point of all others, here he stands as firm as a rock.”¹¹⁸

By itself, this last statement is enough to conclude that some people believed that slavery was a very important issue in the 1864 campaign; to the author, it was not simply “very important,” but instead the issue that had – or at least should have – the capability of deciding the entire election. Not only was no other issue as important as the abolition of slavery and the “re-moralizing” of the nation and of its people, but Abraham Lincoln

¹¹⁵ “Slavery and the Next President,” Oct. 1864.

¹¹⁶ “Slavery and the Next President,” Oct. 1864.

¹¹⁷ “Slavery and the Next President,” Oct. 1864.

¹¹⁸ “Slavery and the Next President,” Oct. 1864.

and his Republicans were also the only people who could successfully do it; the statement also shows that there were some members of the Republican Party who were not afraid of a racist electorate. Before the author made this statement, however – in fact, even before he divulged the evils of slavery – the author wrote more generally about the importance of slavery in the upcoming election, and the impact that the election could have on the future existence of the institution. To him, the circumstances surrounding the election, as well as the election itself, laid the groundwork for the perfect opportunity for the people to understand the “wickedness and inhumanity” of slavery, as well as its detrimental impact on society.¹¹⁹

While Lincoln “would utterly extinguish this curse [slavery] from among us,” the anonymous author argued, McClellan “would treat with the rebels, and allow them still further to practice this injustice which has caused this war.”¹²⁰ To him, understanding the issue of slavery and the ills it brought upon society was of the utmost importance to the American citizens; if they did not form an understanding, the contention between the North and the South would continue eternally. In addition to understanding the full extent of slavery, the people, to the author, also needed to understand the importance of the election and of choosing between the candidates, particularly because of the divergent views of the two men. In his opinion, the choice was obvious, because “the platform on which the Democratic candidate stands...is as disloyal as ever a body framed, and a vote for Democracy under the Chicago platform, is a vote for peace through the virtual triumph of traitors.”¹²¹ Skipping back to the end of the broadside, the author concluded

¹¹⁹ “Slavery and the Next President,” Oct. 1864.

¹²⁰ “Slavery and the Next President,” Oct. 1864.

¹²¹ “Slavery and the Next President,” Oct. 1864.

that voters should choose Lincoln as their president, particularly during that tumultuous period and because he already had experience in office and with dealing with the issue of slavery; if they chose McClellan, it was possible that the nation would fall into ruin. If Lincoln were elected, he, along with the soldiers, would be able to defeat slavery and restore the Union – so said the broadside.

This document is one of the few documents that spoke extensively about slavery and race as issues during the period before the 1864 election and linked these issues to the election and to which candidate should be elected. Though the majority of the document focused on the moral and other wrongs of slavery, all this talk was intended to build support for the most important point: a vote for Lincoln was a vote for the abolition of slavery and for the restoration of the Union. The author, by directly linking Lincoln to abolition, directly linked slavery to the 1864 election, and made it clear that, at least to some people, slavery was not just an important issue in the election campaign, but was *the* most important issue. In fact, this broadside can even be seen as an extended critique of the racist foundations of slavery, inextricably tying the two issues together and again showing the significance of voting for Lincoln in the upcoming election. To determine whether the author of the pamphlet is relatively unique in the importance he puts on slavery and race at the time, one must look further into other documents released at the same time; after doing so, one can conclude that the amount and importance of slavery rhetoric to the author of this broadside is not representative of the rest of the documents and speeches in Lincoln's papers.

In addition to the broadside, there was another printed circular within Lincoln's papers from the time of the election that also dealt with slavery to a relatively large

extent. The circular, titled “America, North and South: The Rebellion & The War,” was published on October 29, 1864, and ended with a note from Thomas Nicholson, who may be presumed to be the author. In the note, Nicholson said that the allegations within the pamphlet may have been surprising to some, particularly those people who knew about current affairs only from reading newspapers such as the *Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Standard*, but not to those who were well-versed in both sides of what he termed “the American Question”; through his reference to these newspapers, the reader realizes that he was writing to a British audience, which is important to consider because they could not be prospective voters.¹²² The author wrote that the points within the circular were something simply to be thought about – which makes sense because of the British audience – but that they were all true and based off of specific evidence, which he also provided.

In the circular, under the main heading is another heading entitled “Things that Are Not True,” followed by a list of 28 specific ideas about the war, Lincoln, slavery, and the actions of the North and the South that seemed to be under some contention. Out of these 28 ideas, there were 12 that related in some way to slavery or African-Americans; by itself, this proportion is telling, but what is even more telling is the fact that the majority of these 12 dealt with slavery issues deemed important at the time, and not just minor race issues. For example, issue six alleged that “it is not true...that this Rebellion and War had any other origin than the accursed system of Slavery, with its inevitable concomitants.”¹²³ Additionally, the circular denied the truth of ideas such as that the

¹²² Thomas Nicholson, “America, North and South: The Rebellion & The War,” 29 Oct. 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹²³ Nicholson, 29 Oct. 1864, 1.

slaves and other African-Americans did not benefit from the Emancipation Proclamation, that African-Americans did not want to enter the army or did not care about the war, that lasting peace was possible without the end of slavery, that the Southern states showed any inclination that they would free their slaves, that it would be difficult or dangerous to immediately free the slaves, and that there would still be problems between the North and the South if slavery were to be abolished.

Though the inclusion of the points about slavery in the circular is important in analyzing the prevalence of the issues of race and slavery during the time of the election, there was one point that was even more important than any of these: that which spoke specifically of Lincoln in relation to slavery, particularly that though he emancipated slaves from the rebel states, he was not “indifferent about the freedom of the Slaves in the loyal States.”¹²⁴ Had the circular not included anything about Lincoln, it would appear to have simply been a statement on the ongoing war and its causes, subjects that were continually under discussion, and which therefore would have no impact on the ultimate question the reader wishes to answer. The inclusion of these points, however, brought the circular to a whole new level, because it showed that it may very well have been written for the specific purpose of influencing voters in the upcoming election. Though the supposed author wrote in the note that the purpose of the circular was simply to educate, one must infer – from the extent to which he tries to correct misconceptions about slavery and his statement that all his facts are proven – that it is actually intended to serve the purpose of being a campaign document. Because members of the original audience could

¹²⁴ Nicholson, 29 Oct. 1864, 1.

not vote in the election, one must also assume that the author meant for the circular to be dispersed throughout the United States.

In addition to these two important documents, there were also a few speeches made very near to the election that included thoughts about slavery, and which are important to consider in answering the question of the inclusion of slavery and race in campaign rhetoric. The first lecture, entitled “The American Question” with the theme “The Case of the North Stated and Upheld,” was given by the Reverend Thaddeus O’Malley on October 3, 1864 at the Theatre of the Mechanics’ Institute, which was presumably in Dublin, Ireland. One can assume that the speech was given there from the fact that both O’Malley and Richard D. Webb, who was “in the chair” at the time of the lecture, were Irishmen, as well as that there is not evidence that either man traveled to or spoke in America; additionally, the only account of a “Mechanics’ Institute” is of the one in Dublin.¹²⁵ Though there is not clear evidence that O’Malley spent time in the United States, he nevertheless was involved in politics and anti-slavery measures; O’Malley was even called “The Father of Federalism in Ireland.”¹²⁶ These facts should be kept in mind when one analyzes the importance of this speech in answering the question of the amount of relevant slavery-related rhetoric dispersed during the campaign.

The fact that the speaker was Irish and that the lecture took place in Ireland is an especially interesting one for many reasons. First of all, it shows that the importance of the issues surrounding secession and the Civil War extended all the way to Europe, and that Europeans cared about those issues. Secondly, it may decrease the importance of the

¹²⁵ Thaddeus O’Malley, “The American Question,” 3 Oct. 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹²⁶ Library Ireland, “Thaddeus O’Malley,” 12 April 2011
<<http://www.libraryireland.com/biography/ThaddeusOMalley.php>>.

points made within the speech, because O'Malley was not directly involved in the politics in America, and so may not have had all the knowledge needed to draw an accurate conclusion. Additionally, the fact that the speech is actually referred to as a "lecture," as well as the fact that many of the sections of the lecture are titled so as to imply that they are meant to teach, not persuade – for example, "The Facts about the Tariff" and "The Whole Truth About Slavery" – makes one believe that O'Malley was not attempting to change anyone's opinion or necessarily make slavery the most important issue, but only to inform them on a subject of which they were not entirely clear. Through this idea, one can draw a final important conclusion from the preliminary examination of the document: the lecture was not intended to be any sort of campaign rhetoric, though it still must be understood in context of the upcoming election. The fact that the issue of slavery within the United States spread all the way to Ireland shows that it was extremely important to understanding American issues, and therefore extremely important within American society during the time period.

One of the most important points that O'Malley made within his speech was that the issue of slavery, right up to when the rebellion began, was not so much a North versus South issue, but instead an issue between the Republicans and Democrats. To him, the Republican platform was not to interfere with slavery in any of the states where it already existed, but instead to prevent it from spreading into any of the up to then unoccupied areas; additionally, the abolitionists, whom he refers to as "the more advanced portion of the party," wanted all of the slaves to be immediately emancipated.¹²⁷ The Democrats, on the other hand, wanted to "compromise" with slavery, which included allowing it to

¹²⁷ O'Malley, 3 Oct. 1864.

extend into the free states. The conflict that was between both parties soon fell by to the wayside, however, when the war began; all of the previous arguments were disregarded in favor of the national cry “Slavery or no slavery – the Union before all things.”¹²⁸

The Reverend’s speech can be useful in attempting to determine the scope and significance of race and slavery in the 1864 United States election in a few ways. Though O’Malley was not American and was not giving his lecture within the United States, the fact that the lecture occurred around the time of the American election nevertheless shows that the issue of slavery was important enough to move across the ocean. While one must always keep in mind O’Malley’s bias against slavery while examining his statements, there are still a few conclusions one can draw about the role – both the existence and its degree – of slavery and race rhetoric in the election. First, though it appears as if slavery seemed to the Europeans to be a very – if not the most – important issue within the United States, one cannot conclude that the fervor about race and slavery in America was present because of the election and the rhetoric released in its midst. These two issues had been important in the United States even before Lincoln had been elected the first time, and were thought by many to have been a cause of the war. Therefore, slavery’s being an important topic in America was not unique to the time of the 1864 election, and cannot be taken as representative of the rhetoric produced especially for the election and to influence voters. Secondly, even though topics regarding slavery within the United States had spread all the way to Ireland, showing that it was an important topic within American politics at the time, the importance could have stemmed just as easily from its role in the war than from its role within the election.

¹²⁸ O’Malley, 3 Oct. 1864.

Though one cannot make a definite conclusion in this case, even the doubt that it puts in one's mind about the amount or significance of slavery rhetoric in the election is important. Additionally, though O'Malley spoke mainly of differences between the North, or at least the Republican government, and the South – the Union and the Confederacy – he also briefly mentioned differences between the Republicans and Democrats; the fact that he did so does not necessarily give the reader any indication that he was saying that slavery was a major issue between these two parties, especially in the election. Instead, it actually demonstrates that, to him, there did not seem to be as much of a struggle between the two parties as there was between the North and the South; one could even say that O'Malley appeared to believe that the differences between the parties was negligible, particularly compared to the differences between the Union and the Confederacy, and especially when it came to their ideas about race in general. Finally, upon examining the obvious biases of the Reverend against both the South and the institution of slavery, one can firmly conclude that the remarks made about slavery and race within his speech are not indicative of an increased occurrence of slavery rhetoric during the 1864 presidential election within the United States.

The second speech within Lincoln's papers that is important to consider in trying to determine the prevalence of race rhetoric dispersed during the election is entitled the "Reply of Hon. William D. Kelley to George Northrop, Esq.," and was given on October 6, 1864 in West Philadelphia Hall. The speech, which appears to be No. 7 in a series, was given by William D. Kelley as a part of the Pennsylvania Congressional election; it did not focus on slavery or race, but instead on rebutting the previous statements of George Northrop, which included a few about those two topics. Though the speech made by

Northrop that supposedly contained an incorrect representation of Kelley's words does not appear to be available, one can glean from Kelley's speech that Northrop previously stated that Kelley said that "this was a war for the wages of the negro."¹²⁹ Instead, according to Kelley, he had actually said that the war had begun because of the conflict between two different parts of civilization: the group that believed that the capitalist should own the laborer, and the other group – the system in the North – that believed that every person was legally entitled to wages for all the work he did. Additionally, Kelley said that he also previously stated that

"his [Lincoln's] Southern friends and political brothers" had fired upon the flag and begun this war for the extension of slavery and the extinction, so far as concerned the Southern States, of the right of the laboring man or woman to wages, whether that man or woman be white or black.¹³⁰

From this address, the reader receives the impression that slavery did play an important part in the election. While, to many, this may not seem an apt conclusion – the speech, after all, did not focus on slavery itself, but on correcting the supposed misinformation given by Northrop, the fact that slavery was even mentioned in this smaller-scale speech shows that it permeated throughout society and was influential enough to have an effect on something like this debate.

In addition to his comments in this speech, Kelley also made some comments in other speeches in this series that are not included within Lincoln's papers, but that nevertheless can be seen as related – directly or indirectly – to slavery and race. Though some of these speeches were given after the speech included within Lincoln's papers, it

¹²⁹ William D. Kelley, "Reply of Hon. William D. Kelley to George Northrop, Esq.," 6 Oct. 1864, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹³⁰ Kelley, 6 Oct. 1864.

appears necessary, in trying to understand what role race played in the campaign, to study the speech included in the papers before studying any other speeches in the series, even if they occurred before said speech. Obviously, the inclusion of the particular speech within the collection of the president's papers means that it was deemed important, perhaps even more important than the rest of the speeches; the fact that the seventh speech that was the one included, rather than the first or the second, could also be telling. Though one must look more closely at the other speeches before drawing an absolute conclusion, he may hypothesize that this speech was earmarked because it was more beneficial to Lincoln's campaign, or because it contained more slavery rhetoric than the others.

The first of these speeches was given September 23, 1864 in the Hall of the Spring Garden Institute in Philadelphia. Kelley spoke a great deal about the Constitution, and, though he did not speak about the constitutionality of slavery, what he said, especially viewed in respect to O'Malley's lecture, could be important in determining the frequency of slavery rhetoric related to the election. In this section, Kelley stated that either the armies or the voters – through the *election* – would determine the question that he saw as one of the most important: was the Constitution the supreme law of the states? Though this is a short question, and one that was asked in relation to the secession of the Southern states and not to slavery, it still has an impact on one's understanding of the extent to which slavery was spoken about in the election. The question of the power of the Constitution was an important one from the time the document was written, and was especially important in terms of the continued existence of slavery, as one can see in O'Malley's lecture. In particular, when studying this speech in terms of the Reverend's claims, one can understand more fully Kelley's emphasis on the election's ability to

determine the validity of the Constitution. If the voters in the election really were the ones who held all the power in this determination, as Kelley said, and if the Constitution does not condone slavery, but instead provides for its gradual elimination, as O'Malley said, does it not follow that the election was actually very important in terms of slavery? This does not necessarily mean that there was much slavery rhetoric during the election, but it does perhaps make a greater case for the belief that Kelley was speaking of slavery-related issues in this series of debates.

In the same speech, Kelley proved that the issue of slavery was spreading into local politics through an inclusion of more anti-slavery rhetoric. Though the intent of this speech was not to speak about abolitionism – in fact, he called his foray into the topic “a brief digression” – the fact that he chose to speak on this subject within this campaign speech demonstrates that it was a somewhat important issue, though one cannot be sure of why he found it important. In this section of his speech, he was speaking of the “Democratic Secretary of the Navy,” and of how he was from New England, which he called “the land of Abolitionists!”¹³¹ Being from Pennsylvania, however, Kelley said that he was wary of this claim, because he believed that it was “robbing Pennsylvania of the brightest jewel in her coronet” – that is, the creation of abolitionism.¹³² He said that the right of man to wages for his work came from Pennsylvania, and that Pennsylvania passed an act in March 1780 that abolished slavery within the Commonwealth forever. In saying these things, Kelley phrased his descriptions of abolition in almost divine terms, saying that the Pennsylvania act was passed “in grateful recognition of God’s goodness,”

¹³¹ William D. Kelley, “Reply of Hon. William D. Kelley to George Northrop, Esq.,” 23 Sept. 1864, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹³² Kelley, 23 Sept. 1864.

and that “in the literature of America, there is no prouder or grander chapter than the preamble to that law” that says that every laboring person within Pennsylvania is guaranteed wages for his work.¹³³ In closing this brief digression, Kelley continued the trend of praising abolitionism, calling the act of giving every man his freedom and wages a great honor bestowed upon his state.

Though this section is very brief, and does not actually pertain to the rest of the speech, the fact that he felt the need to include it is telling. Kelley obviously viewed abolitionism as a positive idea, and was adamant about making sure Pennsylvania was recognized as a beacon of the movement and its ideas about freedom. In a time when many people within the government were more than hesitant to claim ownership of any idea that may have been seen as politically dangerous, particularly near an important election, Kelley’s claim to and support of abolitionism is remarkable. Though a main question one is trying to determine in studying these documents is if there even *was* anti-slavery speech present during this pivotal election, it is also helpful, in answering the whole question about race in the election, to determine *how important* the race issues were to each document or speech. For example, though Kelley’s statements about his pride in abolitionism were a part of this speech, they did not, by any means, play a pivotal role in the speech. One cannot even question if, perhaps, Kelley meant for them to play any more of a part in his speech than one is led to believe: the man himself made sure to note that, while important, these statements were just a side note, and not pertinent to his remarks or to his platform.

¹³³ Kelley, 23 Sept. 1864.

In his September 28 speech at the Spring Garden Institute, Kelley made mention of slavery once again, this time in response to a question that Northrop apparently asked him. Given Kelley's remarks, one is led to believe that Northrop asked whether Kelley approved of any of the twenty-three acts of Congress – one cannot be sure to which acts he referred – that were to give African-Americans all the rights and privileges given to white men. Kelley answered that there were no laws of the kind on the books, and that he would give a more inclusive answer later if Northrop requested. Kelley admitted that this was only a “partial answer,” but he also said that it was a “preliminary remark”; however, it seems that he did not actually intend to ever speak more about the issue, but that he was instead just dodging the Democratic charge that Republicans supported African-American equality.¹³⁴ Regardless of this fact, these statements are more or less unimportant to the speech as a whole, and do not give the reader any more reason to believe that slavery or race were important issues – or at least important enough to mention frequently within a Senatorial campaign – to Kelley at this time.

Later in the same speech, however, Kelley did appear to have made statements both important to the speech and to answering the question of the prevalence of race in campaign rhetoric. These statements were made in regards to the Democratic Party, and to what its beliefs were about slavery and the South; to him, the Democrats wanted the Union – and the Republicans – to ask the South and its “slave masters” for forgiveness after completing an armistice and surrendering to the South.¹³⁵ He also spoke of the beliefs of the Democrats in relation to slavery, particularly that they believed that slaves

¹³⁴ William D. Kelley, “Reply of Hon. William D. Kelley to George Northrop, Esq.,” 28 Sept. 1864, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹³⁵ Kelley, 28 Sept. 1864.

did not deserve wages for their work and, because of this, denounced New England and the North, where all men, African-American or white, had the same freedoms.

Additionally, Kelley made the bold statement that, within his speeches, he “shall proceed to show that their [the Democrats’] purpose is...to dismember the Union in the hope of organizing a Union as a great slave empire.”¹³⁶

This statement, though giving the impression that Kelley believed this threat of a slave empire was an important issue to consider in choosing a party in the upcoming election, was also an important political debate tactic: from this small mention of slavery, Kelley could possibly create a whirlwind of panic among voters, which Democrats would then have to deal with in their own campaigns. In doing so, it would appear as if the Democrats wanted to make slavery an important issue in the campaign, which may not have gone over well with voters given the circumstances of the time. He also could have made this statement in order to take some of the slavery-related focus off the Republicans, particularly because Northrop had accused the party of favoring African-American equality. Though there are many possible explanations for Kelley’s statements about slavery, every one of the explanations can show that the issue was a relatively important one to Kelley during the election, regardless of whether he truly believed in the issue as a moral one or if he just wanted to take advantage of it to win the election.

Later in the same speech, Kelley spoke once again – albeit somewhat indirectly – about slavery, noting that certain states, particularly Maryland, were much better off and their people happier and freer now that they were under the control of Republicans. He noted that abolitionists were now, within the state, free to speak about slavery to all

¹³⁶ Kelley, 28 Sept. 1864.

audiences, whether they were comprised of African-Americans, white, slaves, or slaveholders: “the man who speaks most of freedom, and shows most plainly the curse of slavery, is most welcome in that region as an orator.”¹³⁷ He also mentioned West Virginia, saying that the Republican Party saved it from the “slave-driving aristocrats of East Virginia” and the despotism of the slave powers.¹³⁸ However, though this September 28 speech definitely included statements that lead one to believe that he was trying to have an influence on the upcoming presidential election, it lacks enough specific and persuasive rhetoric about slavery to cause one to believe that he was trying to greatly influence the national election through the use of race rhetoric. Thus, even though one recognizes that Kelley’s use of race and slavery in his speeches was important in that he sometimes attempted to employ them to win votes, one also recognizes that even this use was not frequent or significant enough to merit the conclusion that race was an important part of the election campaign.

However, after examining Kelley’s September 29 speech at the Spring Garden Institute, one is required to slightly amend the previous conclusion that Kelley was not attempting to use slavery rhetoric to influence the national election, and instead state that he was in fact attempting to use slavery as an issue, but in the *state* election in which he was a candidate. His use of this rhetoric as a way to try to win his own state election can be seen in this speech when he returned once again to Northrop’s question about Kelley’s views on the supposed twenty-three acts pertaining to African-American rights that were being passed by Congress. In particular, he spoke of his pattern of voting for every act that was passed by Lincoln’s Republicans, saying that, in a sense, he was “responsible for

¹³⁷ Kelley, 28 Sept. 1864.

¹³⁸ Kelley, 28 Sept. 1864.

all those acts which go to ameliorate the condition of the negroes, abandoned by their masters.”¹³⁹ Additionally, and very importantly, Kelley said that he voted to put the African-Americans into the military, particularly “to enlist them...to equip them...to pay them,” and that he did not understand why anyone would have a problem with this fact, particularly because African-American enlistment into the military meant that more men – particularly white men – would not have to join.¹⁴⁰

This direct appeal to the white men, including both men of fighting age and their families – “I do not see why you, young man, should be dragged from your home, your profitable employment, and the girl of your heart, to save the rebels slave from death” – gives the reader an even clearer idea of why Kelley spoke about race within this debate.¹⁴¹ He obviously spoke of these things because he knew that he could use them to his advantage, particularly in terms of the war: in the tumultuous wartime period, he knew that bringing up the fact that African-American soldiers entering into the war could decrease the number of white men being enlisted would be a way to gain votes from those white men. However, he never specifically stated how this would actually work, instead being very ambiguous about how it would be carried out and only focusing on the positive outcome for white soldiers; this ambiguity was a popular Republican campaign tactic from the beginning, and was also often used by the Free Soil Party.

Kelley also appealed to white voters through the use of rhetoric related to African-Americans in the military in his October 3 speech at Manayunk. Adding onto what he said in his previous speech, in this speech, Kelley said that African-Americans

¹³⁹ Kelley, 29 Sept. 1864.

¹⁴⁰ Kelley, 29 Sept. 1864.

¹⁴¹ Kelley, 29 Sept. 1864.

within the Union were not working in the fields or helping the rebels in the war, but instead were fighting for the United States: “They carry with them the American flag...they will aid in bringing back the country covered by the Confederacy.”¹⁴² Though he did not state it directly, one can also gather from Kelley’s statements the fact that he believed that, with the lack of white soldiers within the army, many African-American soldiers could have been used to benefit the military in the war, if only the Democrats had not influenced the voters and made them unwilling to use the African-Americans. Kelley obviously held disdain for the Democrats and the prejudices of the voters, even asking any soldiers – particularly those who had fought on the same field as African-American regiments – present at his speech if the African-Americans were not good men and soldiers, and if they would not “die fearlessly for their freedom and our country and its flag?”¹⁴³

Kelley obviously believed that painting African-American freedom in terms of benefiting the war effort would be a very useful tool in helping him win his election, whether he was speaking about African-Americans fighting alongside or instead of whites. This idea is especially evident after one reads the very next line in his speech, where he said that if he was re-elected, he would be in favor of enlisting as many African-Americans as possible. Though this part of the speech was interesting, what Kelley said next was even more so: he, like Wilson, returned to the issue of African-American enlistment allowing more white soldiers to return home, saying that if half a million African-Americans joined the military, he would attempt to bring home all white

¹⁴² William D. Kelley, “Reply of Hon. William D. Kelley to George Northrop, Esq.,” 3 Oct. 1864, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

¹⁴³ Kelley, 3 Oct. 1864.

soldiers who desired to leave the military. He even went so far as to imply that voting for Northrop would indicate that those voters valued the lives of African-Americans more than the lives of their own sons or brothers, an idea that would not go over well with Americans at the time. Though it would appear as if Kelley was trying to play on the race prejudices of his audience, his statements also point towards his trying to play the war card, convincing them that if they were to vote for him – which would lead to freedom of the African-Americans – their sons and brothers would no longer have to fight in the bloody war. In fact, Kelley made sure to reassure his audience in his aims: “I am not for the negro before the white man.”¹⁴⁴

In analyzing Kelley’s speeches – each one part of a debate between himself and Northrop in the Pennsylvania Congressional election – in terms of slavery, one first notices how often the Republican candidate spoke of the institution. Though varying in degree, Kelley spoke of slavery in every one of his debate speeches. However, when one takes a closer look, one realizes that many of Kelley’s references to slavery were in relation to the constitutionality of various issues, the proceedings of the war, or issues between the two federal parties or between the Union and the Confederacy; he did not include these issues simply in order to speak about slavery’s importance in relation to them. Instead, he spoke of these issues because he felt that they were the most important issues of the day, and that he could win the election through discussing them, and partly through tying slavery to them. A final important idea to consider when examining Kelley’s speeches is the fact that he was once a Democrat, and later became one of the founders of the Republican Party. Due to this fact, one cannot be surprised that the man

¹⁴⁴ Kelley, 3 Oct. 1864.

sometimes spoke of the national parties and their issues, and therefore cannot chalk this fact up to his attempting to bring national issues into the state elections. Once again, this demonstrates that he was not trying to imply in any way that the issues he discussed in his campaign were also national issues.

Though it appears as if race and particularly slavery were important topics in many of the letters and speeches by citizens and members of the Republican Party, one must remember that quantity and quality are two very different things. Though these topics are included in many of the documents, they are not the crux of these documents, and instead are often just mentioned as brief side issues that do not seem to be of any importance to the writers of the letters, except for the abolitionists. The letters from these abolitionists, though full of references to slavery and race, are not representative of the majority of letters to Lincoln during this time, and so cannot be used to determine the amount of race rhetoric in the election. Similarly, there were some Republicans, such as the author of “Slavery and the Next President,” who were sometimes surprisingly willing to discuss slavery and race, particularly because they were still wary and defensive on the issues of slavery and race. This again, however, was not the norm among Republicans.

Even when Republican politicians whose policies and beliefs were more in line with those of the Republican Party *did* speak of slavery in their speeches, it was often for reasons – like using the subject as an example in order to make certain points about constitutionality or to discredit the Democrats – other than believing that slavery was an integral part of the campaign. Kelley was one of these politicians, and was also representative of another common Republican pattern: the use of ambiguity in slavery and race rhetoric. One can especially see this in Kelley’s appeal to white men and the

families of white soldiers, showing that the Republicans liked to retain the ambiguity of the original Free Soil Party appeal; while allowing African-Americans to enlist would advance their claims to citizenship, it would also allow the white men to escape from military service. This was in the same vein as the Free Soil idea that keeping slavery out of the territories – serving the interests of abolitionists – would also serve the purpose of keeping African-Americans out of the towns of white settlers – serving the interests of more racist whites. Leaving these statements open to some interpretation allowed his audience to view them as they wanted, with the benefit of Kelley not having to explicitly state any potentially controversial opinions.

From the lack of slavery rhetoric in Lincoln's speeches, the use of this rhetoric in letters and speeches by other Republicans only to more easily make points about subjects they actually cared about, and the tendency for Republicans to frame these issues in ambiguous terms, one can conclude that the Republicans definitely did not believe that slavery or race were important issues in the election campaign. While some members of the party were more willing to talk freely about slavery and race, these members were not the rule, but the exception. Similarly, though there was more seemingly "true" slavery rhetoric in the Democratic speeches and campaign documents, the tendency of the party members to only bring up these issues of race and slavery when there was nothing else for them to base their campaign upon, one can also conclude that the issues were not important parts of their campaign. Though rhetoric by Democrats like Jeremiah Black is very radical, one must remember that there is a marked spectrum of opinion on these issues in the party; through examining all the Democratic campaign rhetoric, one can determine that the general tendency of members of the party was to only bring up slavery

and race when there was nothing else or to rile up voters who would otherwise be in favor of Lincoln. Overall, therefore, one can conclude that, in opposition to Long, race and slavery were not important enough issues in the 1864 presidential election to be deemed significant. Unlike Zornow, however, one also cannot completely ignore the use of race during this time; instead, one examined the instances – which definitely existed – of race rhetoric during the campaign and, from there, determined that slavery and race really were not primary issues used by either party to win the election. Had the issues not been brought up at all throughout the campaign, the results would have remained the same.

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