

Volume 18

Number 025

A House Divided: HD (82)

Emancipation Strategy- IV

Lead: One hundred and fifty years ago the Republic was facing its greatest crisis. This continuing series examines the American Civil War. It is "A House Divided."

Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: As the Civil War deepened and as the blood and sacrifice on both sides became more profound, Abraham Lincoln began seeking an edge to improve the Union's chances of prevailing. After a stream of good news from the West

earlier in the year, by summer 1862 Union military fortunes had fallen on hard times. Lincoln began to consider striking a powerful economic and, as it turned out, military blow against the rebels. He had begun to formulate an Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln started looking for the opportune moment to issue it, meaning he needed a Union victory so as to insure that such a revolutionary and precipitous move might not seem to be an act of desperation.

On September 22, 1862, five days after the horrific blood-letting at Antietam, clearly seen as a real if incomplete Union victory, he shared the anticipated Proclamation with his cabinet. It was a military action

directed only at states in active rebellion on January 1st, but it was a powerful signal to North, South and a watching world that the Civil War consuming America had become a moral crusade to end the social scourge of slavery. It was an essential step toward including the African in the promises of the Declaration of Independence made seventy-six years before.

The irony was this Proclamation was largely mandated by the failure of Union arms. If Halleck and Grant had succeeded in taking Vicksburg and thus splitting the Confederacy in mid-1862, or had George McClellan overcome his timidity and fear of defeat and captured Richmond that

summer, it would probably have caused the collapse of the rebel government. The South or large portions of the South would have been dragged back into the Union with slavery largely or provisionally intact. The strategy of emancipation thus shifted Union policy toward total war and a destruction of the Southern way of life as the only way to end of blight of slavery.

**From Richmond Virginia, this is
Dan Roberts.**

Resources

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