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# An Analysis of Media Perceptions Regarding African Americans in Gettysburg Throughout 1963

## **Abstract**

On Monday, September 28, 1863, the *Compiler*, Gettysburg Pennsylvania's Democratic newspaper, published an article taken from the *Sussex Messenger* about a black man forcing himself onto a white woman. The girl, daughter of Mr. Daniel Messick, was going from her father's house which was just outside of the town limits to a neighbor's home when she was suddenly assaulted by a black man. The man jumped out from behind thick brush and grabbed the girl. A struggle ensued and the assailant ripped off the girl's clothing and put his hand over her mouth in order to keep her from calling for help. Despite the man's best attempts to silence his victim's cries, nearby neighbors heard the muffled screams and rushed to the girl's aid. They arrived just in time to prevent the man from raping the girl. The girl was released from her assailant and the local constabulary took the man into custody. The *Adams Sentinel*, the *Compiler's* Republican counterpart, did not run the story. Although this incident did not take place in Gettysburg, the instance effectively reflects attitudes and perceptions held by two of the area's largest and most prosperous newspapers: the *Adams Sentinel* and the *Compiler*.

## **Keywords**

African Americans, Gettysburg, 1863, media

## **An Analysis of Media Perceptions Regarding African Americans in Gettysburg Throughout 1863**

*Brendan M. Shelley*

On Monday, September 28, 1863, the *Compiler*, Gettysburg Pennsylvania's Democratic newspaper, published an article taken from the *Sussex Messenger* about a black man forcing himself onto a white woman. The girl, daughter of Mr. Daniel Messick, was going from her father's house which was just outside of the town limits to a neighbor's home when she was suddenly assaulted by a black man. The man jumped out from behind thick brush and grabbed the girl. A struggle ensued and the assailant ripped off the girl's clothing and put his hand over her mouth in order to keep her from calling for help. Despite the man's best attempts to silence his victim's cries, nearby neighbors heard the muffled screams and rushed to the girl's aid. They arrived just in time to prevent the man from raping the girl. The girl was released from her assailant and the local constabulary took the man into custody. The *Adams Sentinel*, the *Compiler's* Republican counterpart, did not run the story.<sup>1</sup>

Although this incident did not take place in Gettysburg, the instance effectively reflects attitudes and perceptions held by two of the area's largest and most prosperous newspapers: the *Adams Sentinel* and the *Compiler*. The year 1863 marked the 63<sup>rd</sup> year of the *Adams Sentinel*. Founded in 1800 by Robert Harper, the *Centinel*, which later became known as the *Adams Sentinel*, proved to be a significant source of information for thousands of local Gettysburg residents.<sup>2</sup> In 1816, Harper turned the paper over to his son, Robert G. Harper. By the fall of

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<sup>1</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 28 September 1863. p.4, c.A. The *Sussex Messenger* was likely a newspaper printed in Sussex County, Delaware. The Delaware Public Archives have record of a paper entitled *The Messenger* that was published for the people of Sussex County. According to the on-line archive, the *Messenger* was published from 1859 until 1863. Sussex County was largely rural during the 1860s and boasted one of state's largest slave populations. *The Messenger* is housed at the Delaware Public Archives under the call number RG 9210 NEWSPAPERS 9210.12.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Adams County Pennsylvania*. (Chicago: Warner, Beers and Co., 1886; Reprint, Gettysburg: Adams County Historical Society, 1992) p. 144.

1863, Harper was just months away from embarking on his 47<sup>th</sup> year at the helm of Adams County's most widely read newspaper.<sup>3</sup> In the midst of the *Sentinel's* optimism for continued prosperity raged a devastating Civil War. Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the seat of the county government, had felt the effects of war first hand in July when Confederate General Robert E. Lee brought his Army of Northern Virginia through the border state of Maryland and into rural Pennsylvania. Throughout the war, the *Adams Sentinel* remained true to the northern cause, passionately supporting President Lincoln and the restoration of the Union. The *Compiler* was less enthusiastic in supporting the North. The Democratic *Compiler* and the *Adams Sentinel* clashed on many issues including the role of the federal government and support for the war, but one of the most polarizing issues that distinguished these two papers was their views on African Americans. Each papers' views on blacks stemmed from powerful party ideologies that were characteristic of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century American society. *The Adams Sentinel*, embracing the Republican ideology, was clearly more sympathetic and understanding towards African Americans while the *Compiler*, a Democratic newspaper, subscribed to the notion that blacks were inferior to whites and the source of society's ills.

Founded in 1816 by Jacob LeFevre, the *Compiler* represented the conservative political ideology of mid 19th century America. In 1839, LeFevre turned the paper over to his son Isaac, who subsequently sold the paper to E. W. Stahle in 1843.<sup>4</sup> Years later, Stahle left the paper to his son Henry J. Stahle.<sup>5</sup> The younger Stahle was an ardent Democrat, having served as a justice of the peace in neighboring York County and as a presidential elector in several national elections.<sup>6</sup> He served as editor and proprietor for the *Compiler* during the war years. As editor,

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 372.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

Stahle vehemently opposed the war between the Union and the Confederacy. Furthermore, the articles published in his paper suggest that Stahle was a fervent racist. The year 1863 brought the *Compiler* much in the way of change. On May 4, 1863, Stahle announced to his readers that the *Compiler* office had moved “two doors north of the old location – that is, two doors nearer the Post Office.”<sup>7</sup> Although the new location was larger and housed two printing presses, enabling Stahle to print more newspapers with less effort, the move also caused Stahle to incur higher publication costs.<sup>8</sup> On June 1, 1863, the *Compiler* invited Democratic newspaper editors of Pennsylvania to a conference in Harrisburg on Wednesday, June 17th. Stahle often announced such meetings in the *Compiler* so as to foster solidarity and camaraderie among the Democratic papers in the state.<sup>9</sup>

Weeks later, Gettysburg experienced the scourge of war first hand. The *Compiler* did not publish an issue on July 7th. On July 13th, only two weeks after the battle of Gettysburg, the *Compiler* reported the arrest of Stahle by the Union provost marshal. The *Compiler* claimed that Stahle fell under the “displeasure of a person claiming to be a soldier.”<sup>10</sup> This mysterious soldier then allegedly reported Stahle to the authorities who then removed him to Fort McHenry in Baltimore. The following week, the *Compiler* featured an article describing the supposed events surrounding Stahle’s arrest. On the bottom of the second page, just one column away from the *Compiler’s* page long harangue scolding Stahle’s accusers and those who were said to have conspired against him, was a brief three lined postscript that reads as follows: “The editor of the *Compiler* still lives. He returned home yesterday.”<sup>11</sup> Two weeks later on August 8th, the *Compiler* reported that Stahle returned to Fort McHenry after having received a summons from

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<sup>7</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 4 May, 1863. p.2 c.A.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 1 June 1863. p.2 c.A.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 13 July, 1863. p.2 c.B.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* 20 July, 1863. p.2 c.A&B.

military authorities. After “another two weeks’ ‘visit’ to Fort McHenry,” Stahle was released.<sup>12</sup> During Stahle’s imprisonment, the *Compiler* was managed by M. E. Doll,<sup>13</sup> a relative of Stahle’s wife, Lousie B. Doll, who most likely lived in Frederick, Maryland.<sup>14</sup> Doll, like Stahle, opposed the war and black rights. Even during the aftermath on the deadliest battle of the Civil War, Doll printed his fair share of articles attacking African Americans. Stahle resumed the mantle of editor immediately upon his return and continued to publish articles that promoted the Democratic ideology.<sup>15</sup>

Despite differing attitudes and perceptions, both papers published extensive amounts of material on African Americans. In 1863, it was not uncommon to pick up the weekly paper and read an article about the creation of a black regiment or the furtherance of an abolitionist initiative. Both papers also printed letters from prominent members of society discussing individual perspectives on the status of blacks. Although both papers addressed common themes, their fundamental understanding and core beliefs differed to such an extent, that it was not hard to distinguish between those who were more tolerant towards the blacks and those who wanted to leave the institution of slavery intact. In order to combat the proponents of slavery, the *Adams Sentinel* often ran articles about everyday slave life on southern plantations. These articles depicted slavery as depreciating and undignified while praising those men, women and children who endured being subjugated. Cherishing the values of unionism and emancipation, the *Sentinel* routinely featured articles describing the courage and dedication of all black

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 3 August, 1863. p.2 c.A

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 10 August 1863. p.2 c.A

<sup>14</sup> *History of Adams County Pennsylvania.* (Chicago: Warner, Beers and Co., 1886; Reprint, Gettysburg: Adams County Historical Society, 1992) p. 372. According to the 1860 Census Index for Gettysburg, Adams County, Pennsylvania compiled by Joan R. Hankey for the Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, PA. in October of 1995, no M.E. Doll lived in Gettysburg at the time of the 1860 census. Lousie B. Doll, wife of H.J. Stahle, had some family living in Gettysburg at the time of the census, but M.E. Doll was not one of the Dolls recorded in the census. Because the Doll family originates from nearby Frederick, Maryland, it is likely that one of Lousie’s relatives ran the paper while Stahle was held at Fort McHenry.

<sup>15</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 10 August, 1863. p.2 c.A.

regiments. Some articles even went so far as to urge for full equality between blacks and whites, a truly radical idea for 1863. The *Compiler* worked to promote the status quo, including the institution of slavery. Stahle considered the Union's desire to abolish slavery as the chief cause of the war. Many articles published in the *Compiler* refer to the Republican Party as the Abolitionist Party. The sharp criticisms printed in the *Compiler* that were directed towards President Lincoln, members of his cabinet, officers of the Union army and other Republican leaders often times contained the label "abolitionist," even if the attacks had nothing to do with blacks or emancipation. Nevertheless, the attacks made against President Lincoln and the Republicans were relatively mild compared to those attacks made against the nation's negro population. The pages of the *Compiler* portrayed African Americans as vicious, stupid, and parasitic. Often times, articles would accuse blacks as being the lone source of the war.

In 1862, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, ordering that slaves in rebelling states be freed. On January 20th, 1863, the *Sentinel* published the findings of the United States Census for the year 1860, specifically the data on slave populations. The census recorded over 3,000,000 slaves in rebelling states that qualified for their freedom under Lincoln's edict. The states that were allowed to keep their slaves, including Maryland, Kentucky, Delaware and Missouri, had according to the census just shy of a million slaves.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 20 January 1863. p.1 c.F. According to the census results published in the paper, a total of 3,001,221 slaves from Arkansas, Texas, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia and Louisiana qualified for freedom. A total of 949,122 slaves from Maryland, Delaware Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee were not included in the proclamation. The article goes on to state that 83,010 slaves from Louisiana and 160,887 slaves from Virginia were not subject to the proclamation and were to remain enslaved, even though both states were allied with the Confederacy. In another article published by the *Sentinel* (*The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 17 February, 1863. p.2 c.E.) on February 17, 1863, General N. P. Banks promulgated the Emancipation Proclamation in Louisiana by refusing to allow officers of the United States military to assist in returning slaves to their owners, even though there were districts in the state that were allowed to have slaves. Banks is quoted as saying that "The public interest peremptorily demands that all persons without other means of support be required to maintain themselves by labor. Negroes are not exempt from this law." All unemployed blacks were put to work by Banks' quartermaster harvesting corn on abandoned estates. The presence of the Union army in the Louisiana and the occupation of New Orleans is probably what prompted Lincoln to make parts of Louisiana exempt from the Emancipation Proclamation. Allowing districts of Louisiana to keep their slaves

Lincoln's proclamation infuriated the south and the *Compiler*. In an article published on January 5th entitled "Relief of the Contrabands," the *Compiler* attacked the Emancipation Proclamation, warning readers that the result of such an action would be nothing less than the integration of the former slaves into American society.<sup>17</sup> The *Compiler* also addressed the claim that due to the war, many freed slaves would move north in order to avoid being returned to a state of bondage. "What may we expect when [Lincoln] set free all the slaves of the South?" the *Compiler* inquired.<sup>18</sup> An excerpt taken from the "St. Louis Republican entitled Destitute Contrabands in St. Louis" asks northerners to consider the effects of black refugees flooding into Union states. According to the article, many of the freed slaves came to the north with nothing but the shirts on their backs. As a result, hundreds of black men, women, and children were starving in the streets.<sup>19</sup> Yet another article published in the same paper entitled "Abolition" collected a series of quotes arguing against the emancipation of the slaves. One quote was from the late Daniel Webster, a prominent congressman and senator from New England, presidential candidate and an abolitionist at heart.<sup>20</sup> The *Compiler* went on to argue that the framers of the Constitution would

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probably made the occupation easier to conduct. According to an article published in the *Compiler* (*The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 5 January 1863. p. 2 c. A.), New Orleans and thirteen parishes were not affected by the Emancipation Proclamation. The districts in Virginia that were not required to free their slaves were the counties that eventually became the state of West Virginia. On March 3, 1863, the *Sentinel* reported on the West Virginia Convention (*The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 3 March 1863. p. 3 c. B). By March of 1863, the seceding counties of Virginia that became West Virginia had drafted a request for statehood. One component of resolution was a request asking Congress to appropriate money to West Virginia so that it could free its slave population.

<sup>17</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 5 January 1863. p.1 c.F.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 12 January 1863. p. 1 c. E. Stahle admitted that in writing this article that he wanted to prove that although the Union states spoke highly of the ideals of emancipation, when push came to shove and blacks were pouring into the North, many whites wanted nothing to do with the refugees. A quote from the article reads "Here, then is a chance for the admirers... of the negro, when he is afar off to manifest the strength of their love for him when he is brought to their homes."

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* 5 January 1863. p. 1 c. D. Daniel Webster lived from 1782 until 1852. Initially a Federalist, Webster eventually helped found the Whig party. While a senator, Webster supported the Compromise of 1850, earning him the contempt of his northern colleagues. According to many of his fellow senators, Webster's decision to support the compromise conceded too much ground to the South. The Compromise of 1850 also included provisions for a fugitive slave law. On March 7, 1850, Webster delivered what many consider to be his most famous speech ever while supporting the Compromise. In the summer of 1850, Webster became Secretary of State under then President Millard Fillmore and was charged with the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act, a



never have allowed a provision that would lead to the end of slavery.<sup>21</sup> In an editorial published by the *Compiler* on January 5, 1863 entitled “The Negro Proclamation,” Stahle attacked Lincoln for putting slavery forward as the central cause of the war. Indeed Stahle did not consider blacks worth fighting for.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the Emancipation Proclamation went on to receive strong support in the northern states. According to an article reprinted from an unnamed Boston newspaper in the *Sentinel* on April 7, 1863, the state of Maine’s legislature adopted concurrent resolutions fully endorsing the immediate and enthusiastic application of Lincoln’s proclamation. The article went on to say that the legislature opposed any suggestion of compromise regarding the matter of liberating the Confederates’ slaves.<sup>23</sup> Even residents of Gettysburg offered their support to the ideals of the Emancipation Proclamation, although the newspapers never formally mentioned the peoples’ endorsement. On April 28, the *Sentinel* printed resolutions that were adopted at the Late Meeting of the Loyal Citizens in Gettysburg. Among the resolutions adopted was a statement concerning culpability for the war. The people of Gettysburg attacked the slave-holding oligarchs for committing the south to war and for attempting to “establish a military or monarchical government, sustained by an organized and cemented aristocracy in which the principals of democracy shall be utterly ignored.”<sup>24</sup>

The border slave state of Maryland even mustered support for Lincoln’s proclamation. On April 20, the city of Baltimore hosted a rally considered by the writers of the *Sentinel* to have been “one of the most enthusiastic assemblages ever to have gathered within the limits of the

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responsibility that made Webster even more unpopular with his party. Although against slavery in general, Webster found himself torn between upholding the law or letting the Union dissolve. (Lodge, Henry Cabot. *American Statesmen: Daniel Webster*. Boston: Riverside Press, 1884.)

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 5 January 1863. p. 2 c. A.

<sup>23</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 7 April 1863. p.1 c.F.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 28 April 1863. p.2 c.A

monumental city.”<sup>25</sup> At the rally, speakers urged the federal government to support Maryland in eliminating the practice of slavery within the state lines. Two resolutions were adopted at the rally, both of which called for Maryland to end slavery within its borders. The leaders of the rally also asked for the federal government to provide funds to help ease the transition from slave state to a free state.<sup>26</sup> Delaware followed Maryland’s example. On October 20th, the *Sentinel* reported that the Delaware state convention adopted resolutions issuing support for Lincoln’s policies, the temporary suspension of the writ of habeas corpus and the Emancipation Proclamation.<sup>27</sup>

As the Union army moved deeper into the south, imprisoned blacks were freed from their masters. According to an article that was reprinted from a Cincinnati newspaper, a Union expedition moving along the St. Francis River in Arkansas was implementing Lincoln’s orders for emancipation as it moved further into the southern interior. Adjutant General George H. Thomas addressed General James B. McPherson and his brigade at Lake Providence, charging the troops to aid all “negroes who were to be received in [Union] lines.”<sup>28</sup> General Thomas told McPherson’s men that any soldier who did not act in accordance with the President’s policy would be subject to severe punishments.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 28 April 1863. p. 3 c. A.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3 c. A. Robert J. Brugger’s book, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980*, reflects the struggles of Maryland during the Civil War. Brugger describes Maryland’s predicament during the Civil War with great clarity and explains in Chapter 6, *A House Divided*, the steps Maryland took from being a likely candidate for succession to an important asset. (Brugger, Robert J. *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988.) In an article published in the *Sentinel* on November 10, 1863, it was said that Maryland declared the state “unconditionally for the union.” The *Sentinel* welcomed Maryland as a full fledged member of the Union after the border state declared slavery to be morally reprehensible. The November 5<sup>th</sup> elections decided once and for all that the practice slavery within the state would cease to exist. (*The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg) 10 November 1863. p. 2 c. E.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* 20 October 1863. p. 2 c. C.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 21 April 1863. p. 3 c. C.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*. Adjutant General George H. Thomas went on to receive a great deal of publicity throughout the war. On Saturday, November 14, 1863, *Harper’s Weekly* ran an article on Thomas and his willingness to employ the help of former slaves in the war effort. Interestingly enough, the article mentions a military engagement in Helena. The expedition moving along the St. Francis River with instructions to emancipate the slaves originated

On January 6th, the *Sentinel* reported on a series of remarks published in the *Nashville Union*, a pro-Republican paper from Tennessee. The article, which was entitled “Drawing Ruin on Their Own Heads,” pointed out that many southern plantation owners were moving their slaves to Alabama for fear of a Union invasion and the application of Lincoln’s proclamation. The unforeseen consequence of such a move was that many of the plantations in the Deep South were being neglected; hence there was not enough work for the blacks. Other plantations were saturated with slaves, but in many of those cases, the blacks were often left without work. With no tobacco or cotton to grow, many of the relocated blacks would be without work, giving the slave owners more mouths to feed. According to the *Nashville Union*, this would weaken the southern economy and result in the deaths of thousands of slaves. The *Union* argued that by refusing to emancipate the slaves on Lincoln’s terms, the south would just be creating a giant powder keg that would explode once the number of starving and neglected blacks reached a critical capacity. Once the south was saturated with black slaves, the *Union* predicted that the blacks would revolt and throw off their bonds, greatly hurting the Confederacy’s chances for victory against the Union.<sup>30</sup>

This article creates images of valiant negroes who were partners with the Union, willing to fight in a two front war against the oligarchs of the Confederacy. In publishing such pieces from papers like the *Nashville Union*, the *Sentinel* hoped to win over more support for Lincoln’s emancipation project. Lincoln’s top priority was the preservation of the Union. Although an opponent of slavery, it is likely that Lincoln’s decision to write the Emancipation Proclamation

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from Helena. In the *Harper’s Weekly’s* article, black troops were praised for their valiantly at Helena. The article also features an engraving entitled *The War in the Southwest: Adjutant General Thomas Addressing the Negroes in Louisiana on the Duties of Freedom* (*Harpers Weekly* (New York), 14 November 1863.). According to the article published in *Harper’s Weekly*, the engraving is of Thomas addressing recently freed slaves at Goodrich’s Landing, a small town approximately 60 miles north of Vicksburg on the west bank of the Mississippi River. Thomas’ address at Goodrich’s Landing took place on October 4, 1863.

<sup>30</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 6 January 1863. p. 3 c. A.

had more to with a strategic initiative than it did the President's personal abhorrence for an institution that relegated men, women and children to the status of property. Lincoln took into consideration all of the details of the Emancipation Proclamation, from the wording of the text to the date of the delivery. The content of the proclamation was calibrated to yield the greatest benefit for the Union. Lincoln likely took into account the political, economic, social and military implications of the pronouncement before revealing his plan to the American people.

Lincoln's goal of emancipation was not easily achieved. On April 27th, the *Compiler* ran a brief five line editorial highlighting the fact that it did not appear as if blacks were "availing" themselves to the provisions of the proclamation.<sup>31</sup> If Lincoln's goal was freeing enslaved blacks in the rebelling states with the intent of eventually ending slavery as an institution, an incident published originally in the *Louisville Journal* of Kentucky and later on in the *Adams Sentinel* would have proved to have been most disheartening for the President. The *Sentinel* reported on March 10, 1863 that free black persons in living in Kentucky were stolen and sold into slavery. The opening line of the article reads "the *Louisville Journal* says there are persons in that city who are guilty of the crime of stealing free negroes and selling them into slavery."<sup>32</sup> Kentucky was one of the boarder states in the Union allowed to keep its slaves. Reference was made to the fact that black soldiers and black laborers for the Union army were among those who were captured and sold into slavery. The *Louisville Journal* also made note of the fact that the men who were enslaved were just as free as those men who had kidnapped them. Nevertheless, such offenses were not treated as serious. The article went on to report that only in cases where "flagrant violations" occurred would the military authority intervene.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 27 April 1863. p. 4 c. A.

<sup>32</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 10 March 1863. p.2 c.D.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 10 August, 1863. p.2 c.D.

Much can be inferred from the language of the article. Note how the writer used the word “stealing” rather than “kidnapping.” Such language places African Americans at a lower level than ordinary white citizens. The language also introduces the notion that blacks, even freed blacks, were no better than property. Although the general impression one takes from reading this article is that kidnapping free blacks and selling them into slavery is a serious crime, the choice of words and tone of the article suggests that blacks were still perceived by many as property and that little effort was to be spent on protecting black citizens from arbitrary abductions.<sup>34</sup>

A similar article published weeks later in the *Sentinel* addressed the abduction of African Americans in a more serious tone. The article was written by *Sentinel* writers, but was based on a letter from St. Louis, Missouri. According to the letter, white men hired recently freed blacks to do work in the southern interior.<sup>35</sup> The hired “contrabands,” recently freed African Americans who moved north after being liberated by the Union armies, followed their white employers into the south where they were sold back into slavery.<sup>36</sup> Nothing more was said about the incident except that several arrests had been made. The language in this article did not relegate blacks to a second class status. Unlike the previous article, the syntax elevated the victims above the status of stolen property. Although the word “contraband” today connotes images of smuggled goods or property, it was understood to refer to displaced former slaves in the 1860s. An explanation for the change in language is that northern papers, wanting to be more supportive of President Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, changed their tone to portray blacks in a more positive light. Another difference between the two articles is that the Louisville article only made mention of possible military intervention while the article based off of the letter from St.

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<sup>34</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 10 August 1863. p.2 c.D.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* 24 March 1863. p.1 c.G.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* p.1 c.G.

Louis assured readers that actual arrests had been made. Neither of the articles mentions whether or not the slaves who were sold back into slavery were freed. One reading the Louisville article would likely get the impression that little was done to free the blacks. The St. Louis article offers little hope of restoring the kidnapped persons to their freed status, even though the perpetrators were arrested.<sup>37</sup>

Yet another case of kidnapping free blacks was reported by the *Sentinel* on May 26. This time, blacks from the free state of Indiana were lured into the border state of Kentucky and imprisoned. Shortly after their arrest, the captured blacks would be taken before a judge who would then have them committed back to the institution of slavery. Like the St. Louis incident, military and civil authorities intervened and put an end to the operation. There is no mention as to whether or not any of the captured persons who were remanded to slavery were ever set free.<sup>38</sup>

As discouraging as the abduction of free blacks was for Lincoln, nothing reported in either the *Sentinel* or the *Compiler* came close to paralleling the alleged atrocity of a group of northern Alabamians. On April 28, 1863, the *Sentinel* ran an article that confirmed the mass murder of nearly one thousand black slaves. The article says that rather than allow the blacks to fall into the hands of the Union army, that slaveholders in northern Alabama ruthlessly killed their slaves.<sup>39</sup> Ironically enough, just a day earlier, the *Compiler* published an article entitled “The Sort of Union Men who Compose the Republican Party.” The article described the brutality of white Republicans, charging them with teaching the slaves “to burn their masters’ buildings, to kill their cattle and hogs, to conceal and destroy farming utensils, to abandon labor

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* p.1 c.G.

<sup>38</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 26 May 1863. p. 2 c. C.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2 c. E. The incident of mass murder was confirmed by the Reverend J. B. Rogers, the chaplain of the 14<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin. Rogers was also designated as the person in charge of the free blacks in Cairo, Alabama.

in seed time and harvest, and let the crops perish.”<sup>40</sup> The imagery invoked by both papers was designed to polarize Republicans and Democrats. While the Republicans painted a picture of cruel and atrocious crimes that would today be considered genocide, the Democrats created an image laced with barbarism and anarchy. Needless to say, neither the *Sentinel* nor the *Compiler* had any qualms with using scare tactics to excite readers.

With the emancipation of the south taking root, it appeared as if the role of blacks in society was about to radically change. Talk of civil liberties filled the papers, polarizing Republicans and Democrats alike. As the war progressed, Lincoln told his colleagues in Illinois that he would not withdraw the Emancipation Proclamation in exchange for the Confederacy’s surrender.<sup>41</sup> One of the principal spokesmen for black equality targeted in the *Compiler* was the famous escaped slave turned abolitionist, Frederick Douglass. In a speech given to thousands of blacks in the city of Philadelphia, Douglass spoke of full political and social equality between blacks and whites, claiming that “the nation demands this.”<sup>42</sup> Douglass denounced far fetched schemes of dealing with the “negro question,” including a plan that would colonize the former slaves in Africa.<sup>43</sup> The *Compiler* mocked Douglass, not just for his optimism with regards to black prospects in America, but also for what many Democrats perceived as a black man trying to be white. At a speech at the Cooper Institute in New York, Douglass was quoted as saying that “ever since the uttering of [the Emancipation Proclamation, he had] grown taller and felt whiter and combed [his] hair with much less difficulty.”<sup>44</sup> Some blacks took Douglass’s words to heart.

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<sup>40</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 27 April 1863. p. 2 c. E. The quoted passage was taken from a book entitled *The Helper Book*, a text considered by the Democrats to be the quintessential bible of the Republican Party. Democrats found that 67 Republican members of Congress signed their names approving the contents of *The Helper Book*.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 14 September 1863. p. 2 c. A and B.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 28 May 1863, p. 4 c. A.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* Douglass made the point that colonizing Africa would be detrimental to the freed slaves because Africa was not their native homeland. This reinforced the notion that all blacks in the United States were American.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.* 2 March 1863. p. 1 c. F.

On September 7th, the *Compiler* reported that the blacks of Kansas were planning to hold a convention “with a view to securing equality.”<sup>45</sup> In Cincinnati, a group of black citizens started publishing a paper entitled the *African Citizen*.<sup>46</sup> The *Compiler* even reported instances where blacks and whites were married.<sup>47</sup> Some northerners were strong advocates of black rights, including Senator Zachary Chandler of Michigan and Daniel Agnew, a candidate for Supreme Court Judge for the state of Pennsylvania.<sup>48</sup> In 1863, blacks exercised what little political influence they had in order to help push Republican Andrew G. Curtin back into office for another term as governor.<sup>49</sup>

Blacks living near Gettysburg also took advantage of their changing social status. The *Compiler* published a short article on the African Methodist Episcopal Church (A. M. E. Church) located on Washington Street shortly after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect. The A. M. E. Church, a pillar of the black community in Gettysburg, organized a festival celebrating black culture, religion, and social advancement.<sup>50</sup> In March, the *Compiler* reported on the festival. Reporters for the *Compiler* were quick to recognize that large numbers of both “black spirits and white” attended the event.<sup>51</sup> The *Compiler* attributed the large number of white persons in attendance to the fact that the Union League scheduled a promenade concert shortly after the festival at Shead’s and Buehler’s Hall.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 7 September 1863, p. 2 c. F.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 December 1863. p. 1 c. G.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* 9 March 1863. p. 2 c. G. The *Compiler* reported on a white woman from Fishkill, New York who eloped with a black preacher. The woman allegedly left her husband, took all of his money and left him with three small children. In November, the *Compiler* reported that a black man with a white wife living in Acquackanonk, New Jersey were forced to move. The community did not approve of their marriage. (*The Compiler* (Gettysburg) 9 November 1863, p. 2 c. B.)

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 28 September 1863, p. 2 c. B. Zachary Chandler denounced copperheads before the war, claiming that “a loyal negro was at anytime better than a slimy copperhead.” According to the *Compiler*, Chandler made these remarks while addressing abolitionists in Ohio and *Ibid.* 5 October 1863, p. 2 c. C.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.* 2 November 1863, p. 2 c. C.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 9 February 1863. p. 1 c. E.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 2 March 1863. p. 2 c. F.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*



On December 14th, the *Compiler* ran an article entitled “Negro Equality.” The article referenced arguments made in the *Dayton Empire*, specifically the passage “all men are created equal.”<sup>53</sup> Writers from the *Compiler* argued that the founding fathers did not recognize blacks as equals with whites. The article goes on to suggest that because many of the founders were slaveholders, including Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence, it would be ludicrous to suggest that blacks were intended to be the recipients of American freedoms. In accordance with the Enlightenment, the *Compiler* writers invoked God, the laws of nature, and the intelligence of mankind.<sup>54</sup> The *Compiler* argued that fighting a war for negro equality was foolish. In concluding, readers of the article were urged to hold the Lincoln administration accountable for making slavery and civil rights for blacks the central cause of the war.<sup>55</sup> In order to convince readers that negro equality would mark the doom of the Union, the *Compiler* attempted to use logic to explain why slavery was not the source of the war. Using a parallel argument in which a horse represented slavery and a thief represented the Union, *Compiler* writers explained that if a man owned a horse, and someone threatened to make war on the owner of the horse, it is the act of threatening the horse’s owner and not the horse that is the source of the war. The article goes on to explain that the abolitionists were responsible for the war because they advocated for emancipation.<sup>56</sup> An article published in the *Sentinel* on June 9th whole heartedly agreed that slavery was not the central focus of the war. Responding to a quote by Clement Vallandigham of Ohio, the *Sentinel* argued that Lincoln’s desire to grant civil rights and freedom to the slaves was due to “military necessity.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 14 December 1863. p. 1 c. F. The phrase “all men are created equal” is taken from the Declaration of Independence.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* 21 December 1863. p. 4 c. A.

<sup>57</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 9 June 1863. p. 2 c. B.

For the most part, the Republicans supported the idea of abolishing the practice of slavery from all states. Nevertheless, there were many instances in which blacks were treated unfairly by pro-Union forces. A prime example of this can be seen in cases where blacks served in the Union army. By 1863, several segregated black regiments had been created to assist white regiments in building fortifications, burying bodies, and moving supplies. In some cases, blacks were given the opportunity to participate in expeditions. General Rufus Saxton made such an expedition with black regiments in Florida, threatening the Confederacy from the south and drawing more black troops to his ranks.<sup>58</sup> General Ullman, who was serving in the Gulf Department, reported to the War Department that he had raised nearly 4,000 colored troops for his *Corps d’Afrique* which was largely responsible for providing logistical support to white fighting units.<sup>59</sup> Over time, armed black soldiers and the creation of fighting black regiments became more common. On May 19th, the *Sentinel* ran an article entitled “General Hooker on Colored Soldiers.” Hooker referred to the black troops as “hardy, brave, patient and obedient.”<sup>60</sup> Hooker’s support for black soldiers was so strong, that he even approved of using black regiments in the most densely populated areas of the south. According to Hooker, the presence of black troops would spur slaves to rise up against their masters and join the Union army.<sup>61</sup> Colonel T. B. Thorpe, who was engaged in the Gulf campaign, reported to his superiors at the War Department that he had monumental success in organizing black troops. In the same article

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* 7 April 1863. p. 2. c. B. In a dispatch dated August 25, 1862, General Saxton received permission from the War Department to collect, organize and use black persons as laborers under the Quartermaster’s Department. Saxton was ordered to “muster [the blacks] into the service of the United States for the term of the war, at a rate of compensation not exceeding five dollars per month for common laborers, and eight dollars per month for mechanical or skilled laborers, and assign them to the Quartermaster’s Department, to do and perform such laborer’s duty as may be required during the present war, and to be subject to the rules and articles of war.” In some cases, Stanton authorized Saxton to use armed blacks to guard seized assets of southern plantation owners. *Army Life in a Black Regiment and Other Writings* by Thomas Woodworth Higginson and R. D. Madison is a detailed account of the blacks who volunteered for similar work. (Higginson, Thomas Woodworth and R. D. Madison. *Army Life in a Black Regiment and Other Writings*. New York: Penguin Books, 1997. Appendix C).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.* 23 June 1863. p. 1 c. C.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* 19 May 1863. p. 2 c. E.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

published on May 26th, the *Sentinel* reported that General Banks allegedly found an executive order signed by Governor Moore of Alabama ordering the enrollment of blacks.<sup>62</sup> In another article from the September 1st edition of the *Sentinel*, Union intelligence reported intercepting a dispatch from the south authored by Confederate President Jefferson Davis. According to the letter, Davis ordered that 500,000 black slaves and field hands be pulled out of the fields and drafted into the Confederate army.<sup>63</sup>

Conscription was a controversial subject among whites and blacks alike. In 1863, a bill sponsored by renowned education advocate and abolitionist Thaddeus Stevens passed Congress, the final count as being 84 “yeas” and 54 “nays.” Stevens’ bill would allow for the conscription of black troops to fight in the Northern armies. The bill aimed to produce 150 new black regiments.<sup>64</sup> All but six Republicans voted in favor of the bill. Under the bill, white and black soldiers could possibly be put into integrated units, but a white officer would never have to report to a black officer.<sup>65</sup> Directly below the article outlining Stevens’ bill was a brief quote taken from a black man living in Gettysburg. When asked if he would now be enlisting with the Union army, the man replied “No. If Stevens any fighting done for the niggers, let him do it hisself.”<sup>66</sup> In yet another brief article published in the same paper, the *Compiler* reported an incident where a black man was told that the negro soldier bill had passed and that he was now expected to fight in the Union army. The man allegedly paused and after a minute of reflection said “well, if I must fight, I must vote too!”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 26 May 1863. p. 3 c. A.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* 1 September 1863. p. 2 c. C. At no time did Jefferson Davis conscript 500,000 slaves to fight in the Confederate Army.

<sup>64</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg) 16 February 1863. p. 2 c. D.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.* 9 February 1863. p. 2 c. A.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* 9 February 1863. p. 2 c. B.

Stahle and his fellow *Compiler* writers were terrified by the fact that a black person could possibly vote in the near future. Democrats earnestly believed that the next step Republicans would take in advancing the blacks would be giving black soldiers the right to vote. As more legislation was passed concerning black soldiers, the Democrats became increasingly agitated. Stahle and other Democratic editors urged their readers to elect the Democrats back into office so that the legislation passed by the Republicans could be repealed. The *Compiler* spared no foul language in debasing the Republican record, calling the administration's propositions "disgusting and monstrous."<sup>68</sup>

According to an article published on June 16, Governor Curtin issued an order calling all black persons living in Pennsylvania to arms. The governor's order also precluded blacks from leaving the state to enlist in other state regiments.<sup>69</sup> Shortly after the Battle of Gettysburg, the *Sentinel* published an article entitled *Drafted Colored Men*. The article described the recruitment effort of various states, including Pennsylvania. According to the article, conscripted colored troops were to be segregated from their white counterparts. Black troops in Pennsylvania were ordered to report to a camp in Philadelphia commanded by a Colonel named Louis Wagner.<sup>70</sup> That same week, the *Sentinel* reported that Union forces in the west were successfully able to recruit several thousand blacks. A *Sentinel* article entitled "Recruitment of Colored Soldiers" pertains to the conscription of black troops in the border states of Maryland, Delaware, Missouri, and Tennessee. The article stipulated that in the event that there were not enough black

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.* 9 February 1863. p. 4 c. A. The *Compiler* reprinted an article originally taken from the *Sunbury Democrat* that attacked Republican policies. No specific policies were named, but the article does call Lincoln's administration a "nigger administration," hence, it is likely that the targets of this editorial were the Emancipation Proclamation and the Negro Soldier Bill sponsored by Thaddeus Stevens.

<sup>69</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg) 16 June 1863. p. 2 c. F. Curtin issued his order on June 14, 1863 in Harrisburg under the authority of the United States War Department.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.* 28 July 1863. p. 2 c. D. According to the website [http://www.thehistorynet.com/acw/blblack\\_soldiers\\_in\\_blue/](http://www.thehistorynet.com/acw/blblack_soldiers_in_blue/), Louis Wagner was a promising Union Major in the 88<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania who was injured at the Second Battle of Bull Run. Wagner was taken prisoner by the Confederates and later paroled to his Philadelphia home. He was later promoted to Lt. Colonel and ran Camp William Penn for colored conscripts.

volunteers or seized slaves from supporters of the Confederacy, black slaves would be called into service. Loyal masters who lost their slaves would have the option of going to the Bureau of Colored Soldiers to collect a reimbursement of up to \$300.00 per slave lost. The article goes on to say that from that point on, the slave is considered “forever free.”<sup>71</sup>

Several accounts of black bravery surfaced in the *Sentinel*. On June 30th, just before the Battle of Gettysburg, the Honorable Benjamin F. Flanders wrote from New Orleans about the bravery and dedication of a black regiment. Flanders is quoted as saying that “[black troops] conquered the prejudice of the army against them. Never was there before such an extraordinary revolution of sentiment as that of this army in respect to the negroes as soldiers.”<sup>72</sup> Some black troops who saw action in the south fell into Confederate hands. In an article published on September 8th, Dr. Stone, surgeon of the 54th Massachusetts Colored Volunteers, reported that black soldiers fighting for the Union that were captured by the Confederates were treated in the same facilities as the white Union soldiers. Stone asserts that he had no recollection of any “outrage” against a captured black soldier in the South at either the attack on Fort Wagner or on James Island.<sup>73</sup>

Although Dr. Stone’s insistence that torturing and murdering black soldiers was uncommon, other accounts published in the *Sentinel* suggest that this was not true. The following week, the *Sentinel* published an article in response to a piece published in an issue of the *Richmond Dispatch*. According to the *Dispatch*, the Confederacy stated that it would not yield

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* 3 November 1863. p. 2 c.B. According to the article, the slaves from the states of Kentucky and West Virginia were exempt from the new conscription model. Delaware was to be exempt as well, but Governor Cannon personally requested that his state be allowed to join the other border states in furnishing Black troops for the Union. The \$300.00 compensation to slave holders was contingent on that master being able to prove his loyalty to the Union.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.* 30 June 1863. p. 2 c. E.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* 8 September 1863. p. 3 c. A.

in its “right” to punish black slaves who ran away to fight for the Union.<sup>74</sup> The *Sentinel* article goes on to report that the *Atlanta Appeal* covered an incident during which approximately fifty black soldiers who had fought for the Union were shot and killed by their Confederate captors.<sup>75</sup> On November 17th, the *Sentinel* published an article in which a Union prisoner of war reflected on his experiences in Confederate jails. One of the most horrible events of the man’s imprisonment concerned a black prisoner of war who was being held at the infamous Libby Prison. The victim was half white, a free man, a resident of Philadelphia, and a soldier in the Union army who was captured by the Confederate navy. While imprisoned at Libby, he received approximately 325 lashes. The man recounting his story remembered the screams as horrific. Later on that evening, he remembered seeing the beaten man wrapped in a blanket that had been soaked with salt water and cast into a dungeon. The man ended his account reflecting on the fact that “those of our number who entered there as advocates for slavery, or at least sympathizers, are such no more.”<sup>76</sup>

The *Compiler* found the idea of using black troops to be completely unacceptable. Pandering to racists and those afraid of radical change, Stahle published several articles in 1863 that attacked the advancement of black soldiers. An article published on January 19th in the *Compiler* decries the fact that black troops under the leadership of General Jim Lane were to receive equal monetary compensation for services rendered as white soldiers.<sup>77</sup> In some cases, blacks were being given power over whites, a fact that disturbed the *Compiler* greatly. On

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.* 15 September 1863. p. 1 c. G.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* The correspondent for the *Atlanta Appeal* states that a Confederate colonel named Logan assumed responsibility for the decision to shoot the black prisoners of war at a place called Centreville. Centreville is twenty miles from Jackson, Louisiana. Upon hearing that Union black prisoners of war were to be executed, General Andrews of the Union army sent a rider under a flag of truce to talk with the Colonel Logan about retaliation if the blacks were killed. The article does not go on to say whether or not General Andrews retaliated against the Confederates in Centreville.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* 17 November 1863. p. 3 c. A.

<sup>77</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 19 January 1863. p. 2 c. F. General Jim Lane organized the 1<sup>st</sup> Kansas Colored Regiment. According to the *Compiler* article, the standard pay for volunteers was \$13.00 a month.

January 26th, the *Compiler* featured an article entitled “Insolence of Negroes.” A private letter sent to the *Compiler* from New Orleans described the Union occupation of the city. Black soldiers were being used to maintain Union control in the captured port. The author of the correspondence expressed his anger at several points throughout the letter. In one incident, a black soldier had ordered the writer to halt. In addition to having legitimate power over some whites, the author expressed his concerns about the behavior of black troops, claiming that the majority were undisciplined and unruly.<sup>78</sup> October 5th featured an article in which the *Compiler* made note of two blacks receiving important promotions in the military. One of the promotions went to Frederick Douglass who was appointed Assistant to the Adjutant General. Robert Purvis, a black man from Philadelphia received a military appointment. The *Compiler* argued that such appointments were not intended for blacks and that both Douglas and Purvis were not qualified for the positions.<sup>79</sup>

On March 9th, the *Compiler* featured an article from the *New Orleans Tribune* on its front page. The article was a correspondence with a *Tribune* writer on the effectiveness of black soldiers in battle. According to the correspondent, the men drilled well and obeyed orders, but General Cuvier Grover allegedly refused to recognize the regiments. As a result, none of the men were clothed or fed, much less paid. White troops tormented the black volunteers with name calling. A combination of threats from the Confederacy and the taunting from their fellow soldiers reduced the regiment to the point that it was no longer operational.<sup>80</sup> Stahle published

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* 26 January 1863. p. 1 c. G.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* 5 October 1863. p. 1 c. F. Frederick Douglass went on to receive numerous other distinctions and appointments at the federal level. He was appointed U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia by President Rutherford B. Hayes in 1877, the first black to ever hold the title.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* 9 March 1863. p. 1 c. F. On April 27, the *Compiler* did a follow up article on the status of the regiment in question. According to the headline of the April 27 article, an attempt to integrate and consolidate the black and white units resulted in the white soldiers refusing to obey blacks. The blacks disarmed and arrested the whites who refused to follow orders. According to the report, the white soldiers were humiliated by the experience.

this article because it was written by a Republican. By having Republicans tell stories about the ineffective nature of black regiments, the *Compiler* managers hoped to dissuade local Republicans from backing negro enlistment.

Emancipation of the blacks did not necessarily mean a better life for thousands of newly freed slaves. As the Union liberated slaves in the south, some opted to aid the army as laborers and ditch diggers. Others enlisted. The reality is however that the vast majority of blacks did not enlist in the military. Many were left without any means to provide for themselves. The elimination of slavery removed sustenance from thousands of blacks all across the south. Those blacks that moved into the north were rarely welcomed with open arms. The exodus of blacks to the north was a drain to many local economies, led to an increase in poverty, resulted in crime, and inflamed stereotypes that whites typically had of blacks. The *Compiler* was quick to pronounce the black migration as damaging to the economy. In an article entitled “How the People’s Money Goes,” Stahle quotes the *Exchange Paper’s* coverage of General Banks and the negro civilian population of Louisiana under his command. Banks reported that it cost approximately \$60,000.00 to sustain the “dependent and destitute persons in the month of January.”<sup>81</sup> Because Louisiana has a law ordering all unemployed persons to earn their keep through labor, Stahle called Banks a hypocrite for essentially applying the slavery model to what the north considered to be free people. The only difference between what the slave holders were doing and what Banks was doing was that under the institution of slavery, the National Bank of the United States did not have to spend the government’s revenue on poor blacks.<sup>82</sup>

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This information was originally published in the *Springfield Republican*, a Massachusetts newspaper, but was later reprinted in the *Compiler*.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* 6 April 1863. p. 2 c. A.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*



Some free blacks were accused of impersonating runaway slaves or contrabands so that they could collect money from the government. Many slaves moving into the north from the Confederacy passed into Washington D.C. where they would be given a little money to build new lives. According to the *Compiler*, many free blacks mixed among the contrabands so as to collect money from the government. Stahle wrote, “They cannot see why they have not as good a claim upon Uncle Abe’s charity as their colored brethren from the South.”<sup>83</sup> The *Compiler* attempted to appeal to all tax payers in an article listing reasons to vote the Democratic ticket in the 1863 governor election. One of the many considerations put forth by Stahle was that a Democratic governor would no longer waste money on abolitionism and black equality.<sup>84</sup> On January 12th, the *Compiler* ran an article that estimated the cost for superintending all of the nation’s blacks to be \$1.2 million dollars.<sup>85</sup> In publishing this astronomical sum, it is likely that the Democrats were trying to achieve a calculated political effect by appealing to social and fiscal conservatives.

In addition to addressing the cost of supporting displaced black persons, the *Compiler* also discusses the fairness of conscription replacement fees for whites and blacks. An article in the *Allentown Democrat*, a newspaper published in northern Pennsylvania, argued that whites and blacks were not treated equally in the eyes of the draft. The argument pointed out that whites who owned slaves are expected to lose money for freeing their slaves and then pay an additional \$300.00 in order avoid the draft whereas blacks were only required to pay the \$300.00

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* 27 April 1863. p. 1 c. G.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.* 21 September 1863. p. 2 c. F.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.* 12 January 1863. p. 1 c. E. These figures are based on the research of Congressman Cox of Ohio. The article was originally published in the *Patriot and Union*.

exemption fee. Therefore, according to the *Democrat*, “the value of the white man and the nigger is placed at the same figure, only the former has the privilege of paying for both.”<sup>86</sup>

Escaped slaves greatly impacted the southern economy since plantation owners considered slaves to be very valuable. Slaves were not merely field hands; rather, they were a huge investment. Masters spent great sums of money to feed, house and clothe slaves. The *Sentinel* published an article on January 13th describing the escape of a group of blacks from Virginia. According to the article, many of the slaves took their masters’ horses with them.<sup>87</sup> Plantations that lost their slaves were devastated. Without a workforce to maintain the fields, crops could not be planted, cared for or harvested. In cases where blacks were left in charge of plantations after their masters fled, the *Compiler* asserted that blacks were too lazy to accomplish any meaningful work. According to an article entitled “Abolition Cotton Culture,” the Fourrierite experiment, a system by which blacks raised cotton while receiving compensation from the federal government, was adopted in South Carolina. The *Compiler* called the program a failure because it produced cotton that was four times as expensive as cotton before the outbreak of the war. The Fourrierite experiment gave the *Compiler* a chance to attack subsidized black work.<sup>88</sup>

In an article entitled “How Abolitionism Benefits the Negro,” the *Compiler* blamed all of America’s ills on the blacks. According to the article, African Americans were responsible for destroying commerce, causing widespread poverty, promulgating violence, and for pitting the north against the south. Blacks were said to have benefited from all of the resources of the

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<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.* 6 April 1863. p.2 c. A. In border states, slaves could be conscripted into the military. Loyal masters who could prove that they did not support the Confederacy would receive a compensation of \$300.00 for each slave that enlisted. Masters aligning themselves with the Confederacy or the copperheads did not receive any financial compensation for their loss.

<sup>87</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 15 April 1863. p. 3 c. B.

<sup>88</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 2 March 1863. p. 1 c. F. The article was originally printed in the *Sunbury Democrat*. Other articles attacking subsidized black labor were featured in the *Compiler* for weeks to follow.

nation as well as the United States military. The author of the article quoted the *Metropolitan Record*, asserting that “a tree should be judged by its fruit.”<sup>89</sup> Using this parallel symbolism, the *Compiler* argued that even with all of the resources of the United States at the blacks’ disposal, they have still managed to accomplish anything save dying and ruining America. Stahle was quick to point out an instance when blacks interacting with the Union Army of the West were in such poor health that they had to be taken out into the middle of the woods to die. In the end, the *Compiler* asked the rhetorical question “how does the abolitionist press like the fiend which it has evoked by its foul orgies?”<sup>90</sup>

In some cases, the *Compiler* viewed blacks as more than just an economic drain. Several articles were published in 1863 concerning an alleged rise in crime after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. The *Compiler* asserted that blacks were responsible for the supposed increase in crime. As a result, a number of articles condemning blacks for breaking the law were published. These articles were not limited to incidents that happened in Gettysburg. Instances of crimes committed from all over the north, including the attempted rape of Daniel Messick’s daughter in Sussex County mentioned earlier, were reported. For example, on March 9th, an article was printed about a gang of blacks terrorizing and beating a white man named Lynch. Lynch was saved when a friend grabbed an ax and scared the attackers. The article goes on to say that three of Lynch’s assailants fled to Canada. Warrants were issued for two other men involved in the incident. Rather than ending the report, the *Compiler* felt it necessary to attack Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation as the source of the blacks’ “insolence.”<sup>91</sup> White

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.* 28 December 1863. p. 4 c. A.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.* 9 March 1863. p. 1 c. F.

citizens were encouraged to take justice into their own hands if Lynch's attackers were not held accountable for their actions.<sup>92</sup>

Coverage of crimes committed by whites in the *Compiler* received far less attention and editorializing. On April 27th, an article was published about the execution of a murderer in Frederick, Maryland. The executed man was convicted of killing a woman who rejected his affection; upon being rejected, the man pulled out a gun and shot the woman in the head, rendering her dead. He then turned himself over to the police. Whereas the attack perpetrated against Lynch was described as "a brutal negro outrage,"<sup>93</sup> the murder committed in Frederick was referred to as "sad."<sup>94</sup> Nothing more was said about the killing in the *Compiler*.

The following week, the *Compiler* ran an article about a black man who had raped a fourteen year old girl in Detroit, Michigan. As the rapist was being taken from the courthouse to the jail under military guard, a large body of angry protesters wanting to kill the man on the spot attacked the escort and tried to wrest control of the prisoner from the guards. The mob's attack failed and one citizen was killed. Many others were wounded. Shortly thereafter, having been unsuccessful in getting a hold of the rapist, the mob turned its attention towards the black quarter of the city. The *Compiler* reported that over thirty homes belonging to blacks were burned down. Additionally, several black bystanders were injured. The state military was called up to put the mob down. In the end, the *Compiler* blamed the affair on "negro agitation," completely ignoring the fact that many blacks were victims of the circumstance. Another consideration that was not taken into account by the *Compiler* was that the initial attacks were caused by a white mob that wanted to circumvent the criminal justice system by taking justice into its own hands.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* 27 April 1863. p. 2 c. E.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.* 16 March 1863. p. 2 c. G.

Blacks were commonly stereotyped by the *Compiler*. Casting blacks as mischievous and lazy, the *Compiler* never missed the opportunity to print articles about blacks robbing whites. On June 1st, the *Compiler* reported on a robbery that took place in nearby Abbotstown. A dozen dresses were reported stolen from the private residence of Catharine and Maria Riegle. Several weeks later, two black girls were arrested after several townspeople gave sworn testimony claiming to have seen the two young women commit the crime. The girls were arrested and their bail was set at \$500.00.<sup>96</sup>

Jokes were used in the *Compiler* to create the impression that blacks were stupid and therefore prone to thievery. In one such joke, a black man noticed that his friend Pomp was wearing a brand new hat. When asked where he got the hat from, Pomp replied “Why, at de shop, ob course.”<sup>97</sup> Pomp’s friend was really impressed. When he asked Pomp how much the hat cost, Pomp said that he didn’t know because the shopkeeper was not in the store.<sup>98</sup> The *Sentinel* countered such rampant stereotypes by publishing articles in which blacks were the victims. In addition to publishing stories about blacks being kidnapped, taken south, and enslaved, the *Sentinel* reported on more traditional crimes perpetrated against African Americans. On June 2nd, the *Sentinel* published an article originally taken from the *Philadelphia Ledger*. In the article, reporters described mobs of Union soldiers attacking defenseless blacks in Harrisburg. Black homes were leveled by the troops. The provost marshal and the police had the rowdy troops arrested and sent to the jail. Upon arriving at the jail with the rioting troops,

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* 1 June 1863. p. 2 c. F. The article was originally reported in the *Hanover Citizen*.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* 21 December 1863. p. 1 c. F.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* 21 December 1863. p. 1 c. F.

the mayor demanded the release of the prisoners, much to the surprise of the provost marshal and the police.<sup>99</sup>

Blacks were reported to have committed crimes against other blacks. On June 16th, the *Sentinel* reported that the home of Mr. Owen Robinson of Gettysburg, a black man, had been burglarized. Mr. Robinson's \$235.00 savings had been stolen. Three black men were arrested in connection with the crime.<sup>100</sup> The *Sentinel* gave Mr. Robinson the distinction of being a hard working and well respected man. Such consideration was often times not provided to blacks.<sup>101</sup>

In a rare turn of events, both the *Sentinel* and the *Compiler* reported an incident that took place in November. On November 24th, the *Sentinel* ran an article about an African American man who had been run over by a train on the tracks of the Cumberland Valley Railroad near the borough of Newville. The *Compiler* ran a similar article on November 30th. Both articles mentioned that the train engineer saw the black man on the tracks and that the conductor was unable to stop the train. The black man was instantly killed, his body cut to pieces. The *Sentinel* and the *Compiler* both went on to report that authorities suspected that the man had been drinking and fell across the track. A broken bottle found lying next to the dead man's body is mentioned in both articles and gives credence to the hypothesis. Nothing else was said in either the *Sentinel* or the *Compiler*.<sup>102</sup>

The *Compiler* asserted that the language used to describe African Americans in the media differed between Republican and Democratic newspapers. According to Stahle, Republicans

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<sup>99</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 2 June 1863. p. 2 c. G. The article was taken from the *Philadelphia Ledger* but the events of this incident were originally reported in the *Harrisburg Telegraph*.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.* 9 June 1863. p. 2 c. B.

<sup>101</sup> 1860 Census Index for Gettysburg, Adams County, Pennsylvania. Compiled by Joan R. Hankey for the Adams County Historical Society, Gettysburg, PA. October 1995. Gettysburg College Special Collections. According to the census, Robert Owens was a resident of Gettysburg at the time of the 1860 census. He was 48 years old in 1860. Mary Owens (46 years old in 1860) and Julia Owens (20 years old in 1860) were also listed as living with Robert Owens at the time of the 1860 census.

<sup>102</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 24 November 1863. p. 2 c. G. and *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 30 November 1863, p. 4 c. A.

elevated the blacks using more politically correct language as the war progressed. In an article entitled *Uncle Abe's Scale* published on January 19th, Stahle presented evidence of what he felt to be a general shift in word choices used to describe blacks. According to Stahle, in 1859, African Americans were commonly referred to as "negroes." In 1860, the term "negroes" gave way to "colored men" which gave way to "intelligent contrabands" in 1861. With the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, Stahle charged Lincoln with elevating blacks to the status of "free Americans of African descent."<sup>103</sup> An analysis of articles published in the *Adams Sentinel* for the calendar year of 1863 did not support Stahle's hypothesis. All of the labels used on Stahle's continuum appear in *Sentinel* articles. The distribution of these terms is relatively equal. Although all of the terms appeared in the *Sentinel*, this is not to say that the *Sentinel* did not change its tone towards African Americas. Very rarely did the *Sentinel* ever publish the words "nigger" or "darkie," both of which were deemed derogatory. Such words appeared in quotes if at all.

Jokes abounded about the politically correct way of addressing African Americans. In one issue of the *Compiler*, blacks were referred to as "unbleached Americans."<sup>104</sup> A brief selection published on the front page of the *Compiler* suggested that according to President Lincoln, it is no longer appropriate to say "nigger in the wood pile." The new politically correct way of describing a similar situation would be to call the black a "free American of African descent; come from under the accumulated fuel."<sup>105</sup> Such political correctness was not intended as a nicety, but rather as a means for mocking black people and Republicans. Words are powerful in the sense that they create mental pictures and connote both good and bad feelings. In getting Americans to approach race with a great sense of open-mindedness, the *Sentinel*

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<sup>103</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 19 January 1863. p. 1 c. D.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.* 17 August 1863. p. 1 c. D.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* 5 January 1863. p. 1 c. C.

attempted to use more inclusive and politically correct language whereas the *Compiler* used divisive and disparaging language to describe blacks.

African Americans were not solely addressed through conventional journalistic means. Although traditionally portrayed through news articles that outlined real life events, both the *Sentinel* and the *Compiler* engaged their subscribers with a section devoted to popular culture. These selections were usually printed on the front page of the paper and included songs, poems, short stories, tips for around the house and jokes. African Americans were often the butt of racist jokes in the *Compiler*. The *Sentinel* usually reserved its harshest criticisms and parodies for slave owners and southern elitists. For example, one such anecdote published in the *Sentinel* made fun of a rich southern aristocrat for being completely dependent on his negro waiter. The story relates an incident during which the aristocrat had his waiter bring him a handkerchief. Not wanting to exert himself, the aristocrat had the waiter hold the handkerchief to his nose. Minutes passed when finally the aristocrat jumped from his chair and kicked the black man, remarking “You knew what I wanted – why didn’t you blow?”<sup>106</sup>

Even though the *Sentinel* was for the most part tolerant of blacks, it too occasionally poked fun at African Americans. On April 14, 1863, the *Sentinel* published a joke taken from the *Louisville Democrat*. The joke featured two black men and a soldier. One of the black men was following the soldier into a fort while the second black man watched. As the first black man and the soldier approached the fort, the second black man asked what his friend was doing with the soldier. The black man following the soldier replied “I’se gwine to reinforce the army.” The second black man was astonished with his friend’s response. The man following the soldier then elaborated, saying “Yes, I gwine to de mortifications to dig trenches.”<sup>107</sup> The satirical portrayal

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<sup>106</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 7 April 1863. p.1 c.E.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.* 14 April 1863. p.1 c.C.



of blacks in the *Sentinel* was not always done with the intention of degrading the African American community, nor was it done to elicit cheap laughs from newspaper readers. Such stories served to illustrate the changing role of blacks in society. By 1863, black soldiers were being enlisted to aid in the Union cause. Although few ever saw the front lines of battle, these troops were instrumental to the well being of the army. Enlisted negroes dug fortification ditches, moved supplies, excavated latrines and buried the bodies of the dead. Such tasks, although not glamorous, were necessary. Satirical writers of the day emphasized that by doing these jobs, black troops were important to the war effort.

Another instance during which the *Sentinel* had made fun of African Americans' intelligence can be found in an article that was published on June 16, 1863. An ill black man on his death bed was asked by the local minister to forgive all of his enemies before he passed away. The dying man had only one enemy and that was one of his fellow negro brethren. After a couple of minutes, the minister elicited forgiveness from the ill man. The sick black man compromised, offering his forgiveness on the condition that "If I dies, I forgive dat nigga; but if I gits well, that nigga must take car?"<sup>108</sup>

On August 11th, the *Sentinel* published an article based on an incident that was originally printed in the *Petersburg Express*.<sup>109</sup> The article told the story of two black women who served cooked dog meat in a stew to soldiers at the rate of \$1.00 per bowl. It was not until the soldiers had completed most of the meal that one of the men realized that the meat in his stew was dog. The soldiers immediately stopped eating the stew, checked the bones to see if they were canine in nature, and then gave each of the women 39 lashes. The *Sentinel* urged the troops to be on the

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.* 16 June 1863. p.1 c.F.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.* 11 August 1863. p. 1 c. G. The *Petersburg Express* is published in Virginia.

lookout for schemers and frauds. It also congratulated the soldiers for punishing the women.<sup>110</sup> Such stories were popular among readers, even though the events described actually transpired.

Songs were equally popular in Civil War era newspapers. Like jokes and stories, songs and poetry could usually be found on the front page of both the *Sentinel* and the *Compiler*. In 1863, several songs and poems were published featuring African Americans in the *Compiler*. African Americans did not garner much attention in the way of songs and poems in the *Sentinel*. The *Sentinel* did not feature African Americans in any of their poems in 1863. Poems and songs reflected not just the news, but also society's values and perceptions. The *Sentinel* featured mostly poems under the heading *Choice Poetry* whereas the *Compiler* specialized in songs under the heading of *The Muse*. Both *Choice Poetry* and *The Muse* were printed in the top left hand quadrant of the front page. Many American poems written in the 1860s had composed melodies, giving the performer the option of reading the stanzas or reading with accompaniment. Common themes for published works included love, marriage, sickness, loss of a loved one, religion, family and farming. In the aftermath of the war, many poets and song writers tried making sense of the battles through music, though initially, only a select few pieces were published in newspapers. *The Civil War in Song and Story*, an anthology of songs, stories, poems and anecdotes, was compiled by Frank Moore in 1865 and republished in 1889. Moore drew much of his material from Union and Confederate newspapers. In his preface, Moore asserted that the primary function of his work was to "preserve the most notable . . . pieces of versification as are worthy of perpetuation."<sup>111</sup>

*The Contrabands* was a piece initially published in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. The song is about poor blacks coming into the north after being freed from their masters by the Union army

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Frank Moore, ed., *The Civil War in Song and Story, 1860-1865* (New York: P. F. Collier Publisher, 1889), p. ii.

and their quest for work. Without work, they would die of starvation. There are several allusions in the song, including references to Abraham Lincoln as “Father Abraham.”<sup>112</sup> The imagery created in the *Contrabands* lead readers to consider the negative impact of emancipation on northern life. The lyricist described hoards of poor, starving, dirty and diseased recently freed slaves moving north in search of a better life.<sup>113</sup> Stahle knew that many Pennsylvanians living in Adams County would be affected by such a song since Adams County borders the slave state of Maryland. This song was written to instill fear in the white public.<sup>114</sup> By playing to people’s fears, the *Compiler* hoped to diminish the support for abolitionism.

On March 9th, the *Compiler* ran another song entitled *Weitzel’s Four Thousand*. It addressed some of the same themes present in *The Contrabands*. Weitzel was a General who was entrusted with approximately 4,000 recently freed slaves. His responsibilities included feeding, clothing, and housing the blacks. Unfortunately for General Weitzel, he did not have the necessary resources to fulfill his responsibilities. To make matters worse, none of the blacks wanted to do any work. This song talks about Weitzel’s dilemma.<sup>115</sup> This song approached the mass exodus of slaves with more humor than *The Contrabands*, but the goals of the song were very much the same. Weitzel’s problems were intended to represent the problems of the northerners who would be taking thousands of blacks into their states as the Union pressed deeper into the south.

*Kingdom Coming* was a popular song by Henry C. Work. It retells the tale of a slave master running away from the advancing Union army. Painting the blacks as mischievous children, Work describes the slaves moving into the master’s home and rifling through his cellar

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<sup>112</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg), 26 January 1863. p. 1 c. B.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* 9 March 1863. p. 1 c. B.

and drawers. The song ends with the plantation overseer getting locked up in the smoke house and the blacks occupying the house and having fun at the master's expense. This song makes fun of the slave oligarchs and the plantation overseers, painting them as cowards, but it also degrades blacks by portraying them as childish and immature. The implication one gets is that blacks are unfit to govern themselves and that slavery is the only way to keep them out of trouble.<sup>116</sup> Paternalistic tones are prevalent throughout the song.

Songs, poems, anecdotes and jokes were not the only pieces of popular culture published in newspapers. Satirical writing was characteristic of 19th century American news, not just as a form of entertainment, but for news and editorial reporting as well. The *Sentinel* printed many satirical and whimsical stories about blacks, copperheads, and confederates alike. In 1863, two stories featuring bloodhounds were published on the *Sentinel's* front page. The first story, entitled *The New Use of Bloodhounds*, was printed on March 10th.<sup>117</sup> The article starts out by initially describing a riverbank scene. Along the riverbank, there was a tall tree with two or three blacks hiding in the branches. There were several bloodhounds jumping at the base of the tree trying to catch the negroes. Despite their best efforts, the dogs were not able to catch the blacks. Such occurrences were common in the south, but what makes this article satirical is the way in which a similar situation was described using southern draft dodgers in the place of fugitive slaves. According to the *Sentinel*, many persons residing in the Confederacy were avoiding the draft. Some southerners claimed that they did not want to fight the Union because they felt a sense of allegiance to the United States. Others refused to fight because they were afraid of

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<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* 17 August 1863. p. 1 c. C. Henry C. Work was a famous 19<sup>th</sup> century composer who has many of his works catalogued at the Library of Congress. In addition to writing lyrics, Work collaborated with pianists and guitarists to provide an accompaniment.

<sup>117</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), 10 March 1863. p. 1 c. E.

battle. This did not stop many southern aristocrats who fell into the later category from contributing vast amounts of money and supplies to the rebel army.<sup>118</sup>

The second article concerning bloodhounds was published in the *Sentinel* on October 6th. In the piece, a black man described his experiences hiding from bloodhounds. According to the man, the best way to avoid the hounds was by traveling as much as possible in the water. In the deep south, slaves were taught to believe that negro eating crocodiles inhabited the river. The black man never believed the stories, though his former master thought he did. As a result, the master never thought to look in the waterways for his slave. Another piece of information disseminated in the article was how to use pepper to prevent bloodhounds from being able to sniff out a fugitive slave's scent. The black man recommended that in the event of a close pursuit, pepper powder applied to one's feet would leave a trail of pepper dust that when inhaled by the dogs would cause them to sneeze violently, effectively ending the chase.<sup>119</sup>

Under the Fugitive Slave Act, such an article would have been seen as inappropriate because it encouraged slaves to run away and taught blacks how to disable bloodhounds. However, in light of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War, staunch Republicans encouraged the escape of slaves provided that it weakened the Confederacy. Whenever reading a newspaper article, it is important to consider the audience for whom the piece was written. Although many parts of the United States did not have largely literate black populations it is possible that Adams County was an exemption. In 1833, an up and coming lawmaker by the name of Thaddeus Stevens secured money from the state legislature to fund

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* 6 October 1863. p. 1 c. D.

public schools in Adams County.<sup>120</sup> Stevens intended for whites and blacks, to take advantage of the public schools.<sup>121</sup> If this be the case, then it is possible that some blacks read the *Sentinel*.

On December 28th, the last issue of the *Compiler* for the 1863 calendar year, reference was made to President Lincoln's latest joke. By the end of 1863, both the *Sentinel* and the *Compiler* knew of Lincoln's fame in telling anecdotes and jokes in order to make a point. The President's latest joke concerned the daunting task of bringing the states of the Confederacy back into the Union. According to the article, Lincoln was more than willing to let the Confederacy rejoin the Union with all of their rights and privileges as states on the condition that they take an oath that they will ignore all parts of their state constitutions that deal with slavery, follow the laws of Congress, and support the proclamations of the President.<sup>122</sup> While persons in the north would be hard pressed to find such conditions laughable, Stahle and the Democrats found it to be hilarious. Ideologically speaking, Lincoln's conditions essentially reversed over a hundred years of southern traditions. Nevertheless, the *Compiler's* stance does provide an insider's perspective on the Democratic philosophy and party ideology. Such an article also reveals a great deal about the people that read the *Compiler*. Democrats and *Compiler* subscribers held cohesive views with regards to African Americans. They were consistently against emancipation, black rights and the war, which they perceived as a means to abolishing slavery and the rights enumerated in the Constitution.

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<sup>120</sup> *Adams County U.S.A.* prod. and dir. by Jake Boritt. 2002.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* When a petition of 30,000 signatories was presented to the state legislature asking for the repeal of the Free School Law due to the fact that many perceived that funding law forced the government to raise taxes, Stevens defended the idea of free education. In an eloquent speech before the state legislature he said "I trust that when we come to act on this question we shall take lofty ground and so cast our votes that the blessings of education shall be carried home to the poorest child of the poorest inhabitant of the meanest hut of your mountains." According to an article by historian Peter C. Vermilyea, a larger number of blacks were enrolled at schools before the war than after the war, despite the construction of a new school for African American children and the hiring of a new school teacher for the blacks, Lloyd F. A. Watts. (Peter C. Vermilyea, "The Effect of the Confederate Invasion of Pennsylvania on Gettysburg's African American Community," *The Gettysburg Magazine* 24 (January 2001) : p. 124 and 125.)\_

<sup>122</sup> *The Compiler* (Gettysburg) 28 December 1863, p. 4 c. A. This article was originally published in the *Patriot and Union*.

Unlike the *Compiler*, the *Sentinel* drew its readers from a more diverse cross section of society. Despite the *Compiler's* best attempts to label the *Sentinel* as a radical or abolitionist paper, such characterizations simply do not apply. Compared to the *Compiler*, the *Sentinel* held a broader range of perspectives on African Americans. The *Compiler* was consistent in portraying African Americans in a negative tone whereas the *Sentinel* represented different views on the matter. For example, the *Sentinel* ran an article commending the bravery of black troops on June 30th.<sup>123</sup> Less than two months later, an article was published calling blacks greedy and “irresponsible.”<sup>124</sup> Like the Republican Party, many of the *Sentinel's* readers had mixed feelings towards blacks. It would be unrealistic to assume that all northern whites supported emancipation and black rights. The fact of the matter is that many northern whites, including Republicans, were distrustful of blacks. If the issue of blacks divided the Republican Party, then the question at hand became “what do Republicans stand for?”

As a rule of thumb, both the Republicans and the *Sentinel* supported President Lincoln and the preservation of the Union. Restoring the republic was, according to the Republicans, the chief purpose of the war. Not an article was published in the *Sentinel* that said anything against the effort to save the United States. Emancipation was not Lincoln's chief objective, but rather a means to an end. In that respect, the *Sentinel* supported the freeing of the slaves. Over time, it is likely that sympathies for the blacks arose. As the *Compiler* points out, the language and tone used to describe blacks changed dramatically after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation. Such changes were evident throughout 1863.

Like any analysis of the media, it is important to consider the historical context. The year 1863 was not just another year in the war. January marked the start of the Emancipation

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<sup>123</sup> *The Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg) 30 June 1863, p. 2 c. E.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.* 11 August 1863, p. 1 c. G.

Proclamation, forever altering the social and cultural framework of America. Less revolutionary than the Emancipation Proclamation was the fact that elections for various state offices, including the governorship, would take place by the year's end. Media played a big role in the elections by endorsing candidates and by getting people excited about voting. The *Compiler* found itself supporting Democrat Geoffrey Woodward for governor. Democrats worked hard to chip away as many Republican votes as possible before the election. By pulling the issue of slavery into the spotlight, the *Compiler* was able to successfully solidify Democratic support while attempting to split the Republicans. Needless to say, such tactics did not work and the Republican candidate Andrew Curtin went on to win reelection.

Another factor to consider is the famous battle of Gettysburg. Gettysburg changed the course of the Civil War. At Gettysburg, the Union delivered a fatal blow to the South, one that would eventually result in the demise of the Confederacy. As the south ebbed, it became clear that a tidal wave of change would soon crash on the United States, the effects of which are felt even today. With the end of the war came the introduction of three new constitutional amendments that completely changed the status of African Americans.<sup>125</sup> Although the majority of blacks living in the United States would continue to struggle, the groundwork had been laid for civil liberties.

Clearly, both the *Compiler* and the *Sentinel* were more interested in printing articles about blacks that would yield political capital than they were in providing fair and unbiased accounts of newsworthy events. A survey of the articles printed in both papers for the year 1863 shows that the bulk of material concerning African Americans does not actually reflect Gettysburg's black population. Most of the articles dealt with the federal government's policies

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<sup>125</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments of the Constitution abolished slavery, gave all Americans equal protection under the law and granted all black men, both slaves and non-slaves, the right to vote.



concerning blacks such as the Emancipation Proclamation and blacks serving in the military. In his article entitled “The Effect of the Confederate Invasion of Pennsylvania on Gettysburg’s African American Community,” historian Peter C. Vermilyea describes the exodus of blacks from Gettysburg right after the Confederate invasion.<sup>126</sup> There is no mention of blacks fleeing Gettysburg in the *Sentinel* or the *Compiler*.

The year 1863 proved to be a tumultuous year of significant change for the whole nation, especially for African Americans. Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation, the political fervor that engulfed Pennsylvania and one of the most crucial battles of the war greatly impacted the way in which the Gettysburg media portrayed blacks. The *Sentinel* and the *Compiler* could never be used to give an accurate account of Gettysburg’s black history. Still, they both provide an interesting insight to how the media, whites, and political parties manipulated views on blacks to achieve political gain.

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<sup>126</sup> Peter C. Vermilyea, “*The Effect of the Confederate Invasion of Pennsylvania on Gettysburg’s African American Community*,” *The Gettysburg Magazine* 24 (January 2001) : p. 128.