CHAPTER ELEVEN:
LIBERATION: AFRICAN AMERICANS AND THE CIVIL WAR

CHAPTER SUMMARY

In 1861, Lincoln’s primary aim was to restore the Union, without regard to freeing the slaves. In fact, Lincoln did not want to frighten the four remaining slave states into the Confederacy. Union policy toward blacks reflected this caution. Initially, Union officers returned slaves to their masters, or treated them as “contraband” of war. Lincoln, meanwhile, continued to advocate colonization as an option for blacks. By the summer of 1862, however, Lincoln’s thinking had changed, and he decided to free certain slaves, primarily in an effort to hurt Southern resources under the Emancipation Proclamation. The Emancipation Proclamation, effective January 1, 1863, met with severe Northern opposition and cost Lincoln’s party significant political power in Congress. Although limited, the Emancipation Proclamation had a dramatic effect on the South, eliminating chances of foreign support and undermining their labor source. Lincoln’s ideas about black military service also changed. With the Emancipation Proclamation, he authorized black military enlistment as well. Blacks enthusiastically joined the First and Second South Carolina Volunteers and the 54th Massachusetts, and the Navy, although they continued to encounter racism and discrimination throughout their service. Although many Northern whites felt that blacks were incapable of anything but menial labor, the 54th Massachusetts in the bloody assault on Battery Wagner proved the bravery and heroism of black soldiers to many whites. Confederates were hardly as charitable, refusing to treat captured blacks as prisoners of war and even engaging in abusive behavior and murder, as seen at Ft. Pillow. Some Northern responses, such as the violent New York City Draft Riot, proved just as brutal as the South. Although rare, blacks also fought for the Confederacy. Often forced into service, the Confederacy began to contemplate the use of black soldiers as their manpower and prospects deteriorated. Some blacks, however, their economic interests tied to the Southern system, did voluntarily serve. Southerners highly publicized such efforts as proof of the loyal and happy slave. In reality, though, few blacks supported the Confederate cause.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Understand Lincoln’s early policies toward slaves and black military service.

Understand the Emancipation Proclamation, including its terms, why it was issued, as well as its effect and reaction.

Understand the role of black men in the Northern military, as well as the difficulties they faced.

Understand the Confederate and Northern white reaction to blacks gaining in status and being allowed in the Northern military.

Understand the role blacks played in gaining freedom themselves.

Understand the role of slaves and blacks for the Confederates.
CHAPTER OUTLINE

I. Introduction

II. Lincoln’s Aims
   A. Initial Goals
   B. Call for Service

III. Black Men Volunteer and are Rejected
   A. Military Efforts
   B. Government Reaction

IV. Union Policies Toward Confederate Slaves
   A. Protection of Slaveholders’ Property
   B. “Contraband”
      1. Origins of policy
      2. First Confiscation Act
      3. Black Reaction
      4. White Opposition to Lincoln’s Actions
   C. Lincoln’s Initial Position
      1. Original plans
      2. Actions of border states
      3. Reactions of blacks
   D. Lincoln Moves Toward Emancipation
      1. July 1862 Decision
      2. Postponement
   E. Lincoln Delays Emancipation
      1. Black reaction
      2. Journalists’ reaction
      3. Lincoln’s explanation
   F. Black People Reject Colonization
      1. Lincoln’s suggestion
      2. Black’s response
      3. Early government attempts

V. The Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation
   A. Terms
   B. Lincoln’s Intentions
   C. Northern Reaction to Emancipation
      1. Black/Abolitionist response
      2. White Northerners
   D. Political Opposition to Emancipation
      1. Northern Democratic Reaction
      2. Northern Democratic Political Gains

VI. The Emancipation Proclamation
   A. Change in Goals of War
   B. Black Reaction
   C. Limits of the Proclamation
      1. Dry language
      2. Geographical limitations
D. Effects of the Proclamation on the South  
   1. Foreign Alliances  
   2. Loss of labor source

VII. Black Men Fight for the Union  
   A. Northern Efforts to 1863  
   B. Difficulties in Decision  
   C. The First South Carolina Volunteers  
      1. Recruitment  
      2. Dispersal  
   D. The Second South Carolina Volunteers  
      1. Enlistment  
      2. Goals of Montgomery  
   E. The 54th Massachusetts Regiment  
      1. The Black Committee  
      2. Lincoln’s Enthusiasm  
      3. Leadership  
   F. Black Soldiers Confront Discrimination  
      1. Racism of whites  
      2. Segregation  
      3. White leadership  
      4. Pay  
      5. Protest over discrimination  
      6. Partial resolution  
   G. Black Men in Combat  
      1. Island Mountain and Missouri  
      2. Other early efforts  
   H. The Assault on Battery Wagner  
      1. Fighting  
      2. Effects

VIII. The Confederate Reaction to Black Soldiers  
   A. The Abuse and Murder of Black Troops  
      1. Seddon’s Order  
      2. 54th Massachusetts Prisoners  
   B. The Fort Pillow Massacre  
      1. Events  
      2. Retaliation  
   C. The Crater  
      1. Petersburg, VA siege  
      2. Confederate victory

IX. Black Men in the Union Navy  
   A. History of Service  
   B. Discrimination and Admiration

X. Liberators, Spies and Guides  
   A. Robert Smalls and The Planter  
   B. Harriet Tubman  
   C. Other Efforts
XI. Violent Opposition to Black People
   A. The New York City Draft Riot
      1. Origins
      2. Outcomes
   B. Union Troops and Slaves
      1. Violent Acts
      2. Sympathy

XII. Refugees

XIII. Black People and the Confederacy
   A. Importance ofSlave Labor
   B. The Impressment of Black People
      1. Reluctance of owners
      2. Labor
   C. Confederates Enslave Free Black People
      1. Counter to Emancipation Proclamation
      2. Effect
   D. Black Confederates
   E. Personal Servants
   F. Black Men Fighting for the South
      1. Examples
      2. Southern reaction
   G. Black Opposition to the Confederacy
   H. The Confederate Debate on Black Troops
      1. Desperation
      2. Cleburne’s Suggestion
      3. Reaction of the South
      4. Decision of Lee
      5. March, 1865 Decision

XIV. Conclusion

TEST MATERIALS

MAP QUESTIONS
(Locate the following regions, geographical features or political entities on a map)
Confederate States of America (locate each one)
Fortress Monroe
Haiti
Liberia
Ile a Vache
Antietam
Island Mountain, Missouri
Charleston
Fort Pillow, Tennessee
Petersburg, Virginia