Frederick Douglass' Relationship with Abraham Lincoln

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No relationship has ever impacted the future of race relations in the United States [more] than that of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass. As a self-taught fugitive slave, Douglass devoted his life's work to the abolition of slavery in America. Speaking at numerous events in both the United States and England and publishing his antislavery newspapers, Douglass was passionate about his cause and stopped at nothing until he lived to see the day that slavery was abolished. Abraham Lincoln's election as President sparked a chain of events that ultimately led to emancipation, and the Thirteenth Amendment. Throughout the years of the war, Douglass challenged the policies of Lincoln in hopes of pushing him towards a definitive and immediate emancipation policy. Although Douglass and Lincoln did not personally meet until after the Emancipation Proclamation, their relationship up to that point was defined by their correspondence through public addresses, letters, and newspapers. During the war years, Douglass and Lincoln had a tenuous relationship that fluctuated according to Lincoln's changing policies. From the antebellum period through the announcement of Emancipation Proclamation, Douglass' sentiments towards Lincoln went from cautious support in 1860, to complete outrage in 1861, and finally respectful admiration in 1863. However, evidence suggests that their relationship grew to become more profound because the realities of the war and the end of American slavery led these two men to hold a deep respect for each other.

From the moment Douglass freed himself from slavery, he began to push his policy of emancipation. He was always passionate about abolition in all parts of the United States: "I am, of course, for circumscribing and damaging slavery in every way I can. But my motto is extermination—not only in New Mexico, but in New Orleans, not only in California but in South Carolina." As a Garrisonian, Douglass had been a proponent of moral suasion, that is, the preaching and practicing of evangelism as a means to abolish slavery. Invoking the principles of moral suasion, Douglass came to see abolition directly linked to religion: "For Douglass, abolitionism quickly assumed the status of religion, drawing upon the best Christian ideals: love, morality, and justice." Douglass, who associated slavery with barbarity and freedom with religion, believed that it was hypocritical to be a Christian slaveholder. He tried to incorporate religious aspects into his speeches in order to show people that slavery was a moral sin. In a letter to British radical abolitionist George Thompson, Douglass quoted a passage from the Bible that refers to the relationship between a master and a slave: "I yet take pleasure in complying with the wish of one who is a friend to me and 'how much more to thee.'" As tensions mounted between North and South during the antebellum period, it became evident that moral suasion alone would not lead to complete abolition, and so, split with the radical Garrisonians. After this split, Douglass used a combination of moral suasion and political action in his agenda; he was determined to work within the established political system to legally abolish slavery. He stood by the belief "that the complete abolition of slavery needed to rely on political forces within the Union, and the activities of abolishing slavery therefore should be within the Constitution." Involvement on the local level, including community and regional political activism against slavery, proved to be ineffective mechanisms to advocate change because the issue of slavery was quickly moving to the forefront of domestic politics. This meant that there needed to be a political party that included an antislavery plank in its platform in the White House. At this time, slaveholders were ardently defending their right to own slaves; compromise was slowly becoming an exhausted option, which suggests that any party that included the antislavery cause as a part of their platform had little chance of reaching the presidency. After giving his support to the Free-Soilers and the Liberty Party, Douglass realized that these third parties had little chance of winning the presidency because their platform solely rested on antislavery. Naturally, Douglass realized that he had to throw his support to another political party that had a better chance of reaching the White House. In a letter to William Seward in 1863, Douglass expressed his desire for a party that would "disentangle the Republic from Slavery."

The growth of Douglass' sense of abolitionism is reflected in his pattern of political party support: "At first he would align himself primarily with the Liberty Party or Radical Abolitionists," but "come election time, he would opt for expediency and support the presidential candidate he deemed the most pragmatic compromise between his radical abolitionism and his growing political activism." The formation of the Republican Party in 1854 proved to be the best bet for the abolitionists. Within the Republican Party were elements of the Liberty Party, the Free Soil Party, and those antislavery forces from both the Democratic and Whig Parties. The Republican Party "was an alliance of antislavery forces...it was not exclusively an Abolitionist Party." This
Americans' political concerns were split right down the middle when it came to the slavery issue as indicated by the maps of the presidential elections of 1856 and 1860 (Appendix). While antislavery sentiments were growing in the North, slavery was still ingrained into Southern lifestyle. If the Republicans were either strongly proslavery or antislavery, they would not have reached the presidency. By sticking to the non-extension policy and broadening their platform, Republicans hoped to appeal to the majority of Americans.

Although Douglass did put his political support to the Republicans in the 1860 election, he still had lingering fears that they would do more harm to the situation of the slaves than good. Douglass was fearful that no president would realize that the only solution to preserve the Union on peaceful terms was to end slavery. While the rest of the nation saw the Republicans policy of non-extension as antislavery, Douglass and the radical abolitionists saw it as proslavery policy. In an article published in Douglass' newspaper Douglass' Monthly entitled “The Late Election,” Douglass criticizes the position of Lincoln and the Republican Party in regards to slavery:

> Mr. Lincoln... while admitting the right to hold men as slaves in the States already existing, regards such property as peculiar, exceptional, local, generally an evil, and not to be extended beyond the limits of the States where it is established by what is called positive law. Whoever live through the next four years will see Mr. Lincoln and his Administration attacked more bitterly for their pro-slavery trucking than for doing any anti-slavery work.  

This was only the beginning of Douglass' militant attitudes and harsh criticisms of Lincoln and his administration. Douglass was optimistic that he would be able to push Lincoln towards immediate emancipation: “Douglas believed he could turn the Republican Party into an Abolitionist party and Lincoln into an Abolitionist president.”

When Lincoln was elected to office, Douglass remained optimistic because he saw Lincoln's potential to eventually emancipate. In general, the Republican party “suffered from a fatally ambiguous attitude toward the Negro.” But Lincoln had always been opposed to slavery because he believed that slavery was the source of all conflict tearing the Union apart. Lincoln believed that ending slavery, or at least preventing the spread of it, would end sectional conflicts and prevent open warfare: “I have said that I believe we shall not have peace upon this question until the opponents of slavery ARREST THE FURTHER SPREAD OF IT....” According to Lincoln's views, non-extension advocated the return to the original Constitution: “I say in the way our fathers originally left the slavery question, the institution was in course of ultimate extinction, and the public mind rested in the belief that it was in the course of ultimate extinction.”

Lincoln also believed that slavery was not consistent with the value of human equality set forth by the Declaration of Independence. He insisted that “there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” However, Lincoln was unwilling to directly approach the slavery issue. In the series of the 1858 senatorial debates with Stephen Douglas, Lincoln “denounced slavery as a moral evil, and cried as much as possible to dodge the race question.” This frustrated Douglas, which was also the source of his fear. But his criticisms of Lincoln's slowness are more harsh during his Presidency.

When Abraham Lincoln took office in the spring of 1861, he knew that his nation was in need of repair. The issue of slavery, which was increasingly becoming a major national debate, characterized the political climate of the antebellum period. The heated arguments over the future of American slavery became so great that compromise was no longer a viable solution. The nature of compromise upon the outbreak of war is best characterized by the Crittenden Compromise of 1861. As a final one-sided attempt to protect the future of slavery, the Crittenden Compromise is difficult to call a compromise because it only had the interests of slaveholders in mind. After its failure, war was inevitable and Lincoln knew it. His goal was now to keep his nation afloat.

At this moment, Lincoln and Douglass had two different agendas: “The president's mission in the war was to save the Union; Douglass was to free the slaves and transform them into citizens.” Because he feared that it would split the Union further, Lincoln refused to make the war a war for abolition. To Douglass, the root cause of the war was slavery. As military conflict became inevitable, Douglas was ready to let the conflict come. He viewed the secession crisis and the coming of the war as “a collision of forces that might cause this break with the past.”

Lincoln at first viewed the war as the worst case scenario: “At the outset of the war Douglass wanted precisely what Lincoln did not want: a 'remorseless revolutionary struggle' that would make black freedom indispensable to saving the Union.” Regardless of what either man wished for, the war did come and both Douglass and Lincoln each openly fought for their causes: Douglass for abolition and Lincoln for preservation of the Union at all costs.

As a means to preserve the Union and honor the Constitution simultaneously, Lincoln felt it best to suffocate any attempts at emancipation until he found a constitutional way to legally emancipate the slaves: “Cease to call slavery wrong, and join them in calling it right. And this must be done thoroughly—done in acts as well as words.” At first, he stuck to his policy of war to preserve the Union and suffocated any instance where slavery was mentioned. On August 30, 1861, Lincoln immediately canceled General John C. Fremont's order to free the slaves that were in arms against the federal government in Missouri. In a letter to Fremont sent on September 2, 1861, Lincoln wrote:

> Your proclamation of August 30th [gave] me some anxiety. I think there is great danger... in relation to the confiscation of property, and the liberating slaves of traitorous owners, will alarm our Southern Union
friends, and turn them against us... Allow me therefore to ask... modify that paragraph so as to conform to the first and fourth sections of the act of Congress, entitled, 'An act to confiscate property used for insurrectionary purposes,' approved August, 6th, 1861.... This letter is written in a spirit of caution and not of censure.22

Not surprisingly, this not only enraged Douglass, but also proved "to be the direct result of the Administration's failure to come out clearly and definitively with a statement of principle opposing slavery."23

Later that year, when Secretary of War Simon Cameron included a section in one of his reports approving the emancipation of and the arming of slaves within the Union borders, Lincoln made him rescind his order and had the section cut from the report. Again Lincoln tried to avoid making any radical decisions regarding slavery when in May 1862, General David Hunter issued an order to emancipate all the slaves in the South Military Region, which included South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Lincoln again revoked the order as a means to keep the Border States loyal. On May 19, 1862 Lincoln announced a proclamation officially revoking General Hunter's order: "I, Abraham Lincoln... proclaim and declare, that the government of the United States, had no knowledge, information, or belief, of an intention on the part of General Hunter to issue such a proclamation... and that the supposed proclamation... in question... is altogether void."24

Douglas was, naturally, outraged at Lincoln's suppression of the slavery issue, which made him even more "determined to change his [Lincoln's] mind"25 and "in 1862, the job for [his] elegant vocal instrument was agitation."26 At that moment, he was enraged with the Lincoln administration, criticizing it whenever he had the chance: "Douglas was constantly pressing the President and everyone else in Washington to stop downplaying the slavery question and turn the war into a crusade to rid the land once and for all of the hated institution."27 Slowly but surely, the "events during the first half of 1862 pushed moderates toward the radical position."28

But as the war progressed, Lincoln started to feel pressure from the political left, including Douglass and other antislavery radicals. Regardless, Lincoln still maintained that the war was a war to preserve the Union, but never doubted that the issue of emancipation coincided with ending the war. In August 1861, the same month he revoked Fremont's order to emancipate all slaves in arms against the federal government in Missouri, Lincoln also signed the first Confiscation Act, stipulating that all slaves who had fought for the Confederacy could be confiscated and then freed. In March 1862, Lincoln signed a bill forbidding the Union Army or Navy from returning fugitive slaves. Any officer who disobeyed would be discharged from service and not able to re-enter the service. In April 1862, Lincoln signed a bill abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, compensating slaveholders $300 a slave. And then in May he compiled with General Benjamin Butler's policy of 'contrabands of war,' which ultimately freed all slaves who crossed over Northern lines: "When the news spread by August, thousands of slaves had run away to Butler's position."29 Lincoln's compliance with this policy is significant because it revoked his strict adherence to the Fugitive Slave Law, which required all runaway slaves to be returned to their masters. Although these efforts marked a significant advance in Lincoln's growth, he still wanted to find a way to legally emancipate the slaves: "This thing is not closed here. I am still under such pressure, and it becomes heavier and heavier."30

Early on in his term, Lincoln needed to proceed cautiously when dealing with the delicate issue of the future of slavery because he and the Republican Party had taken a non-interference stance on the issue from the beginning. If he had initially called the war a war for abolition, then he would have lost party support immediately. Therefore, his prudence was a practical move in order to gain support in the earlier stages of the war: "It was theoretically reasonable for Lincoln to... tread cautiously on the question of slavery."31 He was a good leader who valued pragmatism and legality: "Lincoln was an astute politician who moved only when the time seemed right."32 To Douglass, Lincoln's reluctance to deal with the slavery issue was frustrating, but in reality Lincoln had some obstacles he needed to negotiate before dealing with slavery head on.

The year 1862 was significant in the policies of the Lincoln administration because Lincoln started to recognize that the issues of emancipation and preservation of the Union went hand-in-hand. That is, the military and political agendas started to merge. But even though his policies were straying a bit from his original political perspective, Lincoln still was not making powerful efforts to emancipate, which caused the abolitionists, especially Douglass, to seriously doubt Lincoln's potential. Because of his fear of splitting the Union even further, "Lincoln made each of [his] decisions reluctantly."33 But to Douglas, Lincoln's cautious approach "has often been viewed as a reluctant response to opportunity. Willing to settle for what was practicable... Lincoln was alert to the expanding potential created by war."34 But as Lincoln started acting towards abolition, Douglass grew more militant with the Lincoln administration and kept on pushing them in the direction towards immediate emancipation.

But one problem remained: Lincoln still maintained that his sole objective was to preserve the Union at any cost. Although he understood that the Union could not survive with slavery intact, Lincoln did not yet grasp that immediate emancipation was the only viable solution. Douglass pressed on with his criticism of the Lincoln administration's inability to take powerful measures against slavery: "He told the crowd that he could no longer bite his tongue to keep from criticizing Lincoln. The government was throwing away its chance at victory by failing to attack the root cause of the war."35

As the war advanced, Lincoln's policies were slowly radicalizing. But to Douglass, Lincoln was not radical enough; he saw Lincoln's slowness to approach the slavery issue head on as a call to arms. Douglass was prepared to go at the Lincoln administration with full force. Douglass' articles published right up until Lincoln's announcement of the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862 are the best examples of Douglass' militant attitudes. The article entitled "What the People Expect of Mr. Lincoln" directly addresses the impatience of the public, rather than just antislavery radicals like Douglass, at his reluctance to act on the slavery issue, especially since Congress had recently passed the Confiscation Act: "Mr. Lincoln should be informed that the people are becoming impatient for the execution of the important laws just passed by Congress... and everybody is wondering why he delays to strike."36 By pointing out that Lincoln's slowness was a matter of public concern, not just a concern of his own,
Douglass gave Lincoln another reason to act. Even though Lincoln issued the Confiscation Act in the summer of 1862, which freed the slaves of the rebels who escaped into Northern lines, it still was not powerful enough to satisfy Douglass. Douglass believed that the Confiscation Act meant nothing unless Lincoln saw it through: “The measure is important or unimportant, significant or insignificant only as the President himself shall determine. The sole power of putting life into this law is vested in the President. He can make it effective and binding upon his generals or ineffectual and void.”

Douglass was still waiting for Lincoln to step up to the plate and end the war by emancipating the slaves. The language of Douglass’ criticisms was a crucial part of his attack on Lincoln. In the September 1862 publication of Douglass’ Monthly, the article “The President and His Speeches” is an intense, direct attack on Lincoln’s character: “The President...seems to possess an ever increasing passion for making himself appear silly and ridiculous, if nothing worse.”

The article harshly criticizes Lincoln’s weak attempts to emancipate as unacceptable; not only are Lincoln’s statements “illogical and unfair”, but they are also telling of his racism. Douglass’s newspaper publicly bashes Lincoln’s colonization plan: “He says to the colored people: I don’t like you, you must clear out of the country.” It further claims that Lincoln is “as timid as a sheep... [he] has not been able yet to muster courage and honesty enough to obey and execute...his anti-slavery testimonies.”

Over the course of the war, Lincoln slowly grew out of what Douglass considered old conservative policies and started to try new ways to bring the Union back together. Up until 1863, he had made many efforts to appease all sides of the conflict, but Lincoln was unsuccessful, leaving Douglass still frustrated: “Lincoln felt that he had played almost all his cards, unless he played his trump card—the emancipation of slaves by force—he could not save the Union.” Nothing else was working to bring the nation back together, so he had to make a bold move. During the summer of 1862, Lincoln had privately spoken to his cabinet about emancipation. Under the advisement of Secretary of State William Seward, Lincoln decided to wait until the Union had a victory under its belt before he announced his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Seward thought it would be best to postpone the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation “until you can give it to the country supported by military success.” Otherwise the world might view it “as the last measure of an exhausted government, a cry for help...our last shriek, on the retreat.” But, in reality, the Emancipation Proclamation was a “last shriek” in disguise even though Lincoln waited until after the Union victory at Antietam.

However, it was still unclear as to what would happen to the ex-slaves; there were still racial sentiments against the black presence in America. At this point, Lincoln still felt that colonization was a viable option to rid the problem of slavery and the black presence forever. That is, he believed that removing the black presence in the United States by colonizing the ex-slaves in a separate location would cease national conflict; if there were no blacks, there was no problem. In addition, Lincoln also “believed that support for colonization was the best way to defuse much of the anti-emancipation sentiment that might otherwise sink the Republicans in the 1862 elections.”

Even though his political and military ideologies were merging through his consideration of the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln’s strong support for colonization shows that his moral ideology about the evils of slavery was not yet developed. On August 14, 1862, when Lincoln invited a small group of black leaders to the White House, his behavior illustrates his racism. Lincoln agreed with the black leaders that “slavery was ‘the greatest wrong inflicted on any people.’” He still proceeded to blame the war on the black presence in the United States: “But for your race among us there could not be war, although many men engaged on either side do not care for you one way or the other.” In this instance, Lincoln’s expression of racism dramatically outweighed his growing efforts toward emancipation. Unsurprisingly, Douglass was outraged with Lincoln’s address and pointed out that Lincoln’s affirmation of white supremacy made him representative of American prejudice: “Mr. Lincoln further knows or ought to know at least that negro hatred and prejudice of color are neither original nor invincible vices, but merely the offshoots of that root of all crimes and evils—slavery.”

Douglass was truly hurt by Lincoln’s efforts to colonize the slave population and his deep sense of betrayal is best illustrated in his reaction to Lincoln’s behavior towards the black delegation:

“The tone of frankness and benevolence which he assumes in his speech to the colored committee is too thin a mask not to be seen through. The genuine spark of humanity is missing in it, no sincere wish to improve the condition of the oppressed has dictated it. It expresses merely the desire to get rid of them, and reminds one of the politeness with which a man might try to bow out of his house some troublesome creditor or the witness of some old guilt.”

But Douglass’ outrage would soon be assuaged. After the Union victory at the Battle of Antietam in September 1862, Lincoln was ready to make public his Emancipation Proclamation. In his Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln warned the rebels that unless they returned to the Union, by January 1 all of their slaves would be legally freed. Under the Constitution, Lincoln had no power to act against slavery in the areas still loyal to the Union. Even though slaves would be freed only in the territory rebelling against the federal government, the tone of the war had changed drastically. Lincoln said himself that on January 1, 1863, “the character of the war will be changed. It will be one of subjugation.... The [old] South is to be destroyed and replaced by new propositions and ideas.” Douglass was elated and in a letter to newspaper editor and friend Theodore Tilton, he wrote that he wished “one could strike December from the calendar” in order for the Proclamation to go into effect sooner.

Much changed in the way Douglass regarded Lincoln with his announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation. After the Proclamation was made public, Lincoln’s sense of the war was becoming more aligned with that of Douglass’s. As the war’s purpose expanded, Douglass and Lincoln began to share a sense of the significance of the war. Even though the political ideologies of Douglass and Lincoln had merged, emancipation was still in the name of the war effort. Lincoln used this Emancipation Proclamation as a “military necessity” to save the Union: “If the federal government wanted to win the war, it had to take measures like emancipating the slaves, so it could destroy the enemy’s war foundation.” But on the other hand, the Emancipation Proclamation also demonstrates...
that Lincoln was moving closer to attaining racial goodwill. His moral ideology would not begin to catch up to that of Douglass' until the Gettysburg Address, but the Proclamation was nevertheless a milestone in the process of emancipation.

The day August 10, 1863 would be the pinnacle of the relationship between Douglass and Lincoln. On this day, Douglass went to Washington to meet with Lincoln for the first time. While there, Lincoln's behavior towards Douglass revealed much about how he felt about him and how his views towards blacks had changed. As the first black man ever personally invited into the White House by the President, Douglass was treated with the utmost respect. He was especially impressed with Lincoln's directness: "remembered that the President looked him in the eye.... For the first time, Douglass expressed a personal identification with Lincoln."52 As for the growth of Lincoln towards the slavery issue, on this occasion, Douglass 'felt that Lincoln 'showed a deeper moral conviction against slavery that I had ever seen before in any thing spoken or written by him.... Evidence conclusive that the [Emancipation] proclamation, so far as he was concerned, was not effected merely as a [military] necessity."53 Douglass appreciated Lincoln for treating him like an equal, which is indicative of Lincoln's gradual attainment of a deeper moral conscious.

At this moment, Douglass respected Lincoln, which was a complete turnaround from his blatant outrage expressed publicly through his newspapers. Over the course of the rest of the war, Douglass and Lincoln met on several occasions to discuss the situation of the ex-slaves and their future in the United States. Because of these personal meetings, Lincoln and Douglass' relationship had a chance to grow more profound. After the Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln still considered colonization as a viable option to deal with the black presence. But, to Douglass, black enlistments in the military was the strongest option to attain total emancipation; he believed that the ex-slaves had to "embrace the opportunity to serve in the military to fulfill and protect their status as American citizens, to prevent a pro-slavery compromise between the Union and the Confederacy, and to be a part of the 'ennobling and soul enlarging' war for black liberation."54 Douglass eventually started to bring Lincoln to consider black enlistments: "Douglass explained...that 'if this war...has any lesson for the American people it is to show them the vanity and utter worthlessness of all attempts to secure peace and prosperity while disregarding and trampling upon the self-evident rights and claims of human nature.'55 Soon, Lincoln and Douglass' moral ideologies started to merge as Lincoln was giving the ex-slaves more rights, such as including them in the military. Douglass saw this as "an important aspect of the emancipation process...had been the integral contributions of black soldiers: the black liberation army."56

Naturally, the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation facilitated the growth of Douglass' respectful admiration of Lincoln. Although he began to express his newfound praise of Lincoln while Lincoln was still alive, Douglass' deep respect for Lincoln was best expressed in the years after his assassination. In Douglass' speech at the unveiling of the statue of Abraham Lincoln in Washington on the 21st anniversary of Lincoln's death, Douglass' true feelings came out: "Our faith in him was often taxed and strained to the uttermost, but it never failed...we were at times stunned, grieved, and greatly bewildered; but our hearts believed while they ached and bled."57 He later declared that honoring his memory is important because "under his rule and inspiration we saw the Confederate States, based upon the idea that our race must be slaves...battered to pieces...in the fullness of time, we saw Abraham Lincoln...penning the immortal paper, which, though special in its language, was general in its principles and effect, making slavery forever impossible in the United States."58 Although his praises of Lincoln are significant, still more significant is Douglass' understanding that Lincoln's slackness to deal with the slavery issue was actually necessary caution: "Had he put the abolition of slavery before the salvation of the Union, he would have inevitably driven from him a powerful class of the American people and rendered resistance to rebellion impossible. Viewed from the genuine abolition ground, Mr. Lincoln seemed tardy, cold, dull and indifferent; but measuring him by the sentiment of his country, a sentiment he was bound as a statesman to consult, he was swift, zealous, radical, and determined. Though Mr. Lincoln shared the prejudices of his white fellow-countrymen against the negro, it is hardly necessary to say that in his heart of hearts he loathed and hated slavery."59

Even though Douglass and Lincoln had not met until the summer of 1863, their relationship is vital in order to understand how Douglass felt about the political climate, Lincoln, and emancipation. It is clear that the war brought together their political ideologies, which ultimately paved the way for each to appreciate the other in a deeper sense. The fusion of their political ideologies not only shows that both men changed greatly, but also paved the way for their moral ideologies to merge. Because they had grown to share a deep respect for each other, Lincoln and Douglass were able to overcome their own misconceptions about each other's character. When Lincoln died, he left Douglass his favorite walking staff as a sign of his profound appreciation and gratitude. Douglass also commemorated Lincoln by hanging a portrait of him in his home in Washington, D.C. The relationship between Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass was a milestone in American history that would positively influence the future of race relations.

Author's Note
The publication of my paper in the Journal for Undergraduate Research marks not an end, but rather a beginning. Until recently, I was unaware of a new work on the subject of the relationship between Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln. The Radical and the Republican: Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln, and the Triumph of Antislavery Politics by James Oakes expands on the subjects and issues I raise here, shedding new light on the Douglass-Lincoln relationship during the antebellum and Civil War years. By bringing Lincoln and Douglass together, as I have also done, Oakes tells the story of how these two men stood alongside each other during an immense historical struggle. Although it is unfortunate that this publication was released after the completion of my paper, it is my hope that my paper will challenge others to read Oakes' work.

References
2. Moral suasion was used as an argument to end slavery, because the abolitionists felt that thinking people who were basically good people in America could be persuaded by argument that slavery was wrong; that it was wrong for moral reasons; that it was wrong for religious reasons; that the ideals on which the nation was founded were perverted by the institution of enslavement. What the abolitionists didn’t realize was how deeply embedded in the social, economic, and political structure slavery was. They didn’t realize how powerful the slaveocracy was. And they didn’t realize how much racism had embedded the fabric of American life. (Margaret Washington, "Margaret Washington on Moral Suasion," Africans in America, http://www.pbs.org/ wgbh/aia/patri4/4/2981.html, 21 October 2006.)


4. Letter to George Thompson, February 18, 1860. University of Rochester Dept. of Rare Books.


7. Martin, Jr. The Mind of Frederick Douglass, p. 34

8. Jin-Ping, Frederick Douglass and the Black Liberation Movement, p. 66

9. Passed in 1850, the Fugitive Slave Law stipulated that all runaway slaves were to be returned to their masters. In addition, any federal marshal who did not arrest an alleged runaway slave could be fined $1,000. Blacks suspected of being a runaway slave could be arrested without warrant and turned over to a claimant on nothing more than his sworn testimony of ownership. A suspected black slave could not ask for a jury trial nor testify on his or her behalf. Any person aiding a runaway slave by providing shelter, food or any other form of assistance was liable to six months imprisonment and a $1,000 fine. Those officers capturing a fugitive slave were entitled to a monetary reward, which in turn encouraged some officers to kidnap free Negroes and sell them to slave-owners. 10. http://teachpol.cnj.edu/amer_pol_hist/f/000000b9.htm and http://teachpol.cnj.edu/amer_pol_hist/f/000000bd.htm


12. Jin-Ping, Frederick Douglass and the Black Liberation Movement, p. 67


16. Ibid., p. 65


23. George A. Hinshaw, A Rhetorical Analysis of the Speeches of Frederick Douglass During and After the Civil War, p. 73


26. Ibid., p. 213

27. Ibid., p. 213


29. Jin-Ping, Frederick Douglass and the Black Liberation Movement, p. 82.

30. Ibid., p. 84.

31. Ibid., p. 76

32. Wickenden, Dismantling the Peculiar Institution, p. 2

33. Ibid., p. 3


35. Hoexter, Black Crusader, p. 153


39. Ibid., p. 707

40. Ibid., p. 708

41. Ibid., p. 7083

42. Jin-Ping, Frederick Douglass and the Black Liberation Movement, p. 85

43. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, p. 505.

44. Ibid., p. 508

45. Ibid., p. 508

46. Blight, Frederick Douglass’ Civil War, p. 138


48. Ibid., p. 708


50. Letter to Theodore Titon, November 22, 1862. University of Rochester Dept. of Rare Books.

51. Jin-Ping, Frederick Douglass and the Black Liberation Movement, p. 84

52. Blight, Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln, p. 11

53. Cox, Lincoln and Black Freedom, p. 16

54. Martin, Jr., The Mind of Frederick Douglass, p. 62
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