Many African Americans saw serving in the army during the Civil War as a precursor to full citizenship rights. Frederick Douglass summed it up best: "Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letter, U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pocket, there is no power on earth that can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship." Prints like this one encouraged former slaves—"contraband," to some—to enlist. *(Image: Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library, Duke University)*

Contraband Camps in St. Louis:

A Contested Path to Freedom

BY JANE M. DAVIS

In the early years of the Civil War, the Union army and the Federal government faced an unexpected consequence of success. As Union armies pushed through the outskirts of the Confederacy and into the heart of the South, slaves from surrounding plantations and communities began to flock to Union lines. Due to an unclear Federal policy, Union commanders answered in a variety of ways the question of how to treat African American refugees. From providing employment and the opportunity for freedom to refusal of shelter within Union lines or even return to slave owners, the commanders of the Union forces shaped the fate of African American refugees and, in many ways, the Federal response to the emancipation question. As the number of refugees increased, the Union army and various aid agencies began to create camps near Union lines and in Northern cities to shelter the refugees. These "contraband" camps, as they became known, often became the foundation for African American communities after the war.

In May of 1861, Union General Benjamin Butler determined that since slaves in Virginia were being used to build fortifications by the Confederates, blacks who fled to Union lines were in effect confiscated property of the enemy and, therefore, "contraband." This was a reversal of his previous decision to return slaves to their owners when they made their way to Union lines. Butler changed his treatment of fugitive slaves in part because he was no longer in the loyal Union state of Maryland, but also

because his understanding of the African American refugee or "contraband" issue had changed with the dramatic increase of slaves fleeing to Union lines. In November of 1861, orders from generals Henry Halleck and John Dix refused to allow African American refugees within the Union lines. Other generals held an even more proslavery view, allowing for Confederate slave hunters to enter Union lines and retrieve fugitive slaves upon identification. Still other commanders were more sympathetic to the plight of the slaves and refused to enforce the fugitive slave laws; two such officers lost their commands over the issue and were reprimanded.[1]

The practice of allowing citizens permission to search Union camps for fugitive slaves was so great a concern that General Ulysses S. Grant issued General Order No. 14 in February of 1862, reiterating Halleck's prohibition of fugitive slaves in the line. Grant was primarily concerned about the possibility of Confederate sympathizers entering camps to search for fugitive slaves, and he saw permits to search for slaves as a method for the enemy to gain military information in the process. Grant's Order No. 14 addressed this by clearly stating that no permits would be granted for retrieval of slaves.

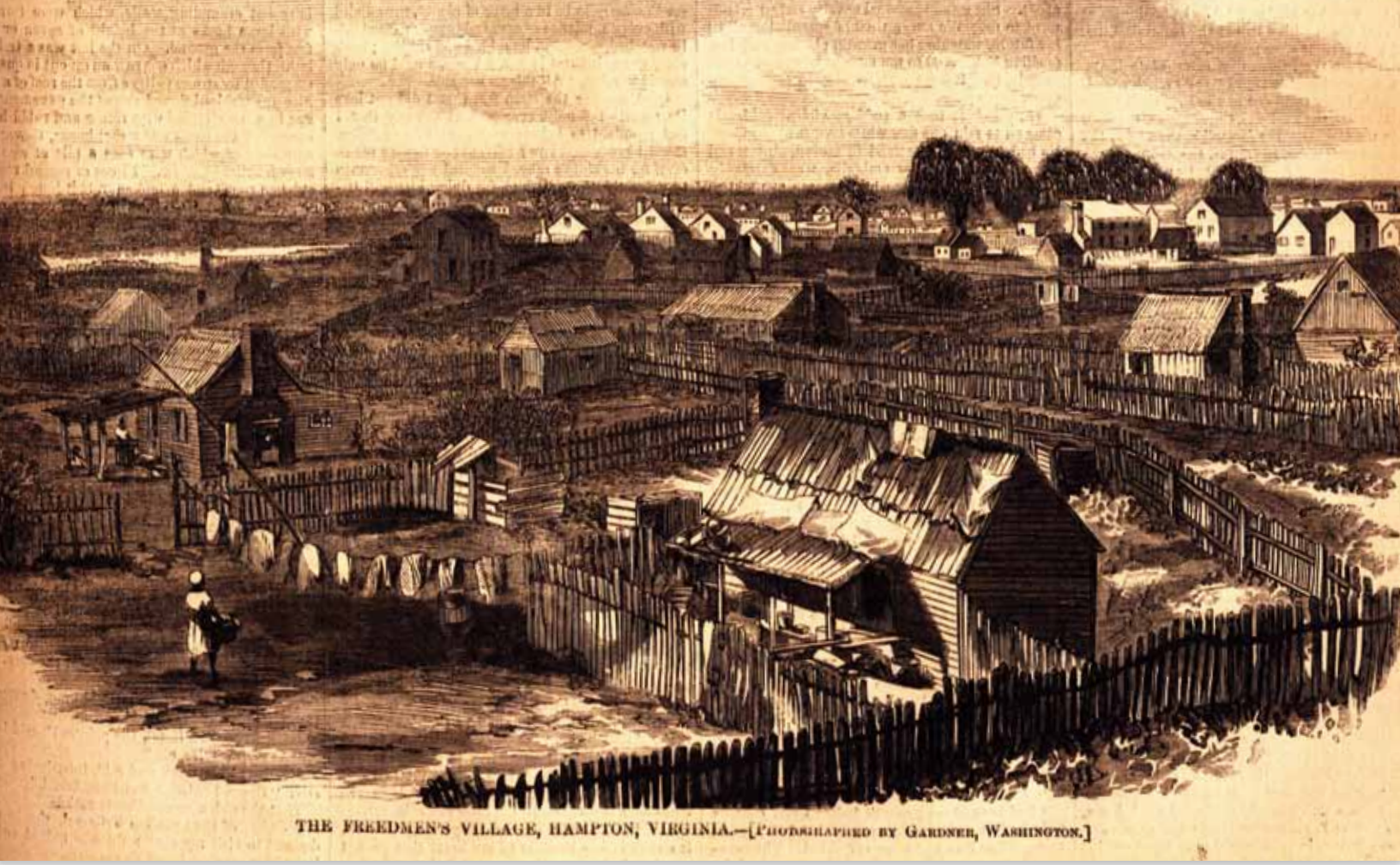
New Englander Benjamin Butler (1818-1893) was commander at Fort Monroe in Virginia when he first refused to return contraband slaves to their owners, flying in the face of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Starting in May 1862, Butler was commander of the newly occupied New Orleans; so many slaves arrived in the city with hopes of being emancipated under Butler's command that he eventually had to exclude all unemployed former slaves from the city. Ironically, Butler supported Jefferson Davis over Illinois senator Stephen A. Douglas at the 1860 Democratic National Convention. *(Image: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division)*

Grant, like Butler, also saw the value in allowing fugitive slaves to remain within Union lines and proposed that African American refugees already in the Union lines or in areas captured by the Union army "will not be released or permitted to return to their Masters, but will be employed in the Quarter Masters Department, for the benefit of the Government."[2] Grant did not wish to see the army used as a tool to return slaves to Rebel slave owners, but at the same time he did not seek to punish pro-Union slave owners and deny them access to their property. Since the majority of slaves fleeing to Grant's lines in the South were obviously property of Rebel slave owners, Grant's policy toward African American refugees solidified around the combined advantages of using African American labor to bolster and aide Union forces and to remove such labor from the hands of the enemy. In mid-August of 1862, Grant wrote to his sister:

> The war is evidently growing oppressive to the Southern people. Their *institution* [sic] are beginning to have ideas of their own and every time an expedition goes out more or less of them follow in the wake of the army and come into camp. I am using them as teamsters, Hospital attendants, company cooks &c, thus saving soldiers to carry the musket. I dont [sic] know what is to become of these poor people in the end but it weakning [sic] the enemy to take them from them.[3]

Grant later mentioned in his memoirs that he felt compelled both by the army's regulations and human decency to establish some method to house and employ the thousands of fugitive slaves who fled to Union lines. While primarily concerned with the employment of those able-bodied fugitive slaves that could perform essential support duties to the Union army, the Federal government and the Union commanders were eventually forced to create methods to deal with those refugees who were too infirm, too old, or too young to work for the army directly. Additionally, as the Federal government began to allow African Americans to serve in the military (permitted by the Emancipation Proclamation, effective January 1, 1863), black women were also excluded from this form of paid employment. Faced with these dependent refugees, Grant, Butler, and other Union generals authorized camps to house and feed these individuals.

Grant chose Army Chaplin John Eaton to organize the camps and coordinate the use of freed slave labor to support the Union army's needs in Tennessee and the Lower South. Grant explained to Eaton that in doing so, the camps' primary purpose was to transform the fugitive slaves from a burden to an asset.[4] Eaton worked extensively both in Tennessee and Mississippi to coordinate the labors of African Americans and to establish pay scales and contracts for their labor. As the war progressed, African American men were encouraged to join the military and, as they did so, their families



During and soon after the Civil War, the federal government tried several experiments in granting land to former slaves. One was this Freedman's Village at Arlington, Virginia, the grounds of the former Custis-Lee plantation at the former home of Confederate General Robert E. Lee. The village housed some 1,100 freedmen after its dedication in December 1863. Later, it became the site of Arlington National Cemetery. *(Image:* Harper's Weekly*, September 30, 1865; Mary Ambler Archives, Lindenwood University)*

sought protection and shelter from the military as well. Throughout the course of the war, camps to house the "contrabands" were established throughout the South and border states to provide refuge to the growing number of African Americans fleeing the bonds of slavery. These camps became, according to many scholars, the foundations of African American communities throughout the South. As contrabands gathered together, they sought to reunite with their families, re-establish churches, and begin the building blocks of freedmen's communities.[5]

Contraband camps that sprang up in the deeper South typically did so near Union encampments or near battlefields. The land surrounding the camps was usually unoccupied, and the Union military officials encouraged contrabands to farm and make use of this land. Villages and farms thus were established on the land surrounding contraband camps throughout the South. Some of these camps—like the one at Davis Bend in Louisiana on the former property of Jefferson and Joseph Davis and Freedmen's Village in Arlington, Virginia, on the former Custis-Lee Plantation—became permanent African American communities. In other instances where the camps existed near urban centers, African American communities sprouted up near the camps in the cities. The newly freed African Americans established churches and schools and began to establish businesses in these communities that would, like the ones in Arlington, Virginia, and near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, continue well into the twentieth century.

One such camp that was considered wildly successful by leaders at the time was the contraband camp at Davis Bend in Louisiana. Grant and Eaton worked together with the existing slave community to create a "Home Farm" system that sought to employ those slaves who remained and those who fled to the camp, and to provide them with food and shelter. By March of 1864, over 3,000 African American freedmen and women had gathered on the former plantation.[6] Historian Eric Foner referred to Davis Bend as the "largest laboratory in black economic independence," and Grant himself had urged Eaton to establish Davis Bend as a "Negro Paradise."[7] By leasing the land to the freedmen collectively and allowing to them to pay for only rations, equipment, and animals from the government, Eaton helped to establish a community of freedmen that was not only self-sufficient but initially successful. The African Americans at Davis Bend had some strong advantages over the average freed slave, and the education and autonomy provided them by their previous masters only further

promoted their independence. In the years following the war, Davis Bend became a flourishing community in the Mississippi delta. In 1866, after the plantation was returned to his possession, Joseph Davis sold the land to his former slaves, Benjamin Montgomery and his sons. The Montgomery family would go on to be the founders of an African American community that would last until the latter part of the nineteenth century.[8]

In her book *Pursuit of the Dream,* Janet Hermann examines the unique situation at Davis Bend. Encouraged by the notions of productivity and the desire to create a workforce that would be autonomous and self-sustaining, the Davis brothers provided the slaves on their plantations with an unprecedented level of self-government and education. The Davis Bend slaves operated their own court system and were better educated than many of their white peers. The success of Davis Bend as a community is due to the combination of many factors, but Eaton and Grant saw the community's prosperity as a shining example of how free labor, as they envisioned it, could work.

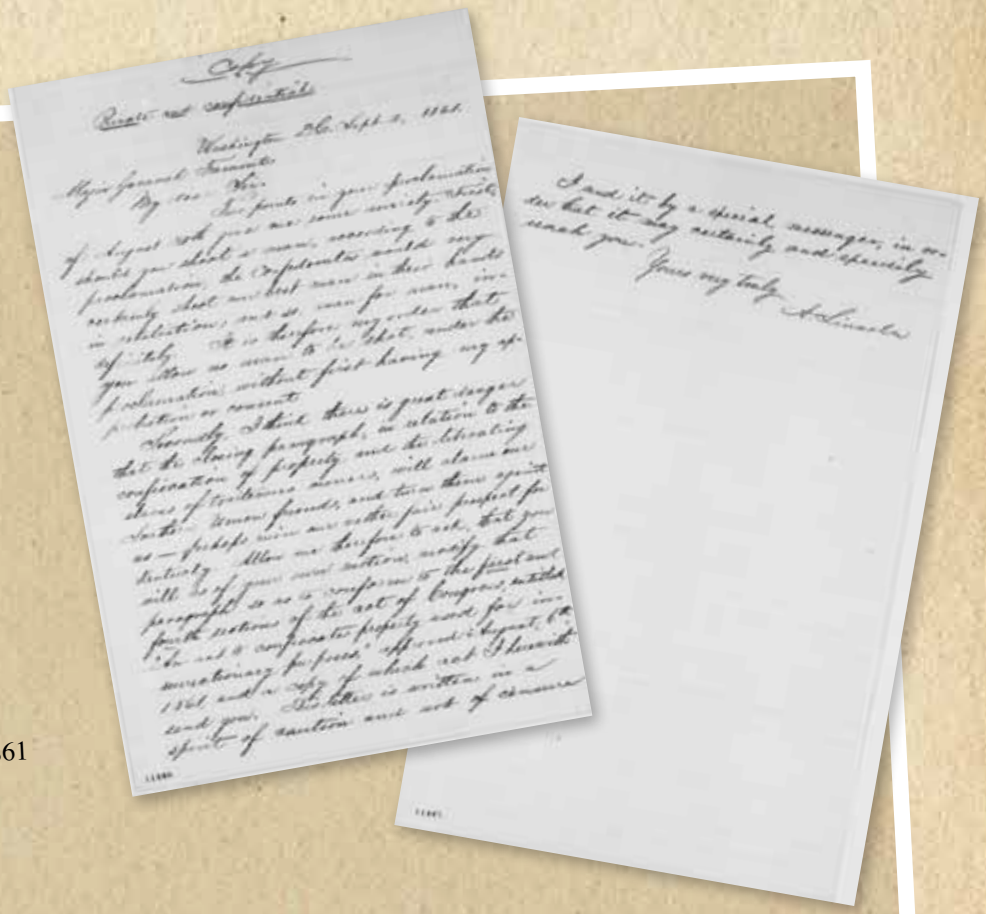
Another such camp that evolved into a strong African American community well into the twentieth century was Freedmen's Village on the former Custis-Lee lands near Arlington, Virginia. Established in the summer of 1863 due to worsening conditions in the contraband camps near Washington, D.C., and a flood of newly freed slaves following the Emancipation Proclamation, Freedmen's Village was a thriving African American community until the War Department bought the lands in 1900 to establish, in part, Arlington National Cemetery. Working with the American Missionary Association (AMA), U.S. Army Quartermaster Colonel Elias M. Greene established the village to provide housing, work, and education for the newly freed slaves. The village had a hospital, school, and chapel, as well as a variety of shops where men could learn carpentry and blacksmithing and women could learn sewing and dressmaking skills. Any able-bodied inhabitants who were not otherwise employed by the military or these businesses were to work on nearby government farms for $10 per month, with $5 per month withheld for the "Contraband Fund" to pay for their upkeep.[9]

When the town was disbanded and the residents dispersed, many chose to remain in Arlington County and continue the communities established in the camps. In nearby Arlington, Virginia, some modern-day descendants of Freedmen's Villagers attend a number of churches originally established in the camp, and they continue to honor the camp as a foundation of the African American community in Arlington. Like many other contraband camps throughout the South, Freedmen's Village provided a foundation for fledgling African American communities even after the war ended and the communities were relocated. In recent years, a number of National Parks employees have begun to interpret and bring to light these African American communities. In the cases of Stones River National Battlefield and Shiloh National Military Park, the interpretation has included a discussion of contraband communities created on the sites of Civil War battlefields only to be uprooted when the War Department sought to preserve the lands as national battlefields.[10]

General John Eaton (1829-1906) became Superintendent of Negro Affairs for Tennessee by appointment of General Ulysses S. Grant in 1863. He was responsible for not only the Davis Bend contraband camp, but also for establishing more than seventy schools for freedmen. *(Image:* Grant, Lincoln and the Freedmen: Reminiscences of the Civil War with Special Reference to the Work for the Contrabands and Freedmen of the Mississippi Valley, *by John Eaton and Ethel Osgood Mason. Longmans (Greenman and Co., New York, 1907). Mary Ambler Archives, Lindenwood University)*

This pattern of community growth out of the former contraband camps does not seem to be reflected in the African American communities in St. Louis. Contraband camps played a very different role in border-state St. Louis than in Southern cities like Nashville, Memphis, New Berne, and Arlington. The camps of St. Louis—first in the Missouri Hotel and later in Benton Barracks—were not established to provide for the local fugitive slaves but rather for the fugitive slaves arriving from points south and west.[11] St. Louis also acted as way-station between the slave South and the free North and Midwest. Many African Americans who fled slavery in the Mississippi River valley did so by making their way as individuals to the promised lands of the North and Midwest, using the assistance of white Union soldiers who made arrangements to transport fugitives North, or through the organized relocation of contrabands to Northern employers by the military or aid societies.[12]

In further contrast to the rural areas where many Southern contraband camps were established, the areas in which the camps were established in St. Louis were not abandoned lands and were not available for confiscation after the war. In fact, the existing African American community in St. Louis often worked to provide assistance



Copy

Private and confidential

Washington D.C. Sept. 2, 1861

Major General Fremont

My dear Sir.

Two points in your proclamation of August 30th give me some anxiety. First, should you shoot a man, according to the proclamation, the Confederates would very certainly shoot our best man in their hands in retaliation; and so, man for man, indefinitely. It is therefore my order that you allow no man to be shot, under the proclamation, without first having my approbation or consent.

Secondly, I think there is great danger that the closing paragraph, 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—perhaps ruin our rather fair prospect for Kentucky. Allow me therefore to ask, that you will as of your own motion, 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, and a copy of which act I herewith send you. This letter is written in a spirit of caution and not of censure.

I send it by a special messenger, in order that it may certainly and speedily reach you.

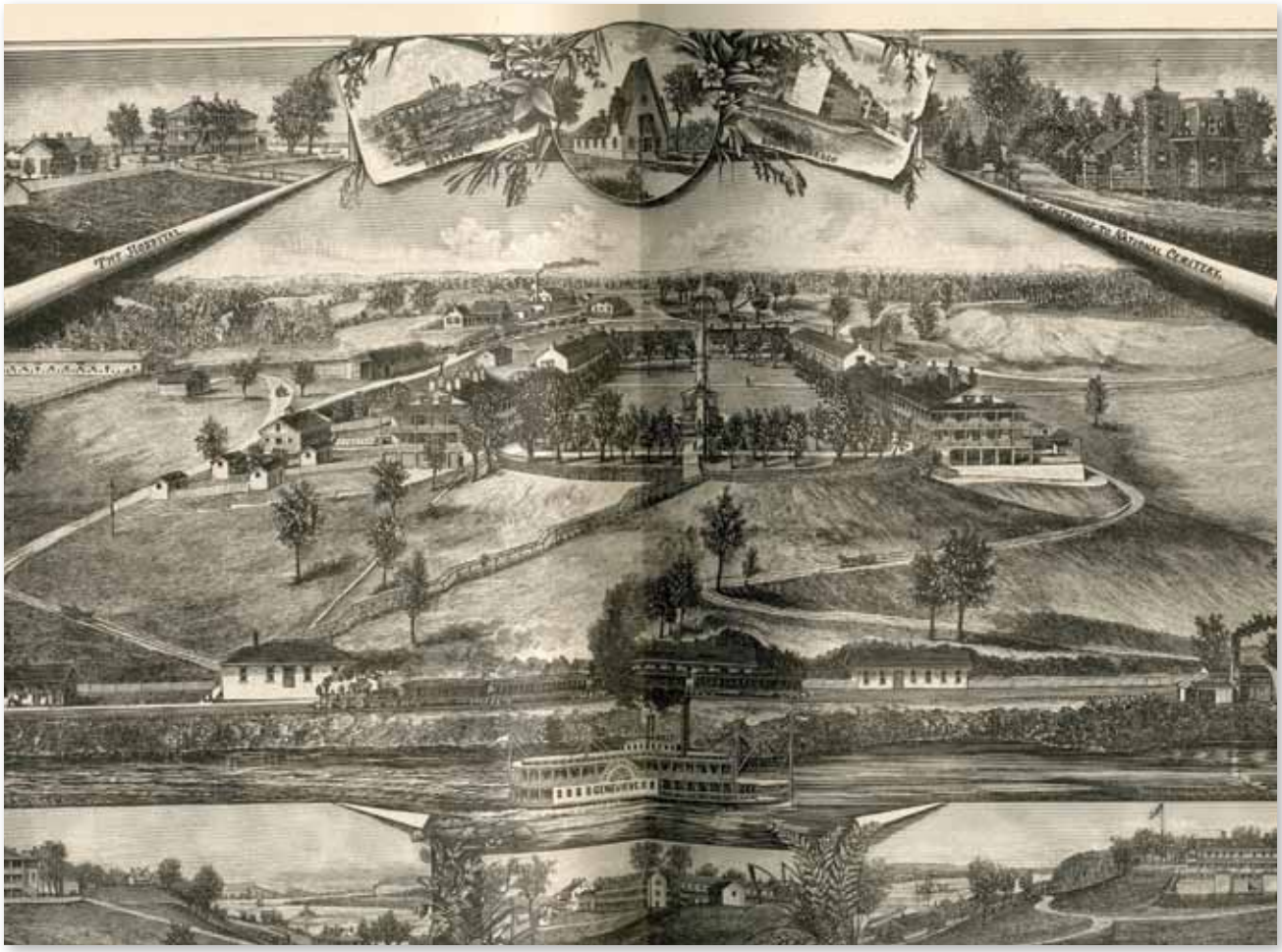
Yours very truly

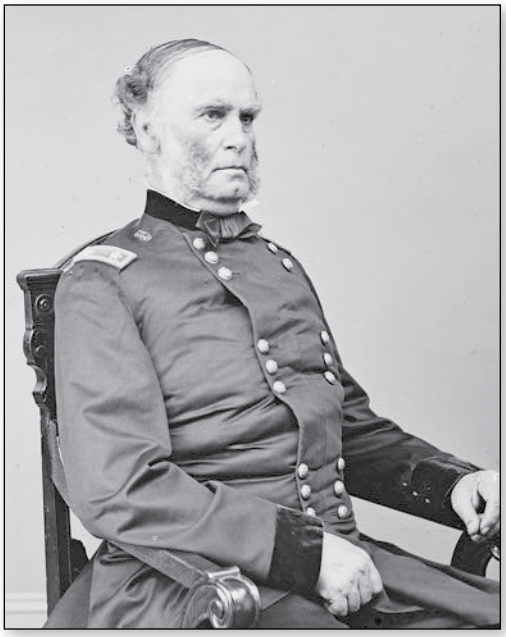
A. Lincoln

to those living in the camps and formed a number of aid organizations to enable their fellow African Americans to begin lives as freedmen. The combination of an existing African American community, the lack of available open land for settlement near the camps, and the policy of neutrality toward Missouri's slave owners by the Federal government created a very different experience in the contraband camps in St. Louis as compared to camps in the South. Unlike the camp at Arlington, Benton Barracks would not become the foundation for the African American community in St. Louis. The camps in St. Louis would instead act as another area where the notions of freedom, slavery, and emancipation were hammered out in the lives and actions of individuals.

African Americans living in contraband camps throughout the South and border states faced a number of challenges. Inadequate food and shelter, irregular pay, and, most importantly, a very uncertain status made life in the camps difficult. Despite congressional actions like the Confiscation Acts that allowed for the Union army to employ and use fugitive slaves' labor as they saw fit, Southern blacks working for the United States military and living in the camps were not free, but merely confiscated from their Rebel owners.[13] Before the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863, they were still technically the property of their masters, albeit "confiscated" property. Even after Emancipation, many residents of the contraband camps were still not legally free. Those contrabands residing in camps in border states or in areas that were Union controlled at the time of the Proclamation were not freed, and in some instances they faced a return to slavery and their masters.[14] In the border states like Missouri, their status was extremely difficult to determine. Torn between the desire to appease loyal Union slaveholders and the urge to punish the Confederate sympathizers within the state, Union commanders, as well as state, federal, and local officials, interpreted the vague rulings on contrabands and fugitive slaves issued by the president, Congress, and military leaders as they saw fit. In some cases commanders overstepped the boundaries sketchily drawn by the

When Jefferson Barracks was established just south of St. Louis in 1826, it was the army's first Infantry School of Practice for training troops. By the Civil War, more than 200 future Civil War generals had served at some time at Jefferson Barracks. During the war, much of the Barracks was used as a hospital. *(Image: Mary Ambler Archives, Lindenwood University)*





Samuel Curtis (1805-1866), the former mayor of Keokuk, Iowa, joined the Union army soon after the Civil War started. As a reward for his organizational work in St. Louis in late 1861, General Henry Halleck (John Charles Fremont's successor commanding the Western Department) placed him in command of the Army of the Southwest. Before war's end, Curtis defeated Sterling Price's army at the Battle of Westport in 1864. *(Image:Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division)*

president and the people of Missouri, and in others they did as little as possible to enforce existing policies. Fueled by the First Confiscation Act in August of 1861, General John C. Fremont challenged the authority of slaveholders in Missouri by declaring martial law and announcing that all slaves of Rebel masters were to be free. However, Fremont had taken too bold a stance against slavery and taken action that was beyond what Lincoln or Missouri officials would support at that time. Loyal Union slaveholders objected so strongly to the proclamation that Lincoln was forced to step in and require Fremont to comply with the more restrictive Confiscation Act. After Fremont was relieved of his duty shortly thereafter in November of 1861, his replacement, General Henry Halleck, issued General Order No. 3 banning fugitive slaves and all other "persons not explicitly authorized" from Union camps. The order was intended to "separate the Union army from any involvement with slavery in the loyal state of Missouri." However, the enforcement of the order proved difficult, and Halleck was forced by circumstances to explain the order time and again. By preventing Union troops in Missouri from seizing slaves from loyal owners or allowing fugitive slaves to seek protection from their masters in Union lines, Halleck attempted to walk the fine line between support of loyal slave owners and denial of support to Rebels. After the passage of the Confiscation Acts, it became more difficult for Union commanders to walk this line.[15]

Contraband camps in St. Louis and the rest of Missouri suffered from this lack of clarity in status. While camps in Mississippi, Louisiana, Virginia, and the tidelands of North Carolina were organized to provide African American refugees with work and shelter with varying degrees of success, camps in St. Louis—like the ones established at Benton Barracks, Jefferson Barracks, and the Missouri Hotel—were of a more transient nature, designed to provide immediate aid to fugitive slaves rather than acting as a transition from slavery to freedom. The military authorities in Missouri responded to plaintive requests from African American soldiers to provide rations and housing to their dependents with refusal. "Since they were legally still slaves, their owners, not the government, were responsible for their care."[16]

In March of 1863, former Arkansas slaves were sent by steamboat to St. Louis. The conditions at the camp in Helena, Arkansas, were abysmal, and military officials and aid agencies determined that the best solution was to move the African American refugees to a location where they might be more able to find work and support. When 500 freed slaves landed in St. Louis in the custody of Army Chaplain Samuel W. Sawyer, the commander in charge of St. Louis, General Samuel Curtis, was faced with a difficult decision. Curtis was initially upset and overwhelmed by the surprise arrival of the refugees and the associated difficulties of housing and feeding the refugees in a city where slavery was still legal, but he made an effort to accommodate them to the best of his ability. While Curtis was challenged by city officials and pro-slavery sympathizers, some insinuating that the refugees would not be safe in a slave state, he determined that if the government were going to begin an official policy of shipping and moving contrabands, it should be done so where there was an armed force to support that policy.[17]

Sawyer set up the contrabands in the Missouri Hotel at the corner of Main and Morgan streets near the river where they were provided with a quartermaster, a surgeon, and some staff to work as clerks. Curtis also allowed the St. Louis Ladies Contraband Relief Society to set up an office in the hotel and a neighboring building to function as a hospital. Despite a desire to return to his family in Indiana, Sawyer was required to stay and find work for the refugees. Not only did he find work on the levees and fortifications around the city for the contrabands, but within a very short time, Sawyer had arranged to employ over 300 throughout the city. Sawyer and Curtis encouraged a policy of hiring out the refugees for work either out of state or housed elsewhere in the city. As a result, the number of residents at the hotel was low.[18]

Besides finding work for the refugees, Sawyer was also responsible for providing them with documentation to prove their status. As of May 1863, the status of African Americans in St. Louis was defined in a variety of ways. Contraband or those former slaves who were employed by Rebel forces were given certificates of freedom upon proof

of such employment. Freedmen and women, or those who were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, received certificates of freedom by showing that their owners' residences were in states included in the Proclamation. The most difficult were those individuals who were slaves in Missouri. Not yet freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, slaves of loyal Missouri residents could only be freed by their masters or by service in the military. Slaves of masters deemed disloyal by the provost marshal could gain their freedom by presenting the evidence and receiving a certificate of freedom; however, it was difficult for the military officials to consistently judge who was a loyal slave owner from a disloyal one, and oftentimes the determination was left up to an official's personal view of


STATE OF VIRGINIA,

color, who was heretofore registered in the Clerk's Office of the Hustings Court of the said [illegible], this day delivered up to me, the former certificate of her registration, and applied for a renewal of the same, which is granted her; and she is now of the following discription, to wit: [illegible] years of age, of a [illegible] complexion, has [illegible]

In Testimony whereof, I, DAVID M. BERNARD, Clerk of the said Hustings Court, have hereto set my hand and affixed the Seal of the said court, this [illegible] day of [illegible] A. D. 185[illegible].

Certificates such as this one from Virginia were designed to document that African Americans in slave states were, in fact, free blacks rather than slaves. They functioned as a sort of "passport" for free blacks or manumitted slaves in slave states. *(Image: Library of Congress)*

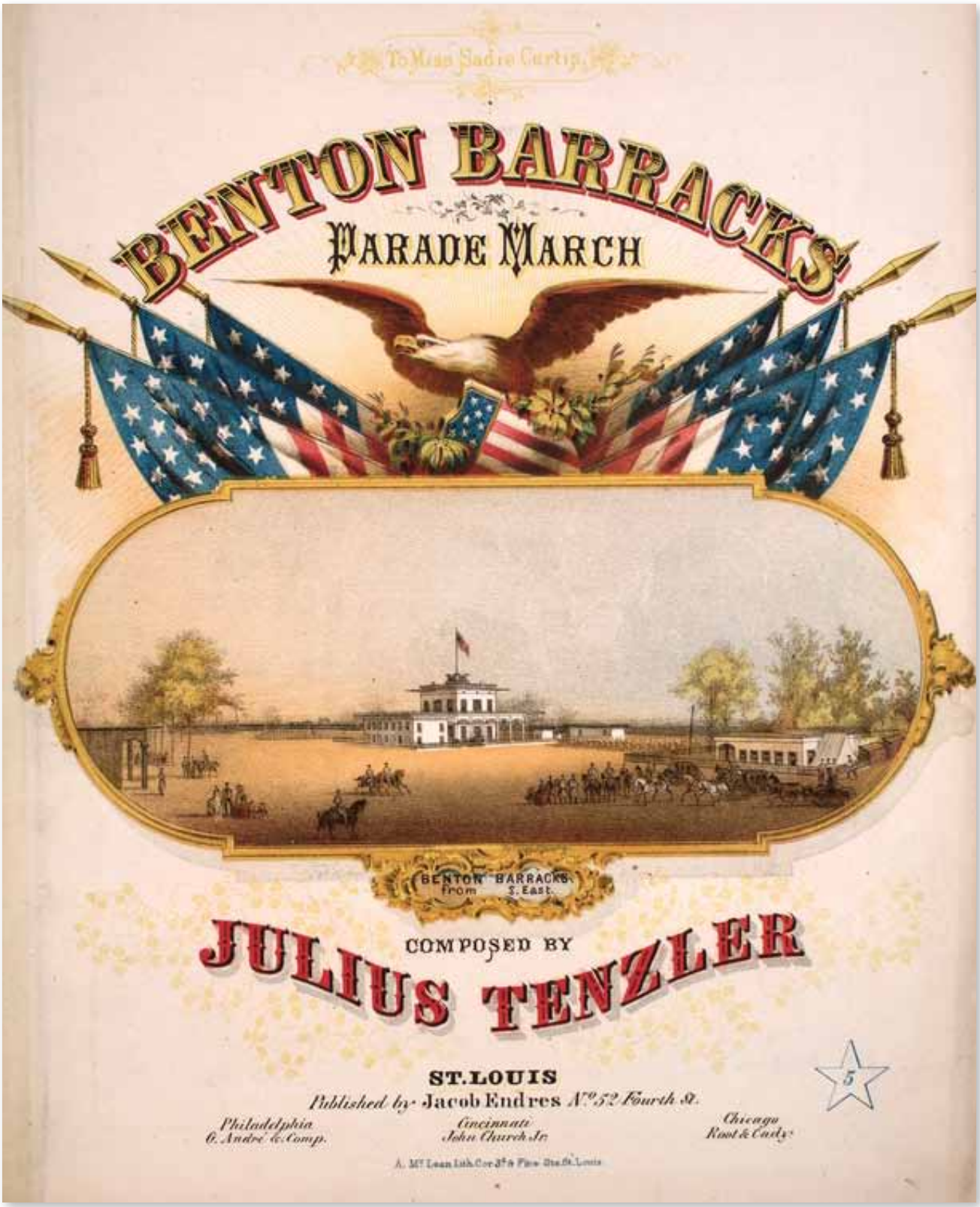
emancipation. Finally, there were those African Americans from Tennessee or Kentucky who were "presumptively free" based on the assumption that their masters had been disloyal, but these states were not included in the Emancipation Proclamation. Slaves from these states were not given certificates of freedom in St. Louis or Missouri, but instead were given passes to leave the state and migrate to free states.[19]

While the camps in St. Louis were relatively safer than nearby camps in Helena and Cairo, Illinois, and the African American refugees in St. Louis were far more likely to be provided with work, shelter, and education, they were also very vulnerable to kidnapping and sale further south. In her book *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest,* Leslie A. Schwalm examines the difficulties facing African Americans in St. Louis. Alice Jones, a free woman with papers, was held in jail at the word of a local slave trader until she could have witnesses testify that she was not a runaway slave. Those who were fugitive slaves were subject to arrest and imprisonment in the St. Louis city jail, where they might be freed by Union soldiers only to be recaptured by a different unit.[20]

Despite the danger of capture and imprisonment, African American refugees at the Missouri Hotel and later at Benton Barracks worked to create lives for themselves outside of bondage. Instrumental in this transition to freedom was the work of the various aid societies in St. Louis. Both black and white aid organizations worked to feed, clothe, house, and educate the residents of the Missouri Hotel and Benton Barracks. The Contraband Relief Society, a branch of the St. Louis Ladies Union Aid Society, was an organization of white women who sought to "clothe the destitute, feed the starving, provide medical treatment and care for the sick, furnish those who can work, with employment, and give such other aid as particular cases may require."[21] Working in conjunction with the military and other aid societies, the Contraband Relief Society helped establish two schools to provide much needed educational opportunities, and it took on much of the work of organizing employment outside the city.[22]

From the outset, camps in St. Louis and throughout the South were not just intended as places of refuge that would merely house and feed African American refugees. Instead, those involved intended the camps to lift former slaves out of subjugation and provide them with the means of self-support. Grant was reported to have said that not only could the contrabands support the troops, but after proving himself as an independent laborer, the freedman could be made into a soldier, and then a citizen.[23] John Eaton reported in his memoirs that the challenge of the camps was quite simply, "how was the slave to be transformed into a freeman?"[24] One path for this transformation was education. In addition to helping African American refugees find work and shelter in the city, the camps provided an opportunity for education. The American Missionary Association (AMA) began teaching in earnest at the Missouri Hotel in March of 1863. J. L. Richardson began teaching in the kitchen of the hotel, but he was soon given a classroom and was extremely impressed with his students' eagerness to learn. Richardson's classes grew and despite a number of challenges (including the burning of a school building days after it was opened), the AMA's effort to educate blacks in St. Louis continued.[25]

Whites were not alone in their efforts to assist the African American refugees at the contraband camps in St. Louis. Free blacks of St. Louis did a great deal with limited resources to help their newly freed brethren. The Colored Ladies' Contraband Relief Society made every effort to visit wounded African American soldiers housed in Benton Barracks. In addition to visiting wounded soldiers, the ladies would make efforts to "teach them to read, read to them, and comfort them in many ways."[26] African American free women who were employed as nurses and laundresses also made efforts to provide support and comfort to the fugitives in the camps and the African American soldiers housed in Benton Barracks in a



When Julius Tenzler wrote this march in 1862, Benton Barracks was primarily an encampment for Union troops. Over time, it housed a substantial hospital, became a barracks for paroled prisoners of war released by the Confederacy, and acted as a substantial "contraband camp" for former slaves. *(Image: Special Collections, the Sheridan Libraries, The Johns Hopkins University)*

similar manner. In 1864, supported by the AMA, ten black men were chosen by their community to create a school board and began to establish free schools for the African American children of St. Louis. In the years following the war, the St. Louis African American community held fairs and raised money to provide for education and assistance to those less fortunate. They even made a concerted effort to aid those African Americans fleeing the South for Kansas during the Exoduster migration. While it was difficult for free blacks in St. Louis to aid the new arrivals in the contraband camps due to limited resources and white interference, the community did attempt to provide support in ways that were possible. Throughout the city, African Americans worked with churches, aid agencies, and as individuals to provide aid and support to their community.[27]

A number of factors made the St. Louis contraband experience vastly different from the contraband experience further south and in more rural settings. A limited amount of available land near where camps were established, an existing free African American community, and a different style of management in the camps all combined for a unique camp experience. A number of scholars have examined how contraband camps acted as a foundation for African American communities throughout the South and in border states. In a number of instances, the foundations of twentieth-century African American communities were based in the camps. However, St. Louis had little available land near the camps, and the existing African American communities inhabited other areas of the city. Well before the Civil War began, six African American churches had been established in St. Louis serving congregations throughout the city. Additionally, schools for free blacks had been established before the war, although they were met with harsh resistance by whites.[28]

The African American community in St. Louis, free or slave, faced a number of challenges during the Civil War. While trying to preserve their communities, navigate the ever-changing waters of who was free and who was not, and maintain a secure environment for their families, African Americans of St. Louis were also faced with the additional challenge of dealing with a massive influx of newcomers who were, for the most part, unprepared to be self-sufficient. The free blacks of St. Louis stepped up and did what they could to provide for the fugitive slaves entering the city. While they were somewhat limited by resources and restrictions placed on them by white aid organizations, they still made the attempt. Both the area around the Missouri Hotel and the land around Benton Barracks show great increases in African American population in later years, but this may be due to a variety of factors. The African American population of St. Louis rose astronomically during the Civil War years, from 3,297 on the 1860 Census to 22,088 by the 1870 Census. The areas near the river and downtown St. Louis showed the largest increase in African American population, particularly the eighth ward, during this time. Later in the twentieth century, a strong African American community arose in the neighborhood known as the "Ville" near Fairgrounds Park and the remains of Benton Barracks. When restrictive covenants preventing African Americans from purchasing property in specific neighborhoods became popular in the twentieth century, the Ville remained one of the few neighborhoods open to African American homeowners.[29]

In areas where an African American community did not exist or was sparsely populated before the war, the settlements that occurred near former contraband camps provide a clear picture of how communities form. However, in areas where the African American community existed prior to the war, the camps played a more subtle role. In Arlington, Virginia, Freedmen's Village arose out of a camp that was created on vacant lands confiscated during the war. In cities like St. Louis, the camps were located where there happened to be available property or in a military barracks. The rise in African American population in the eighth ward following the war might have been a direct result of the Missouri Hotel and the initial contraband camp, or it might have been the result of a combination of factors, such as lower property values near industrial areas and an existing African American community in the downtown area. The twentieth-century African American community that arose in the Ville was less a result of the proximity of Benton Barracks than the impact of racially restrictive covenants. While the contraband camps' direct impact on the St. Louis African American community is not as clear as it is in other regions, the camps and emancipation did lead to a dramatic increase in African American residents throughout the city and a community that sought new life in freedom.

NOTES

[1] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 3; John Eaton and Ethel Osgood Mason, *Grant, Lincoln, and the Freedmen: Reminiscences of the Civil War with Special Attention Paid to the Work for the Contrabands and Freedmen of the Mississippi Valley* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), 5; Louis S. Gerteis, *From Contraband to Freedman: Federal Policy toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1973), Kindle Electronic Edition Loc. 136-37.

[2] Ulysses S. Grant, John Y. Simon, and Ulysses S. Grant Association, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), vol. 4: 290.

[3] *Ibid*., 5:310-11.

[4] Howard C. Westwood, "Grant's Role in Beginning Black Soldiery," *Illinois Historical Journal* 79 (Autumn 1986): 199-200.

[5] Edward Magdol, *A Right to the Land: Essays on the Freedmen's Community* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1977), Kindle Electronic Edition Loc. 186-88, 484; Joseph P. Reidy, "'Coming from the Shadow of the Past': The Transition from Slavery to Freedom at Freedmen's Village, 1863-1900," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95 (1987): 404.

[6] Stephen Joseph Ross, "Freed Soil, Freed Labor, Freed Men: John Eaton and the Davis Bend Experiment," *Journal of Southern History* 44 (May 1978): Kindle Electronic Edition Loc. 91-96.

[7] Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, The New American Nation series (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 58; Eaton and Mason, *Grant, Lincoln, and the Freedmen*, Loc. 2321-26.

[8] Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, 58; Eaton and Mason, *Grant, Lincoln, and the Freedmen*, Loc. 2321-26.

[9] Reidy, "'Coming from the Shadow of the Past': The Transition from Slavery to Freedom at Freedmen's Village, 1863-1900," 405-27.

[10] "Civil War Defenses of Washington—Living Contraband—Former Slaves in the Nation's Capital during the Civil War (U.S. National Park Service)," n.d., http://www.nps.gov/cwdw/historyculture/living-contraband-former-slaves-in-the-capital-during-and-after-the-civil-war.htm; Jesse J. Holland, "Arlington Graves Cover 'Freedman's Village'—US news—Life—msnbc.com," n.d., http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36651047/ns/us_news-life/t/arlington-graves-cover-freedmans-village/.

[11] Ira Berlin *et al*., *Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 133.

[12] Leslie A. Schwalm, "'Overrun with Free Negroes': Emancipation and Wartime Migration in the Upper Midwest," *Civil War History* 50 (2004): 153-54.

[13] Gerteis, *From Contraband to Freedman*, Loc. 190-95.

[14] The issue of Unionist slave owners was particularly thorny, and the Emancipation Proclamation did little to provide clarity. Union commanders in the field were left to their own prejudices and in many cases allowed to make their own judgments about who was free and who was slave. Some generals felt that the return of slaves to loyal Unionists was necessary and made every effort to do so in spite of the wishes of Congress. "While the freedom of blacks fleeing from the enemy was assured after January 1, 1863 (when the final Emancipation Proclamation was issued), black residents of loyal counties remained legally enslaved. Congress restrained General John Dix from seeking out the masters of fugitive slaves, but when loyal masters retained actual possession of their slave property. Dix promised recognition and protection." *Ibid*., Loc. 326-29.

[15] Louis S. Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 263; Berlin *et al*., *Slaves No More*, 21-23.

[16] Berlin *et al*., *Slaves No More*, 160.

[17] Samuel Sawyer to Brigidier General Prentiss, March 16, 1863, quoted in Ira Berlin, *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South*, Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, ser. 1, vol. 2 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 565.

[18] Samuel Sawyer to Brigadier General Prentiss, March 16, 1863, *Ibid*., 565-566; Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis*, 273-275.

[19] Lucien Eaton to Major General Schofield, May 30, 1863, Berlin, *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South*, 571-73.

[20] Leslie A. Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), Kindle Electronic Edition Loc. 1095-97, 1104-6.

[21] Contraband Relief Society, "Circular Letter from the Contraband Relief Society, St. Louis, Mo. to the Public," Circular, February 1863, 1, http://cdm.sos.mo.gov/cdm4/document.php?CISOROOT=/CivilWar&CISOPTR=7293&REC=8.

[22] Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora*, Loc. 1080-89. Initially, many Union commanders, including Grant, sought to ship the Southern contrabands North to Midwestern states like Missouri, Iowa, and Wisconsin to alleviate the labor shortage caused by the war and to provide work and shelter for the African Americans fleeing the South. This was faced with immense opposition by Midwesterners, despite the acknowledged labor shortage due to a number of reasons. Schwalm examines this issue in depth in her article "'Overrun with Free Negroes': Emancipation and Wartime Migration in the Upper Midwest." Since officials in St. Louis were well aware of the inherent problems of relocating fugitive slaves from the deeper South to Missouri and surrounding areas, this article may reveal

insights into white attitudes towards contrabands in St. Louis and the reasons many were shipped out of the area to work. Leslie A. Schwalm, "'Overrun with Free Negroes': Emancipation and Wartime Migration in the Upper Midwest," *Civil War History* 50 (2004): 145-174.

[23] Eaton and Mason, *Grant, Lincoln, and the Freedmen*, Loc. 523-29.

[24] *Ibid*., Loc. 570.

[25] Joe M. Richardson, "The American Missionary Association and Black Education in Civil War Missiouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 69 (July 1975): 438-39.

[26] Emily Elizabeth Parsons and Theophilus Parsons, *Memoir of Emily Elizabeth Parsons. Published for the Benefit of the Cambridge Hospital* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1880), 140.

[27] Katharine T. Corbett, *In Her Place: A Guide to St. Louis Women's History* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1999), 88-93; John A. Wright, *Discovering African American St. Louis : A Guide to Historic Sites* (Saint Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2002), 11; Glen Schwendemann, "St. Louis and the 'Exodusters' of 1879," *Journal of Negro History* 46 (January 1961): 32-46.

[28] Lawrence Christensen, "Race Relations in St. Louis, 1865-1916," *Missouri Historical Review* 78 (1984): 124-25.

[29] Wright, *Discovering African American St. Louis*, 75, 86; 1870. United States Bureau of the Census, 9th census, and National Archives and Records Service, "Population schedules of the ninth census of the United States, 1870 Missouri" (National Archives and Records Service, 1872).