FREEDOM

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF EMANCIPATION
1861 – 1867

SERIES I
VOLUME III
THE WARTIME GENESIS OF FREE LABOR: THE LOWER SOUTH

Planting Sweet Potatoes. Edisto Island, South Carolina.
Photograph by Henry P. Moore; courtesy of The New-York Historical Society, New York City

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SELECTED FROM THE HOLDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE UNITED STATES

SERIES I
VOLUME III
THE WARTIME GENESIS OF FREE LABOR:
THE LOWER SOUTH

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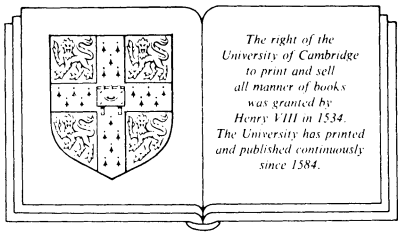

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE
NEW YORK PORT CHESTER MELBOURNE SYDNEY

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Tokyo, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521394932

First published 1990
Reprinted 1991

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

The Wartime genesis of free labor. The lower South / edited by Ira Berlin . . . {et al.}.

p. cm. – (Freedom, a documentary history of emancipation, 1861 – 1867 ; ser. 1, v. 3)

Includes index.

ISBN 0-521-39493-7 (hard)

1. United States – History – Civil War, 1861 – 1865 – Afro-Americans – Sources. 2. Freedmen – Southern States – History – Sources. 3. Working class – Southern States – History – 19th century – Sources. 4. Confederate States of America – Histroy – Sources. 5. Slaves – Southern States – Emancipation – Sources. 6. Afro-Americans – Southern States – History – 19th century – Sources. I. Berlin, Ira, 1941 – . II. Series.
E1 85.2.F88 ser. 1, vol. 3
{E540.N3}
973.7 s – dc20 90-2496
{973.7´415} CIP

ISBN 978-0-521-39493-2 Hardback

TO

WILLIE LEE ROSE

EXEMPLAR

Other volumes of FREEDOM

THE BLACK MILITARY EXPERIENCE
ed. Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland

THE DESTRUCTION OF SLAVERY
ed. Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Thavolia Glymph, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland

THE WARTIME GENESIS OF FREE LABOR: THE UPPER SOUTH
ed. Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland

Freedmen and Southern Society Project
Ira Berlin, Director

Contents

Acknowledgments

PUBLICATION of *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Lower South* and *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South* marks a significant milestone for the Freedmen and Southern Society Project. These volumes bring to a close the first two series of *Freedom*, putting the project roughly at its halfway mark. Having focused on the Civil War years in series 1 and 2, the editors will next turn to the early Reconstruction period.

We could not have come this far without a good deal of help. In *The Black Military Experience* (1982) and *The Destruction of Slavery* (1985), we thanked the men and women who helped found and sustain the Freedmen and Southern Society Project. Our debt to them has not diminished. During the intervening years, many of them have continued in the work, and others have lent a hand. Our gratitude far exceeds this mere mention.

Words, according to Thomas Hobbes, are the money of fools. But, however foolish, we would have no words to trade without the monetary support of both government agencies and private foundations. Our first debt is to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), particularly to Roger Bruns and Mary Giunta, the successive directors of the Publications Program, and to Richard Jacobs, the commission's executive director. The National Endowment for the Humanities has also been an important and ongoing source of financial assistance. We would like to thank Kathy Fuller, David Nichols, and Margot Backas of the Division of Research Programs for their unobtrusive – yet ever vigilant – oversight of our work. In addition, the project has had a warm friend at the Ford Foundation. Sheila Biddle's understanding and appreciation of *Freedom* goes beyond the call of duty. For this, and for additional material assistance, we are deeply grateful.

Upon completion of our major research at the National Archives, the project moved its headquarters to the University of Maryland. As chairman of the History Department, Richard Price, like his predecessor Emory G. Evans, has been a genial host and valued colleague. In countless ways, he has facilitated our work and advocated our cause in the university's councils. His own pioneering studies of British wage-workers have offered numerous clues to the history of former slaves.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our next-door neighbor, Louis R. Harlan, offered not only advice and encouragement, but also the temporary use of his office, where proofreading proceeded amid memorabilia of Booker T. Washington and under the watchful gaze of a larger-than-life photograph of Adlai Stevenson.

Indispensable assistance for both volumes of *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor* came from Leslie Schwalm, who served an apprenticeship as an NHPRC fellow during the 1987–88 academic year, and from Wayne K. Durrill, who joined the project to assist in editing the proceedings of postwar freedmen's conventions. Besides providing a sounding board for many of the ideas in *Wartime Genesis*, both of them shared in the drudgery of proofreading. Wayne Durrill also prepared the indexes, a job requiring intellectual acuity as well as close attention to mind-numbing detail.

Both volumes of *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor* have benefited enormously from the work of graduate student assistants, who brought to the project an enthusiasm and energy that rejuvenated old hands. We express our gratitude to Mary Beth Corrigan, Margaret Dorrier, Kevin Hardwick, Yong Ook Jo, Cynthia Kennedy-Haflett, Joseph Mannard, Robert Pickstone, Walter Shaefer, Richard Soderlund, Brian Sowers, and Peter Way, each of whom will leave a special mark on the study of the past. Above all, we want to thank Gregory LaMotta, who for eight years has been our eyes and ears at the National Archives. His sharp instincts, intimate knowledge of the labyrinthine stacks, and patient good humor have served us well in tracking down elusive documents and exploring previously untapped records.

Oversight of this sizable force, along with innumerable other duties, fell to the project's administrative assistant and secretary: first Lorraine Lee, then Susan Bailey (returning for a second tour of duty), and now Terrie Hruzd. Each brought her own distinctive skill and style to the task, and each sped and smoothed the work of the editors. Everyone's work was made much easier by Claire Dimsdale, who dispatched a vast array of assignments with an admirable combination of precision and cheerfulness.

As we entered the final stages of work on *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Lower South*, we called upon several fellow scholars to review parts of the manuscript. Eric Foner read the introductory essay. Lawrence N. Powell and Michael S. Wayne commented on the Mississippi Valley chapter, and Rebecca J. Scott did the same for that on southern Louisiana. Their careful readings saved the editors from a few blunders, raised important questions, and improved the volume in many ways.

After a decade-long association with the people of Cambridge University Press, we remain impressed by their consistently high standards and professional competence. Frank Smith, our editor, has always allowed us to set our own scholarly agenda without forgetting that our

object, like that of the press, is to bring volumes before the public. Edith Feinstein and Richard Hollick guided the transformation of a massive and unwieldy manuscript into a book. All authors should be lucky enough to have a copyeditor like Vicky Macintyre. Because she does her job so well, her contributions to *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor* will be unnoticeable to most readers. We appreciate them very much.

The Freedmen and Southern Society Project could not exist without the magnificent records in the National Archives of the United States and the hundreds of men and women who have built and maintained that institution over the years. We would like to express our appreciation to some of the present generation of archivists who, despite successive reorganizations and budgetary shortfalls, have always found time to answer our queries, point us in the right direction, and sometimes lead us by the hand. To Timothy Connelly, Richard Cox, Robert Gruber, Michael Meier, Michael Musick, William Sherman, Aloha South, and Reginald Washington, our hats are off. Finally, there is Sara Dunlap Jackson, whose knowledge of the records in the National Archives made the project possible and whose deep respect for the people who created those records has established a standard against which every volume of *Freedom* should be measured.

As our dog-eared copy of *Rehearsal for Reconstruction* attests, the work of Willie Lee Rose provided a constant source of information and inspiration as we struggled to understand life and labor within Union lines. In dedicating this volume to Professor Rose, we merely make public our longstanding admiration for her many achievements.

I. B.
T. G.
S. F. M.
J. P. R.
L. S. R.
J. S.

College Park, Maryland
April 1990

Introduction

NO EVENT in American history matches the drama of emancipation. More than a century later, it continues to stir the deepest emotions. And properly so. Emancipation accompanied the military defeat of the world's most powerful slaveholding class and freed a larger number of slaves than lived in all other New World slave societies combined. Clothed in the rhetoric of biblical prophecy and national destiny and born of a bloody civil war, it accomplished a profound social revolution. That revolution destroyed forever a way of life based upon the ownership of human beings, restoring to the former slaves proprietorship of their own persons, liquidating without compensation private property valued at billions of dollars, and forcibly substituting the relations of free labor for those of slavery. In designating the former slaves as citizens, emancipation placed citizenship upon new ground, defined in the federal Constitution and removed beyond the jurisdiction of the states. By obliterating the sovereignty of master over slave, it handed a monopoly of sovereignty to the newly consolidated nation-state. The freeing of the slaves simultaneously overturned the old regime of the South and set the entire nation upon a new course.

The death of slavery led to an intense period of social reconstruction, closely supervised by the victorious North, that lasted over a decade in many places. During this period, former slaves challenged the domination of the old masters, demanding land and the right to control their own labor. Former masters, abetted by a complaisant President, defeated the freedpeople's bid for economic independence and imposed on them new legal and extralegal constraints. But whatever the outcome, the struggle itself confirmed the magnitude of the change. Freedpeople confronted their former masters as free laborers in a system predicated upon contractual equality between employers and employees. They gained, if only temporarily, full citizenship rights, including the right to vote and hold public office.

With emancipation in the South, the United States enacted its part in a world-wide drama. Throughout the western world and beyond, the forces unleashed by the American and French revolutions and by the industrial revolution worked to undermine political regimes based upon hereditary privilege and economic systems based upon bound

labor. Slavery had already succumbed in the Northern states and in the French and British Caribbean before the American Civil War, and it would shortly do so in its remaining strongholds in Spanish and Portuguese America. Almost simultaneously with the great struggle in the United States, the vestiges of serfdom in central and eastern Europe yielded to the pressure of the age. Only small pockets in Africa and Asia remained immune, and their immunity was temporary. The fateful lightning announced by the victorious Union army was soon to strike, if it had not already struck, wherever men and women remained in bonds of personal servitude.

For all systems of bondage, emancipation represented the acid test, the moment of truth. The upheaval of conventional expectations stripped away the patina of routine, exposing the cross purposes and warring intentions that had simmered – often unnoticed – beneath the surface of the old order. In throwing off habitual restraints, freedpeople redesigned their lives in ways that spoke eloquently of their hidden life in bondage, revealing clandestine institutions, long-cherished beliefs, and deeply held values. In confronting new restraints, they abandoned their usual caution in favor of direct speech and yet more direct action. Lords and serfs, masters and slaves had to survey the new social boundaries without the old etiquette of dominance and subordination as a guide. Their efforts to do so led to confrontations that could be awkward, painful, and frequently violent. The continued force of these encounters awakened men and women caught up in the drama to the realization that their actions no longer ratified old, established ways, but set radically new precedents for themselves and for future generations.

Moments of revolutionary transformation expose as do few human events the foundation upon which societies rest. Although those who enjoy political power and social authority speak their minds and indulge their inclinations freely and often, their subordinates generally cannot. Only in the upheaval of accustomed routine can the lower orders give voice to the assumptions that guide their world as it is and as they wish it to be. Some of them quickly grasp the essence of the new circumstances. Under the tutelage of unprecedented events, ordinary men and women become extraordinarily perceptive and articulate, seizing the moment to challenge the assumptions of the old regime and proclaim a new social order. Even then, few take the initiative. Some – perhaps most – simply try to maintain their balance, to reconstitute a routine, to maximize gains and minimize losses as events swirl around them. But inevitably they too become swept up in the revolutionary process. Barely conscious acts and unacknowledged motives carried over from the past take on a changed significance. Attempts to stand still or turn back only hasten the process forward. At revolutionary moments all actions – those of the timid and reluctant as much as those of the bold and eager – expose to view the inner workings of society.

Introduction

Because they thrust common folk into prominence, moments of revolutionary transformation have long occupied historians seeking to solve the mysteries of human society. Knowledge of the subordinate groups who have formed the majority throughout history has proved essential to an understanding of how the world works. Historians have therefore developed special methods for penetrating the often opaque histories of ordinary people, including peasants, slaves, and wage-workers. Some have viewed them over the *longue durée*, translating glacial demographic and economic changes into an understanding of times past. Others have sought such understanding by focusing on particular events, decoding the fury of *carnaval*, the ritual of a bread riot, the terror of the "theater of death," or the tense confrontation of an industrial strike. Almost all have learned from periods of revolutionary transformation. Whatever the historian's approach, direct testimony by the people involved has usually been a luxury. For this reason, the study of emancipation in the United States promises rich rewards not just to those specifically interested in the question, but to all who seek a fuller view of the human past. Encompassing in full measure the revolutionary implications of all transitions from bondage to freedom, emancipation in the American South has left behind an unparalleled wealth of documentation permitting direct access to the thoughts and actions of the freedpeople themselves. Indeed, it provides the richest known record of any subordinate class at its moment of liberation.

THE RECORDS

As the war for union became a war for liberty, the lives of slaves and freedpeople became increasingly intertwined with the activities of both the Union and Confederate governments. Following the war, federal agencies continued to figure prominently in the reconstruction of the South's economy and society. The records created and collected by the agencies of these governments and now housed in the National Archives of the United States provide an unrivaled source for understanding the passage of black people from slavery to freedom. Such governmental units as the Colored Troops Division of the Adjutant General's Office; the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission; the Union army at every level of command, from the headquarters in Washington to local army posts; army support organizations in Washington, including the Judge Advocate General's Office, the Provost Marshal General's Bureau, and the Quartermaster General's Office, and their subordinates in the field; the Civil War Special Agencies of the Treasury Department; individual regiments of U.S. Colored Troops; various branches of the Confederate

government (whose records fell into Union hands at the conclusion of the war); the Southern Claims Commission; the Freedman's Bank; and, most important, the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands all played a role in the coming of freedom. (See pp. xxxiii–xxxiv for a list of record groups drawn upon.)

The missions of these agencies placed them in close contact with a wide variety of ordinary people, and their bureaucratic structure provided a mechanism for the preservation of many records of people generally dismissed as historically mute. The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (Freedmen's Bureau) illustrates the point. Although the bureau often lacked the resources to do more than make written note of the abuses of freedpeople brought to its attention, bureau agents scattered across the South conducted censuses, undertook investigations, recorded depositions, filed reports, and accumulated letters authored by ex-slaves and interested whites. Other agencies whose duties focused less directly upon the concerns of former slaves created thousands of similar, though more dispersed, records.

Alongside the official reports in these archival files, hundreds of letters and statements by former slaves give voice to people whose aspirations, beliefs, and behavior have gone largely unrecorded. Not only did extraordinary numbers of ex-slaves, many of them newly literate, put pen to paper in the early years of freedom, but hundreds of others, entirely illiterate, gave depositions to government officials, placed their marks on resolutions passed at mass meetings, testified before courts-martial and Freedmen's Bureau courts, and dictated letters to more literate black people and to white officials and teachers. The written record thus created constitutes an unparalleled outpouring from people caught up in the emancipation process. Predictably, many of these documents requested official action to redress wrongs committed by powerful former slaveholders who only reluctantly recognized ex-slaves as free, rarely as equal. Others, however, originated in relationships entirely outside the purview of either federal officials or former masters and employers. They include, for example, correspondence between black soldiers and their families and between kinfolk who had been separated during slavery. That such letters fell for various reasons into the bureaucratic net of government agencies (and thus were preserved along with official records) should not obscure their deeply personal origins.

Selected out of the mass of purely administrative records, these documents convey, perhaps as no historian can, the experiences of the liberated: the quiet personal satisfaction of meeting an old master on equal terms, as well as the outrage of ejection from a segregated streetcar; the elation of a fugitive enlisting in the Union army, and the humiliation of a laborer cheated out of hard-earned wages; the joy of a family reunion after years of forced separation, and the distress of having a child involuntarily

apprenticed to a former owner; the hope that freedom would bring a new world, and the fear that, in so many ways, life would be much as before. Similar records offer insight into the equally diverse reactions of planters, Union officers, and Southern yeomen – men and women who faced emancipation with different interests and expectations. Taken together, these records provide exceptionally full documentation of the destruction of a dependent social relationship, the release of a people from their dependent status, and the simultaneous transformation of an entire society. As far as is known, no comparable record exists for the liberation of any group of serfs or slaves or for the transformation of any people into wage-workers.

However valuable, the archival records also have their problems. They are massive, repetitive, and often blandly bureaucratic. Their size alone makes research by individual scholars inevitably incomplete and often haphazard. The Freedmen's Bureau records, for example, extend to more than 700 cubic feet, and they constitute a relatively small record group. The records of U.S. army continental commands for the period spanning the Civil War era fill more than 10,000 cubic feet. In addition to the daunting volume of the records, their bureaucratic structure creates obstacles for studies that go beyond the institutional history of particular agencies or the documentation of policy formation to examine underlying social processes. Governmental practice provided the mechanism for preserving the records, but it also fragmented them in ways that can hinder historical reconstruction. Assume, for example, that a group of freedmen petitioned the Secretary of the Treasury complaining of a Confederate raid on a plantation supervised by his department. Their petition might be forwarded to the Secretary of War, since the army protected such plantations. He in turn would pass it on to a military field commander, who would send it down the chain of command. If black soldiers provided the plantation guard, the petition might be forwarded to the adjutant general, who directed the Bureau of Colored Troops, who might then send it to the commander of a black regiment. On the other hand, if the Secretary of the Treasury wished to act himself, he could forward it to a treasury agent in the field. Augmented by additional information in the form of reports, depositions, or endorsements on the original complaint, the petition might be passed along to still other federal agencies. In the meantime, the Confederate raiders might have made a report to their commander, perhaps noting the response of the plantation's residents to the foray. Rebel planters, eager to regain their property, might also have a say, addressing the Confederate Secretary of War, his adjutant and inspector general, or a local Confederate commander. At any or all points, additional documents might be added and portions of the original documentation might come to rest. Only a search of the records of all these agencies can make the full story available. In part because of the scope of such an

undertaking, individual scholars have been unable to avail themselves of the fullness of the resources of the National Archives. Research has necessarily been piecemeal and limited to one or two record groups or portions of various record groups. Only a large-scale collaborative effort can make these resources available to the public.

THE FREEDMEN AND SOUTHERN SOCIETY PROJECT

In the fall of 1976, with a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, and under the sponsorship of the University of Maryland, the Freedmen and Southern Society Project launched a systematic search of those records at the National Archives that promised to yield material for a documentary history of emancipation. Over the course of the next three years, the editors selected more than 40,000 items, which represented perhaps 2 percent of the documents they examined. Indexed and cross-referenced topically, chronologically, and geographically, this preliminary selection constitutes the universe from which the documents published as *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation* are selected and annotated, and from which the editors' introductory essays are written.

The editors found it imperative from the outset to be selective. They have focused their attention upon the wartime and postwar experiences of slaves and ex-slaves, but have also sought to illuminate the social, economic, and political setting of the emancipation process. The formation of federal policy, for example, is not central to the project's concerns, except insofar as the preconceptions and actions of policy makers influenced the shape that freedom assumed. Therefore, the volumes published by the Freedmen and Southern Society Project will not undertake a history of the Freedmen's Bureau, the U.S. army, the Bureau of Colored Troops, or any other governmental agency; nonetheless, documents about the operations of these agencies will be prominent when they describe activities of freedpeople and shed light upon the context in which former slaves struggled to construct their own lives. Throughout the selection process, the editors have labored to reconstruct the history of the freedpeople rather than the institutions that surrounded them.

Above all, the editors have sought to delineate the central elements of the process by which men and women moved from the utter dependence slaveholders demanded but never fully received, to the independence freedpeople desired but seldom attained. This process began with the slow breakdown of slavery on the periphery of the South and

extended to the establishment of the social, economic, and political institutions black people hoped would secure their independence. The editors have also sought to recognize the diversity of black life and the emancipation process, by selecting documents that illustrate the varied experiences of former slaves in different parts of the South who labored at diverse tasks and who differed from one another in sex, in age, and in social or economic status. Although former slaves, like other men and women caught in the transition from slavery to freedom, wanted to enlarge their liberty and ensure their independence from their former masters, how they desired to do so and what they meant by freedom were tempered by their previous experiences as well as by the circumstances in which they were enmeshed. At the same time, the editors have been alert to the shared ideas and aspirations that American slaves carried into freedom and to those features of emancipation that were common throughout the South – and more generally still, common to all people escaping bondage. These common characteristics and the regularities of the process of emancipation connect the lives of former slaves across time and space and link them to other dependent people struggling for autonomy.

Reflecting editorial interest in a *social* history of emancipation, *Freedom* is organized thematically, following the process of emancipation. At each step the editors have selected documents that illustrate processes they believe are central to the transition from slavery to freedom. The first two series concentrate primarily on the years of the Civil War. Series 1 documents the destruction of slavery, the diverse circumstances under which slaves claimed their freedom, and the wartime labor arrangements that developed as slavery collapsed. Series 2 examines the recruitment of black men into the Union army and the experiences of black soldiers under arms. The remaining series, while drawing in part upon evidence from the war years, explore most fully the earliest years of postwar Reconstruction. They document the struggle for land, the evolution of new labor arrangements, relations with former masters and other white people, law and justice, violence and other extralegal repression, geographical mobility, family relationships, education, religion, the structure and activities of the black community, and black politics in the early years of Reconstruction. The series are organized as follows:

Series 1	The Destruction of Slavery and the Wartime Genesis of Free Labor
Series 2	The Black Military Experience
Series 3	Land, Capital, and Labor
Series 4	Race Relations, Violence, Law, and Justice
Series 5	The Black Community: Family, Church, School, and Society

Introduction

Each series comprises one or more volumes, and topical arrangement continues within the volumes. Each chapter is introduced by an essay that provides background information, outlines government policy, and elaborates the larger themes. The chapters are further subdivided, when relevant, to reflect distinctive historical, economic, and demographic circumstances.

Also in accordance with the editors' predominant concern with social process, the annotation (both the notes to particular documents and the introductory essays) is designed to provide a context for the documents rather than to identify persons or places. The official character of most of the records means that vast quantities of biographical data are available for many of the army officers, Freedmen's Bureau agents, and others who cross the pages of these volumes. The editors have nonetheless decided against the time-consuming extraction of details about individuals, because to do so would divert energy from research into the larger social themes and reduce the number of documents that could be published, while adding little of substance to the business at hand.

In its aim, approach, and editorial universe, the Freedmen and Southern Society Project therefore differs fundamentally from most historical editing enterprises. Rather than searching out the complete manuscript record of an individual man or woman, the project examines a process of social transformation, and rather than seeking all the documentary evidence relevant to that transformation, it confines itself to the resources of the National Archives. *Freedom* endeavors to combine the strengths of the traditional interpretive monograph with the rich diversity of the documentary edition while addressing in one historical setting a central question of the human experience: how men and women strive to enlarge their freedom and secure their independence from those who would dominate their lives.

SERIES 1

Series 1 of *Freedom* comprises three volumes. Volume 1, *The Destruction of Slavery*, explicates the process by which slavery collapsed under the pressure of federal arms and the slaves' persistence in placing their own liberty on the wartime agenda. In documenting the transformation of the war for union into a war against slavery, it shifts the focus from Washington and Richmond to the plantations, farms, and battlefields of the South, and demonstrates how slaves became the agents of their own emancipation.

Volume 2, *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper South*, and volume 3, *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Lower South*, concern

the evolution of freedom in those areas of the slave states that were held by Union forces for a substantial part of the Civil War (including the border slave states that did not join the Confederacy). Among the subjects they address are the employment of former slaves and free blacks as military laborers; the wartime experiences of former slaves in contraband camps, on government-supervised plantations, and in cities, towns, and military posts; and various kinds of private employment, from evolving labor arrangements with former owners to new forms of independent labor in town and countryside. In so doing, the two volumes also document federal free-labor policies and practices, and the struggle among former slaves, free blacks, Union army officers, Southern planters, Northern teachers and clergymen, Northern businessmen, and federal officials over the meaning of freedom.

In order to give due consideration to the regional differences in society, economy, military occupation, and politics that influenced the evolution of free-labor arrangements, the two volumes of *The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor* are divided geographically. Volume 2 describes developments in Union-occupied parts of the Upper South – tidewater Virginia and North Carolina; the District of Columbia; middle and east Tennessee and northern Alabama; and the border states of Maryland, Missouri, and Kentucky – where small slaveholding units, mixed agriculture, and urban life had characterized the slave regime. Volume 3 documents the evolution of freedom in the plantation regions of the Lower South that were captured and occupied by Union forces – small enclaves in lowcountry South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, notably the South Carolina Sea Islands; the sugar parishes of southern Louisiana; and the Mississippi Valley from Memphis to just north of Baton Rouge. In order to compare developments in the various regions and to identify common underlying themes, the same interpretive essay introduces each of the two volumes.

Together with *The Black Military Experience*, the single volume that makes up series 2, the three volumes of series 1 document the death of the old order and the birth of a new one in the crucible of civil war.

Editorial Method

THE RENDITION of nineteenth-century manuscripts into print proceeds at best along a tortuous path. Transcribing handwritten documents into a standardized, more accessible form inevitably sacrifices some of their evocative power. The scrawl penciled by a hard-pressed army commander, the letters painstakingly formed by an ex-slave new to the alphabet, and the practiced script of a professional clerk all reduce to the same uncompromising print. At the same time, simply reading, much less transcribing, idiosyncratic handwriting poses enormous difficulties. The records left by barely literate writers offer special problems, although these are often no more serious than the obstacles created by better-educated but careless clerks, slovenly and hurried military officers, or even the ravages of time upon fragile paper.

The editors have approached the question of transcription with the conviction that readability need not require extensive editorial intervention and, indeed, that modernization (beyond that already imposed by conversion into type) can compromise the historical value of a document. The practical dilemmas of setting precise limits to editorial intervention, once initiated, also suggest the wisdom of restraint. In short, the editors believe that even when documents were written by near illiterates, the desiderata of preserving immediacy and conveying the struggle of ordinary men and women to communicate intensely felt emotions outweigh any inconveniences inflicted by allowing the documents to stand as they were written. Fortunately for the modern reader, a mere passing acquaintance with the primer usually led uneducated writers to spell as they spoke; the resulting documents may appear impenetrable to the eye but are perfectly understandable when read phonetically. In fact, reproduced verbatim, such documents offer intriguing evidence about the spoken language. Other writers, presumably better educated, frequently demonstrated such haphazard adherence to rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation that their productions rival those of the semiliterate. And careless copyists or telegraph operators further garbled many documents. Both equity and convenience demand, nonetheless, that all writings by the schooled – however incoherent – be transcribed according to the same principles as those applied to the documents of the unschooled. Indeed, a verbatim

rendition permits interesting observations about American literacy in the mid-nineteenth century, as well as about the talents or personalities of particular individuals.

Therefore, the textual body of each document in this volume is reproduced – to the extent permitted by modern typography – *exactly* as it appears in the original manuscript. (The few exceptions to this general principle will be noted hereafter.) The editorial *sic* is never employed: All peculiarities of syntax, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation appear in the original manuscript. The same is true of paragraph breaks, missing or incomplete words, words run together, quotation marks or parentheses that are not closed, characters raised above the line, contractions, and abbreviations. When the correct reading of a character is ambiguous (as, for example, a letter "C" written halfway between upper- and lower-case, or a nondescript blotch of punctuation that could be either a comma or a period), modern practice is followed. Illegible or obscured words that can be inferred with confidence from textual evidence are printed in ordinary roman type, enclosed in brackets. If the editors' reading is conjectural or doubtful, a question mark is added. When the editors cannot decipher a word by either inference or conjecture, it is represented by a three-dot ellipsis enclosed in brackets. An undecipherable passage of more than one word is represented in the same way, but a footnote reports the extent of the illegible material. (See p. xxxii for a summary of editorial symbols.)

Handwritten letters display many characteristics that cannot be exactly reproduced on the printed page or can be printed only at considerable expense. Some adaptations are, therefore, conventional. Words underlined once in the manuscript appear in italics. Words underlined more than once are printed in small capitals. Internally quoted documents that are set off in the manuscript by such devices as extra space or quotation marks on every line are indented and printed in smaller type. Interlineations are simply incorporated into the text at the point marked by the author, without special notation by the editors unless the interlineation represents a substantial alteration. Finally, the beginning of a new paragraph is indicated by indentation, regardless of how the author set apart paragraphs.

The editors deviate from the standard of faithful reproduction of the textual body of the document in only two significant ways. The many documents entirely bereft of punctuation require some editorial intervention for the sake of readability. However, the editors wish to avoid "silent" addition of any material, and supplying punctuation in brackets would be extremely cumbersome, if not pedantic. Therefore, the editors employ the less intrusive device of adding extra spaces at what they take to be unpunctuated sentence breaks. Although most such judgments are unambiguous, there are instances in which the placement of sentence breaks requires an interpretive decision. To prevent

the ambiguity that could result if an unpunctuated or unconventionally punctuated sentence concluded at the end of a line of type, the last word of any such sentence appears at the beginning of the next line.

The second substantial deviation from verbatim reproduction of the text is the occasional publication of excerpted portions of documents. Most documents are printed in their entirety, but excerpts are taken from certain manuscripts, especially long bureaucratic reports, extensive legal proceedings, and other kinds of testimony. Editorial omission of a substantial body of material is indicated by a four-dot ellipsis centered on a separate line. An omission of only one or two sentences is marked by a four-dot ellipsis between the sentences that precede and follow the omission. The endnote identifies each excerpt as such and briefly characterizes the portion of the document not printed. (See the sample document that follows this essay for a guide to the elements of a printed document, including headnote, endnote, and footnote.)

The editors intervene without notation in the text of manuscripts in two minor ways. When the author of a manuscript inadvertently repeated a word, the duplicate is omitted. Similarly, most material canceled by the author is omitted, since it usually represents false starts or ordinary slips of the pen. When, however, the editors judge that the crossed-out material reflects an important alteration of meaning, it is printed as ~~canceled type~~. Apart from these cases, no "silent" additions, corrections, or deletions are made in the textual body of documents. Instead, all editorial insertions are clearly identified by being placed in italics and in brackets. Insertions by the editors may be descriptive interpolations such as [*In the margin*] or [*Endorsement*], the addition of words or letters omitted by the author, or the correction of misspelled words and erroneous dates. Great restraint is exercised, however, in making such additions: The editors intervene only when the document cannot be understood or is seriously misleading as it stands. In particular, no effort is made to correct misspelled personal and place names. When material added by the editors is conjectural, a question mark is placed within the brackets. For printed documents only (of which there are few), "silent" correction is made for jumbled letters, errant punctuation, and transpositions that appear to be typesetting errors.

Although they faithfully reproduce the text of documents with minimal editorial intervention, the editors are less scrupulous with the peripheral parts of manuscripts. To print in full, exactly as in the original document, such elements as the complete return address, the full inside address, and a multiline complimentary closing would drastically reduce the number of documents that could be published. Considerations of space have therefore impelled the editors to adopt the following procedures. The place and date follow original spelling and punctuation, but they are printed on a single line at the beginning of the document regardless of where they appear in the manu-

script. The salutation and complimentary closing, although spelled and punctuated as in the manuscript, are run into the text regardless of their positions in the original. Multiple signatures are printed only when there are twelve or fewer names. For documents with more than twelve signatures, including the many petitions bearing dozens or even hundreds of names, the editors indicate only the number of signatures on the signature line, for example, [*86 signatures*], although some information about the signers is always provided in the headnote and sometimes in the endnote as well. The formal legal apparatus accompanying sworn affidavits, including the name and position of the official who administered the oath and the names of witnesses, is omitted; the endnote, however, indicates whether an affidavit was sworn before a military officer, a Freedmen's Bureau agent, or a civil official. Similarly, the names of witnesses are omitted from contracts and other legal documents, but the endnote indicates that the signatures were witnessed.

The inside and return addresses create special complications. The documents in *Freedom* come from bureaucratic, mostly military, records. Therefore both inside and return addresses often include a military rank or other title and a statement of military command and location that may run to three or more lines. Similar details usually accompany the signature as well. Considerations of space alone preclude printing such material verbatim. Furthermore, even if published in full, the addresses would not always provide the reader with enough information to identify fully the sender and recipient. Military etiquette required that a subordinate officer address his superior not directly, but through the latter's adjutant. Thus, a letter destined for a general is ordinarily addressed to a captain or lieutenant, often only by the name of that lesser officer. To bring order out of the chaos that would remain even if all addresses were printed in full, and at the same time to convey all necessary information to the reader, the editors employ a twofold procedure. First, the headnote of each document identifies both sender and recipient – not by name, but by position, command, or other categorical label. For example, a letter from a staff assistant of the Union general in command of the military Department of the Gulf is labeled as originating not from "Lieutenant So-and-So" but from the "Headquarters of the Department of the Gulf." Confederate officials and military units are indicated as such by the addition of the word "Confederate" before their title or command, while those of the Union stand without modification. Most of the time this information for the headnote is apparent in the document itself, but when necessary the editors resort to other documents, published military registers, and service records to supply the proper designations. Second, the citation of each document (in the endnote) reproduces the military rank or other title as well as the name of both sender and

recipient exactly as provided in the original document (except that punctuation is added to abbreviations, nonstandard punctuation is modernized, and superscripts are lowered to the line). Thus, the headnote and endnote together communicate the information from the return and inside addresses without printing those addresses in full.

Bureaucratic, and especially military procedures often created document files containing letters with numerous enclosures and endorsements. Although many routine endorsements served merely to transmit letters through proper channels, others reported the results of investigations, stated policy decisions, and issued orders. Indeed, enclosures or endorsements themselves are often valuable documents deserving publication. The editors therefore treat the material accompanying a document in one of three ways. First, some or all of such material may be printed in full along with the cover document. Second, accompanying items not published may be summarized in the endnote. Third, any accompanying material neither published nor summarized is noted in the endnote by the words "endorsements," "enclosures," "other enclosures," or "other endorsements." The editors do not, however, attempt to describe the contents or even note the existence of other documents that appear in the same file with the document being published but are not enclosed in it or attached to it. Clerks sometimes consolidated files of related—or even unrelated—correspondence, and many such files are voluminous. The editors draw upon other documents in the same file when necessary for annotation, just as they do upon documents filed elsewhere, but the endnote is normally a guide only to the material actually enclosed in, attached to, or endorsed upon the published document.

A technical description symbol follows each document at the left, usually on the same line as the signature. The symbol describes the physical form of the manuscript, the handwriting, and the signature. (See p. xxxiii for the symbols employed.)

An endnote for each document or group of related documents begins with a full citation that should allow the reader to locate the original among the holdings of the National Archives.[1] The citation refers solely to the document from which the printed transcription is made; the editors have searched out neither other copies in the National Archives nor any previously published versions. Because all the documents published in *Freedom* come from the National Archives, no repository name is included in the citation. Record groups are cited only by the abbreviation RG and a number. (See pp. xxxiii–xxxiv for a list of record group

[1] Scholars have cited documents from the National Archives in a bewildering variety of forms, many of them entirely inadequate. The editors of *Freedom* have tried to include all the information required to locate a document. They urge similar completeness, if not necessarily their particular form of citation, upon other researchers and publishers.

abbreviations.) For the convenience of researchers, the editors usually provide both series title and series number for each document, but readers should note that series numbers are assigned by the National Archives staff for purposes of control and retrieval, and they are subject to revision. Each citation concludes with the Freedmen and Southern Society Project's own file number for that document, enclosed in brackets. In future the editors plan to microfilm all the documents accumulated during the project's search at the National Archives, along with the various geographical and topical indexes created by the staff. The project's file number for each document will thus serve as a guide both to the microfilm copy of the manuscript document and to other related documents in the project's files.

For ease of reference, the documents published in *Freedom* are numbered in sequence. On occasion, the editors have selected for publication several documents that taken together constitute a single episode. These documentary "clusters" are demarked at their beginning and at their conclusion by the project's logo – a broken shackle. The documents within each cluster bear alphabetical designations next to the number of the cluster.

Because *Freedom* focuses upon a subject or a series of questions, the editors consider the function of annotation different from that required in editing the papers of an individual. The editors seek, in the essays that introduce each section, to provide background information and interpretive context that will assist the reader in understanding the documents that follow, but the documents themselves are selected and arranged to tell their own story with relatively little annotation. When the editors judge annotation to be necessary or helpful, it usually appears in the form of further information about the content of a document or about the historical events under consideration, rather than biographical identification of individuals mentioned in the document. Thus, there are relatively few editorial notes to specific items within a document, but the endnote often describes the outcome of the case or discusses other events related to the episode portrayed in the document. Such annotation, as well as the chapter essays, is based primarily on other documents from the National Archives; those documents are cited in full, and their citations provide a guide to related records that could not be published. Quotations that appear without footnotes in a chapter essay, as well as undocumented descriptions of specific incidents, are taken from the documents published in that chapter. When portions of documents are quoted in endnotes and footnotes, they are transcribed by the same procedures as those employed for documents printed in full, except that terminal sentence punctuation is modernized. Annotation is also drawn from published primary sources, and, with few exceptions, the editors rely upon primary material rather than the secondary literature.