

History 225

Re: Notes w/ Lincoln & Black Freedom

Source: Paludan, Lincoln

Toward the 1863 elections

Lincoln's letter to Illinois Republicans. The state party asked Lincoln to visit the state because they were fearful of the Democrats' power and use of the draft issue to win the state elections.

See Paludan's excerpts from the Lincoln letter

The 1863 elections would be a test of Lincoln's management of the war and his Emancipation Proclamation. Two key states were Ohio and Pennsylvania.

In Keystone state the Democratic candidate was Judge George Woodyard. He was running for the governorship. Woodyard had aroused the Democrats in the state by declaring the draft law unconstitutional. He argued that the habeus corpus law (suspension of civil liberties) was an expression of executive tyranny; that the draft rushed poor men to their death (hitting at the \$300 substitute provision); that emancipation would unleash a race war in the South and erode the social fabric in the North. Goodyard called for the old Union, the old Constitution, and the old white/black relationship (white supremacy).

In Ohio the Democrats ran Clement Vallandigham, the most celebrated Copperhead in the North. Lincoln had already exiled him to the Confederacy. Vallandigham was the symbol of peace at any price Democracy.

The results of election day dismayed the Democrats. They expected to further the gains they made in 1862 based on their assumption that war-weariness in the North was even greater than the preceding year--especially as the body count, the tax burden, and the draft quotas mounted and as innovations in race relations spread off Northern whites. Yet they lost every state race they contested in New England, California, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Vallandigham was trounced in Ohio, he received less than 40% of the state vote. In Virginia's Libby Prison 163 Ohio POWs ran their own straw vote. Republican, 162; Vallandigham 0; one vote was cast for the Democratic candidate for governor in 1861.

The 1863 vote was a watershed. The returns provided a resounding public endorsement of Lincoln and his party for their efforts to end slavery and for opening up the war to the sable arm.

After these elections that Lincoln made his trip to Gettysburg to explain to the citizenry the larger meaning of the war.