

Holmes, Lincoln  
Però  
(1992)

History 225  
Re: Lecture/Notes w/ # 3

+ Blockade

King Cotton Illusion/Trent Affair

For the first 18 months of the War there was a danger that Britain (and France) might recognize the Confederacy. Lincoln was rightfully alarmed about this possibility.

Refer to McPherson's discussion of this issue. He gives a decent summary (if not complete) of this situation.

Discussion of the Illusion of King Cotton: Leave up to class.

South misplayed its hand on this matter.

Point: In Britain's behalf London never really understood what was at stake in this war. She only dimly perceived the attitude of Lincoln and the North--it was determined to maintain the Republic come what may. Of course Lincoln initially contributed to The Gladstone government's misunderstanding when the end of slavery was not announced originally as one of the North's war aims (We'll discuss later). As you recall he hardly mentions slavery in his Inaugural Address. It allowed Britain to view the war as simply a police action by the North to prevent the CSA from carrying out its determined effort to assert its independence. To act upon its proclaimed sovereign right of self-determination.

and  
Alm ERS  
Russell

\* Note: Britain (+ France) recognize So.'s sovereignty

(implied in Union Blockade from a state of war  
evoked last. Union + Confederacy)

- meaning that Britain would force Cens +  
Contribution to Reconstruction.

- G. Britain recognized the blockade as legitimate  
on No's part. NOT a paper blockade

History 225  
Re: Lecture/Notes w #3  
Page two w/ King Cotton

Here was the danger: Pose a hypothetical worse case scenerio:

Britain and France (with other European nations in tow) would offer to mediate the crisis in America. The purpose would be to stop the terrible slaughter taking place in America. The entire civilized world was appalled over this viscious war. They demanded that it be ended, etc, etc.

Richmond would have responded with alacrity and sent her delegates to a "peace" conference at some neutral site. Some place on the continent.

Lincoln would have refused mightly. he would have also warned England/France, etc. that the Civil War was not an issue for mediation. That European nations must mind their own collective business.

The "peace" conference would go on and the CSA would be in their seats. Britain taking the lead would recognize that while the Union was recalcitrant the Confederacy was peace-loving and amenable to a solution of the problem. Britain would move now to recognize the Confederacy. Conditional upon recognition would be to open trade with the CSA.

Trade would entail breaking the Union blockade. Shooting and war between the Union and Britain, France, et al.

Consequences: See A. Nevins page on this.

Trent Affair: Covered in text. This event nearly pushed England into belligerent status. This was an affair of honor. US Ambassador to Court of St. James (Charles Francis Adams) told his legation that they would be home in a month.

Secretary of State Seward was overheard in a conversation at the Portuguese embassy in WDC that if England wanted war she shall have it. "We will wrap the whole world in flames!"

Seward's role during this whole 18 months was to make it clear that if England went beyond neutrality (eg. recognition) that war was a certainty. He played hard ball all the way. This did influence the British.

Summary: Trent affair blew over when the Union returned th two Southern diplomats--George Mason (author of the infamous 1850 Fugitive Slave Act) and Slidell (a red-hot secessionist).

1861  
one of the  
earliest  
secession  
to  
Chesapeake  
his  
Kaufmann  
part of  
the Union

Howe Jones, Lincoln  
Peace

History 225  
Re: Lecture/Notes # 3  
Page three for Illusion of King Cotton

England never moved to initiate mediation and/or recognition? Why?

Answers have been because Lincoln preempted the issue with the Emancipation Proclamation in September. This explanation is flawed.

The basic reasons were (1) England was not going to involve herself is that if she introduced mediation or extended recognition prematurely she would find herself in a war with the Union. The Palmerston govt. feared that the first casualty in any Anglo-American War would be Canada. The US would strike hard and perhaps fatally at the British dominion in North America.

(2) What I meant by prematurely, is just that there was a flaw in the Confederacy diplomacy on this issue. Richmond assumed by playing her King Cotton card she could blackmail England to extend recognition and thereby win her independence. The reality of the situation was that before England would extend recognition the CSA was going to have to show signs that she could or had won her independence on the battlefield.

Well after Antietam the Palmerston govt. was still on the verge of initiating mediation. Especially true after 2nd Bull Run. Then Lee decided to take the war into the North again, this time into Pennsylvania. The upshot was the 3-days of Gettysburg. A defeat for the Confederacy--big time. England had held back to see what the outcome would be.

With Lee's defeat and retreat cooler heads began to take over in the higher reaches of the British govt. Mediation was soon dropped as a practical possibility.  
and

History 225  
page four

Re: Notes w/ King Cotton/the Illusion

King Cotton Diplomacy failed for a variety of reasons:

1. It failed because London was very wary of becoming involved in the Civil War and distracted from her political/diplomatic concerns in Europe.

The closest the Palermston Govt. came to recognition of the CSA was in 1862. Had Lee managed a victory or a series of victories in the North when he invaded Maryland or was also able to rally the state or large elements of the state of Maryland to switch allegiances to the Confederacy, the British Government would have shifted its position and moved to recognition. Had Maryland come over to the Confederacy other border states might have followed. This would have been a pretty persuasive "fact" that the Confederacy might carry the day. Nothing succeeds like success.

The process of intervention would probably have taken shape in the following manner:

England with France in a supporting role would have tried to ally other European nations to call for mediation of this war. To stop the terrible slaughter, etc. World opinion demands that this hecatomb be ended.

Richmond would have agreed to send delegates to a "peace" conference to iron out the arrangement for peace.

Had Lincoln refused, as he might have, England would have in the process recognized the Confederacy and the likelihood of war with the "recalcitrant" North would be just a matter of time.

History 225

Page Five

Re: Notes w/ King Cotton/ The Illusion

2. A second reason King Cotton failed had to do with the ineptitude of the South and Southern diplomacy.

This is laid out pretty good in McPherson.

The major flaw in Southern cotton diplomacy was the basic premise that foreign recognition would bring independence rather than independence would bring recognition. What I mean by that is if the South was ever to lure England from her neutral position into recognition she would need to demonstrate that not only had she established a government and a military force but that she could win military victories in the field. That is, destroy the Union armies in the early years of the war. Cotton should have been used early on as the instrument for these victories by procuring essential supplies and weapons from Europe.

Europeans, just like Americans, followed closely the contest of arms and attitudes toward the Confederacy fluctuated the news from the battlefield.

CSA took a different course. McPherson mentions the policy of self-imposed embargo on her cotton in the opening stages of the war. This was the wrong kind of pressure. It was a form of blackmail or illusion based on the South's belief that England/France needed Southern cotton more than the CSA needed European weaponry and supplies.

Then the South had hard luck. England already had a oversupply of cotton from earlier bumper crops of Southern cotton sent before hostilities broke out.

England found other sources for cotton to make up for the shortfall by 1862--India and Egypt. Then the South after it was too, late began to ship cotton to England.

There was the fact, that Southern leaders should have anticipated was that while the English textile industry might have been destabilized for a time, war orders from the North and South were picking up economic prosperity in other areas of British commerce and manufacturing. England's productivity suffered not at all for the South's self-imposed embargo.

The question of Northern wheat supplies were also critical in the equation.

History 225  
Page six

Re: Notes w/ King Cotton/The Illusion

How to account for the failure of Southern Cotton diplomacy:?

Basically, it was a reflection of the South's self-imposed isolation from the World.

Southerners had closed off themselves from a world that was more and more opposed to slavery. This institution was regarded by foreign nations as obsolete.

Mention the wave of emancipation that went around the civilized world prior to the onset of the Civil War. The only countries in North America that still practiced slavery in 1860 were Brazil and Cuba. Serfdom had ended in Tsarist Russia in 1860.

The British had ended slavery in their colonies in the Caribbean by the 1830s and other European nations had followed suit.

Add here that North and Lincoln appealed to this anti-slavery prejudice finally in 1862 with the Emancipation Proclamation. Cover this more deeply when we discuss the North's two-aim war.

THE NEW YORK  
Did not see to matter the  
Scarceness of labor in English  
Cotton  
thing.

## COAL PRODUCTION FROM 1860 TO 1863

PENNSYLVANIA COAL PRODUCTION, ANTHRACITE AND BITUMINOUS,  
 COMPARED TO ESTIMATED PRODUCTION IN ALL STATES,  
 NORTH AND SOUTH, FROM 1860 TO 1863.  
 FROM EAVENSON, COAL, P. 431.

YEAR	Total U.S. Production (tons)	Pennsylvania Production (tons)	Percent of U.S. Production
1860	20,040,859	15,694,372	78.3%
1861	19,000,663	14,807,156	77.9%
1862	19,570,544	15,182,035	77.5%
1863	22,747,407	17,600,046	77.4%

LEADING COAL PRODUCING STATES, TONS MINED,  
 NORTH AND SOUTH, FROM 1860 TO 1863.  
 FROM EAVENSON, COAL, PP. 428, 431.

STATES	1860	1861	1862	1863
Pennsylvania	15,694,372	14,807,156	15,182,035	17,600,046
Ohio	1,849,586	1,855,300	1,890,400	1,923,500
Illinois	857,600	948,800	1,038,200	1,198,900
Virginia	477,227	418,556	382,317	388,577
Maryland	438,000	287,073	346,201	877,313

ANTHRACITE COAL PRODUCTION IN PENNSYLVANIA,  
 COMPARED TO PRODUCTION IN ALL STATES,  
 NORTH AND SOUTH, FROM 1860 TO 1863.  
 FROM EAVENSON, COAL, P. 498.

YEAR	Total U.S. Production (tons)	Anthracite Produced in Penna. (tons)	Percent of Total U.S. Production
1860	20,040,859	10,983,972	54.8%
1861	19,000,663	10,245,156	53.9%
1862	19,570,544	10,186,435	52.0%
1863	22,747,407	12,267,446	53.9%

