

Early on in the introduction to *“The Radical and the Republican”* author James Oakes makes a strong distinction between the antislavery politics of Abraham Lincoln and the radical abolitionism of Frederick Douglass. There is a clear attempt by Oakes to stay away from creating separate biographies concerning Lincoln and Douglass, which is difficult to accomplish. In fact, the author does focus on how the politician in Lincoln and the reformer in Douglass could not agree on the right course to take to achieve their ultimate goal of ending slavery in the United States. We, the reader, learn that the abolitionism practiced by Frederick Douglass and William L. Garrison was at odds with Lincoln’s methodical approach to antislavery politics. Oakes often points out that the slow process under constitutional democracy was a hindrance to both Lincoln and Douglass. The author is able to use the conflict between politician and reformer to show how the lives of these enormous figures in American History play off of each other and ultimately join forces to achieve an end to slavery. The historical events which bring Lincoln and Douglass together become the main focus of the book while the author also discusses the written works of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass.

Readers should find the analysis behind the written works of both figures very informative. The author is helpful with analysis concerning Douglass’ autobiographical works and speeches concerning Lincoln during his two terms in office. Douglass’ speeches after the assassination of Lincoln are exceptional in showing how far Douglass had come from his roots as an abolitionist reformer. Several works of Lincoln are not to be overlooked. Starting with the Lincoln Douglass Debates, the reader sees the growth of Lincoln before his historical Emancipation Proclamation and why Lincoln was seen as such a master politician when dealing with so many diverging interests. Readers may find it disheartening to learn that Lincoln and Douglass would personally meet only three times before Lincoln’s death. The circumstances surrounding these meetings are filled with gripping historic drama and Oakes does a masterful job when explaining the impact the meetings had on the main figures in question. Readers will also find it helpful to view the major figures from a pre-war perspective and then see how the relationship between Lincoln and Douglass changes throughout the course of the war.

Looking first into the life of Frederick Douglass, his relationship with William Lloyd Garrison and the New England Antislavery movement shows how passionate Douglass was. Religion and Christianity greatly influenced the work of Garrison yet Douglass would struggle with a religion that was used by plantation owners to control slaves. The author discusses how the break between Frederick Douglass and William Lloyd Garrison is impacted by religion and how Douglass becomes influenced by Gerrit Smith and the Liberty Party. Even after Douglass left New England for New York he still supported Garrison's argument that the Constitution was a proslavery document. James Oakes points out that "Douglass understood that compromise was essential to democracy itself, but there was always a risk. Too much compromise would dilute the basic principles of the antislavery cause" (pg. 21). Douglass would be forced to compromise and always found himself walking a fine line supporting religion or the Constitution when his position was enhanced. Further confusion is displayed when Douglass refers to slave owners committing a sin against "divine law" or his support for John Brown, calling their fight the "bloody force of God's holy wrath" (pg. 92). In July of 1852 Douglass is praised for his rhetorical skills while giving a Fourth of July Speech in Rochester New York. The author notes how Douglass, in front of a white audience, explains how an ex-slave is unable to celebrate liberty even though he believed in the cause of the founding fathers and their struggle for freedom. The poignant argument being that the founders and the anti-slavery movement had a common goal, yet slavery had been allowed to survive and even expand. Douglass would never give up his role as a reformer and it shows in his opposition to the Whig Party in 1844 and the Republicans soon after. Douglass could not hide his dedication to his lifelong cause, passion would ultimately trump reason with Douglass.

It is important not to overlook Abraham Lincoln's role as a Whig member of Congress and his support of the Free Soil Movement. Frederick Douglass would oppose the Free Soil Movement even though they wanted to stop the expansion of slavery as well as the War with Mexico. Supporting the Liberty Party shows that Douglass could not dismiss his principled ideals and this would be a struggle when it came to his political decisions conflicted with ideals. Lincoln's early career was centered on Henry Clay and the

Whig Party. Author, James Oakes even brings up the fact that Henry Clay was eulogized by Lincoln. We also find out that Lincoln praised Clay for his stance on slavery. Lincoln shows his support for Clay when he questions the Liberty Party stance against him. Lincoln states that if “the anti-slavery men in New York” voted for Clay the United States would have avoided the War with Mexico (pg. 45).

Lincoln’s connection to the Whig party can also be seen in the economic argument that free labor provides upward mobility. Both Lincoln and Douglass understood poverty and placed an emphasis on free labor creating opportunity and prosperity. Lincoln provides a strong argument when stating the “Superiority” of labor over capital and that everyone deserves “a fair chance in the race of life” (pg. 60). Next we see how economic equality was quickly referenced in relation to moral equality and that slavery “was wrong because it violated the moral principle of fundamental human equality” (pg. 61).

In the chronicling of events that pre-date our civil war we see that Lincoln could deal with the founders 3/5th Compromise because the 1808 Slave Ban would bring about an eventual end to slavery. That Lincoln was also willing to tolerate the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 shows he understood them to be political “concessions”. However, Popular Sovereignty could not be compromised by Lincoln. The Kansas–Nebraska Act put an end to geographical restrictions and according to Lincoln “a process had begun, that would shortly bring back the African slave trade and a second Dred Scott decision would bring slavery into the free states” (pg. 80). “Equality of man became less important than equality of state” was one of the arguments made after the Dred Scott Decision. On several issues we see Lincoln inching closer to a more radical position. In fact, a case could be made that the Taney decision was so outrageously favorable to the slave states that abolitionist support in the north dramatically increased. Douglass was not ready to vote Republican in 1860 however. Again Douglass was unwilling to support a political party that would not call for an end to slavery. James Oakes articulates how John Brown “awakened in Douglass a messianic wish for divine vengeance upon the slaveholders” (pg. 100). While Douglass struggled to remain principled in his cause Lincoln was faced with the question of racism in the Northern Free States.

Democrats attacked Lincoln as a supporter of racial equality and Lincoln would try to deny that racism and slavery were inseparable. According to Oakes “Douglass concluded that racism was nothing more than an excuse for slavery” Douglass again is forced to decide if fighting for an end to slavery was possible while also supporting “Strategic separatism”. Could a Black Nationalist movement in the North fight for racial equality and at the same time try to use northern liberty to fight for the abolition of southern slavery? Douglass was becoming disillusioned while northerners grew hostile toward free blacks even though support for the abolishment of slavery continued to grow in the Free states. On several occasions we see Lincoln as the typical northern racist who supported the colonization plan of his Whig mentors. Lincoln could easily differentiate between “the evils of slavery” and the “inequality of the races” if his political goal was to be achieved. James Oakes points out the difference between the public and private Lincoln, he explains that “He accepted racial discrimination because that was what most whites wanted, and in a democratic society such deeply held prejudices cannot be easily disregarded” (pg. 127). Sadly Douglass could not support Lincoln in his 1860 campaign for president yet he eventually concluded, “Lincoln was a man utterly lacking in racial prejudice.”

Douglass’ opposition did not end when the war began. Law and Order could not come before his principled ideals. While Frederick Douglass fought Lincoln concerning Confiscation Acts under General John C. Fremont in Missouri and the diplomatic recognition of Haiti, Lincoln quietly pushed congress to consider his plan for gradual state emancipation of slaves. Using the war powers as commander in chief Lincoln called for confiscated slaves to be liberated, taking one step closer to emancipation. Interestingly, and somewhat masterfully, Lincoln knew that accommodations would have to be made with the Border States. Gradual state emancipation with owner compensation would be offered to the Border States, but it was not accepted. Douglass became incensed with Lincoln’s “delicate maneuvering” to keep the Border States in the Union (pg. 162). Lincoln understood racist beliefs were strong in the North so he used Douglass’ opposition to the Border States as a way to make himself look conservative. Lincoln was able to show patience as he side-stepped the confederate opening attack on Fort Sumter and he would also wait

for a major Union victory to claim that military necessity made the emancipation of slavery the right step to take. The relationship between President Lincoln and General George McClellan is well documented but readers might find it interesting to learn that before the Battle of Antietam and the general's removal, Lincoln was handed a letter by McClellan stating his willingness to become "Commander and Chief" and that he opposed any plans for the emancipation of slaves. President Lincoln continued to move toward emancipation and his next move was perhaps his boldest.

Meeting with five black leaders immediately before the declared Proclamation, Lincoln discussed a plan to create a Central American colony for free African Americans. Lincoln made sure the press throughout the nation published his words verbatim. Could this radical plan be accepted? The president had no intention of asking the black leaders for their thoughts, in fact James Oakes calls this meeting a strategic performance that "stunned" Frederick Douglass. In reality Lincoln was hoping the public would be more willing to accept the "Proclamation" if they believed colonization would soon follow. It is remarkable to think that this bold move was taken by President Lincoln, knowing it would be used against him when running for reelection. The President's plan was for the "Total assault" on the rebelling states with an increased draft call up, the enlistment of black troops and the suspension of habeas corpus. The massacre and execution of Black troops by Confederate troops would not stop them from distinguishing themselves on the field of battle. Port Hudson, Milliken's Bend and Fort Wagner were three notable engagements that vindicated these brave Americans. Likewise, Frederick Douglass, while praising the Black troops efforts, would use the opportunity to finally meet with President Lincoln and discuss a policy of retaliation. This first meeting between Douglass and Lincoln was used by Democrats to question the President on the mixing of races and the radical views held by Douglass. The Democrats also chose General George McClellan to run as their presidential candidate in 1864. Radical Republicans would threaten Lincoln's reelection by nominating Salmon B. Chase.

With the belief that he would not win the election, Lincoln met with Frederick Douglass a second time to discuss the fear that blacks who did not leave the south could be forced back into slavery if the Peace

Democrats won. Sherman's "March through Georgia" would secure victory for Lincoln and the passage of the 13th Amendment. Sadly Lincoln and Douglass would last meet in March of 1865 after Lincoln gave his historic second inauguration speech considered by some to be "the greatest speech, ever delivered by an American President"(pg. 238.). President Lincoln would be assassinated six weeks later on April 15 1865, leaving Andrew Johnson to deal with reconstruction in the hostile south. Black Codes limited the impact of the 13th Amendment. Attempts would be made by Douglass to convince President Johnson to support black suffrage. Johnson would argue in favor of poor southern whites who were not part of the plantation system. Johnson claims that a race war would be created because "slaves looked down upon their poor white neighbors" (pg. 251). Military Districting and the Radical Republicans would ultimately force former Confederate states to support the 14th Amendment. President Ulysses S. Grant would be forced to deal with the racism under the Jim Crow South that supported the Ku Klux Klan. Frederick Douglass, upon his moving to Washington D.C., accepted a commission from President Grant to allow the United States to possibly annex the island of Santo Domingo.

The support shown by Douglass for the President would portray Douglass' support for the Republican Party which had enhanced "the honor, prosperity, and glory of the American people" (pg. 280). Author James Oakes ends his analysis describing how Frederick Douglass would continue to fight Klan lynchings and disenfranchisement because "he had been an abolitionist since the day he learned what the word meant" (pg. 279). Douglass maintained his radical edge to the end. Douglass was seen as a symbol of the Republican Party but could still be controversial. As a keynote speaker Douglass had dignitaries squirming with his dedication speech to Lincoln. After warning his audience Douglass highlighted how Lincoln's war record was constantly questioned by African Americans. He would end by stating that "the hour and the man of our redemption had met in the person of Abraham Lincoln" (pg. 269).

Reason and Passion: The Temperamental Divide

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