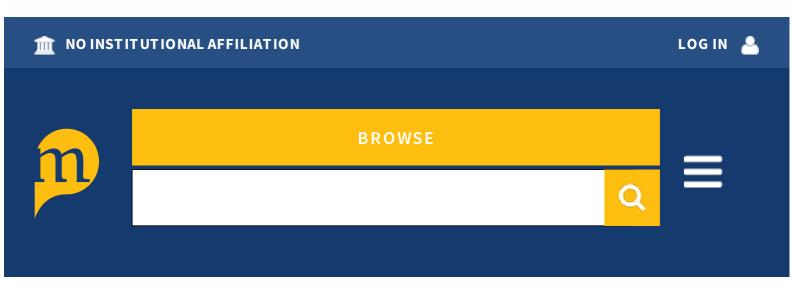
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Race, Rhetoric, and Emancipation: The

Election of 1862 in Illinois.



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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Race, Rhetoric, and Emancipation: The Election of 1862 in Illinois Bruce Tap The Republican party fared poorly in the fall elections of 1862, especially in the lower North and Midwest. Not only did the Democratic party gain thirty-four seats in the House of Representatives, but Democrats also triumphed in the gubernatorial races in New York and New Jersey as well as in capturing the state houses of Illinois, Indiana, and New Jersey. Historians have offered a number of reasons for these electoral reverses, including the Lincoln administration's violation of civil liberties, culminating in the suspension of the writ of habe as corpus; the pervasive economic depression that resulted from the closing of the Mississippi River; the negative effects of the preliminary emancipation proclamation, given the context of negrophobia that characterized much of

the Midwest; and, finally, the general dissatisfaction with Lincoln's handling of the war.1 The election of 1862
in Illinois represented a bitter defeat for the Republican party. Not only did the Republicans lose nine of
fourteen congressional seats, they also lost control of a number of state offices and of both houses of the
legislature, guaranteeing that a Democrat would replace Orville H. Browning to finish out the Senate term of
Stephen A. Douglas. 2 The author wishes to thank Dr. Robert W. Johannsen for critically reading this
manuscript and making a number of helpful suggestions. 1 James McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom: The
Civil War Era (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 561. On the interpretations of historians see: Allan Nevins,
The Warfor the Union: War Becomes Revolution 1862-1863 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), 318-22;
Hans Trefousse, The Radical Republicans: Lincoln's Vanguard for Racial Justice (New York: Knopf, 1969), 259-
61; Frank L. Klement, "Economic Aspects of Middle Western Copperheadism," Historian 14 (Autumn 1951): 27-
44; V. Jacque Voegeli, Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro During the Civil War (Chicago: Univ. of
Chicago Press, 1967), 62-67. Much of my research was inspired by my desire to explore Voegeli's basic
premise more thoroughly for the election in Illinois. 2 D. W. Lutz, Politics and Politicians of Illinois, Anecdotes
and Incidents: A Succinct History of the State, 1809-1886.2d ed. (Springfield, 1886), 145-47. Civil War History,
Vol. XXXIX, No. 2, © 1993 by The Kent State University Press IO 2CIVIL WAR HISTORY While all of the above
reasons played a role in the Democratic victory, negrophobia was the most obvious reason for Republican
defeat in Illinois and was connected with a blunder committed by Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. On
September 18, 1862, Stanton ordered the northward shipment of ex-slaves, "contrabands," who were
$temporarily \ being \ held \ at \ Cairo, Il lino is \ . \ Stanton \ hoped \ that \ the \ contrabands \ might be \ resettled \ throughout$
Illinois and the Midwestso that they could assist farmers in harvesting the fall crop. The timing of Stanton's
$orderwas\ most\ unfortunate.\ Is sued\ just\ a\ few\ days\ prior\ to\ Lincoln's\ Preliminary\ Emancipation\ Proclamation,$
Illinois voters connected the two events, regarding the northward migration of free blacks as the inevitable
result of the proclamation. Democratic newspapers throughout the state charged that the policy of the
Republican party was to "Africanize" Illinois, changing the character of the war from one waged for the Union
to one waged for the establishment of black equality. For the Democratic party, the contraband issue
symbolized everything that it despised in Lincoln's war policy. Not only did Democrats object to the
presence of "inferior" blacks in Illinois, but the movement of contrabands heightened economic fears in a
region already under stress due to the closing of the Mississippi River. In addition, Democrats claimed that
these actions displayed a flagrant disregard for the Constitution. Despite Republican efforts to portray their
opponents as disloyal, the contraband issue caused the Republicans to go down to defeat in the fall
election. There was little charitable sentiment towards African Americans in Illinois and, for that matter,
throughout the Midwest. Although Illinois had significant antislavery and Free-Soil opinions, it would be a
mistake to identify these feelings with a positive attitude toward blacks. In fact, Free-Soil determination to
keep the western territories closed to slavery was

RACE, RHETORIC, AND EMANCIPATION: THE ELECTION OF 1862 IN ILLINOIS

Втисе Тар

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^{&#}x27; James McPherson, Barde Cry of Freedom: The Chil War Ero (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 14881, 953. (In the interpretations of historiats see: Allan Nevints. The War for the Univ. War Becomes Revolution 1862-1863 (New York: Charles Settinger's Sons, 1959), 318-12. Hans. Treforasse, The Radical Republicans: Liouvin's Wanghard for Revial Pastice (New York: Knopf, 1969), 259-61; Frank L. Klemott, "Facekarric Aspect, of Middle Westers Copperheadism," Historian 14 (Autumn 1951): 37-44; V. Jacque Vregell, Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro Daving the Civil War (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967), 62-67. Much of my research was imperied by my deswe to explore Vregell's haste premise new sharoughly for the election in Herois.

¹⁰ W. Laux, Politics and Politicians of Hilbrots, Amendoses and Incidents: A Succious History of the State, 1809–1880, 24 ed. (Springfield, 1886), 143–47.



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