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MARIANNE GAUNT: Good afternoon everybody. Oh great. I guess you can hear me. We've got an overflow crowd and I think hopefully if others come, they'll come in the back and not disturb us here in the front. I'm Marianne Gaunt. I'm Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian here at Rutgers and on behalf of the Rutgers University Libraries I'm delighted to welcome you to the 27th Annual Louis Faugeres Bishop III Lecture. I'm also very, very pleased to welcome our featured speaker, the distinguished historian and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Professor James McPherson, Professor Emeritus of Princeton University, right down the road from us, who will be speaking on the topic *Why the Civil War Still Matters Today*. Professor McPherson has written numerous books on the Civil War and he will be signing copies of his most recent book, *War on the Waters: The Union and Confederate Navies 1861 to 1865*, published by University of North Carolina Press, during the reception right out here in the lobby area. This Bishop Lecture and the opening of the Civil War exhibition, both in the galleries downstairs and Special Collections and Gallery 50 in the lobby, which I hope you will get a chance to see, are the kick-off events in a series of six programs sponsored by the Libraries with other University partners that are focusing on the Civil War during the 150th anniversary year of this pivotal event in the history of the United States. And we're honored to have such a distinguished scholar delivering our Bishop Lecture this evening. So we thank you Professor McPherson for joining us. In a few moments I'm going to pass the microphone onto Fernanda Perrone, who is head of our Exhibition Programs and Special Collections --who actually mounted with our talented staff, the wonderful exhibition -- who will formally introduce Dr. McPherson and tell us about the exhibition on the Civil War that is opening today. Before then I, just want to take a few moments to talk about the Bishop Lecture. The Rutgers University Libraries' only endowed lecture, the annual Bishop Lecture was named in memory of the son of

Dr. Louis Faugeres Bishop, Jr. Dr. Bishop was a prominent cardiologist who served as President of the American College of Cardiologists, the New York Cardiological Society and was a founder and President of the American College of Sports Medicine. Dr. Bishop was also a great book lover who helped build one of the most storied New York private libraries at the New York Racquet Club. I think since he was involved in sports medicine and the racquet club, there must be some association there. But although he was an alumnus of Yale University, he had close family ties to Rutgers through his father, who was born in New Brunswick and was an alumnus of Rutgers College, the class of 1885. He too was a noted cardiologist. Dr. Bishop was able to attend the very first Bishop Lecture in 1985 but sadly, he died the following year. The Bishop Lecture features diverse topics on book and manuscript collecting, printing history and the use of rare books and manuscripts in research and publication. Some examples from the recent past that show the wide spectrum of topics encompassed by the series include the late Ernst Badian of Harvard University who spoke on the development of Roman Republican coinage, Elaine Showalter of Princeton and Rutgers who talked about collecting the works of lesser-known Victorian women writers, Elinor Des Verney Sinnette of Howard University who shared her perspectives on African-American bibliography, art collector and gallery owner, Martin Diamond, who spoke on documenting pre-war abstract artists, and Professor Nigel Smith, also from Princeton, who spoke on John Milton most recently. We are grateful for Dr. Bishop for establishing this endowment that provides this program support. And now it's my pleasure to welcome Fernanda Perrone to the podium to get our program underway to introduce our featured speaker at the exhibition. Fernanda, and thank you all for joining

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us. FERNANDA PERRONE: Thank you Marianne. And I'd like to thank everyone for coming. I'm sure you're eager to hear the speaker so I just wanted to say a few words about the exhibition, *Struggle Without End, New Jersey in the Civil War*. For me, doing an exhibit on the Civil War in New Jersey was a daunting task because I'm not -- unlike some of you here -- I'm not a Civil War historian by training. And what was equally daunting was in this sesquicentennial period, which lasts for another three years, there are many, many exhibits, programs, publications happening all over the country. So what could I do that would be different? I realized though that the difference is that here at Special Collections and University Archives of the Rutgers Library, we have rare and unique items that no one else has. For example, we have a newspaper called *The Prison Times*, which was a handwritten newspaper written by Confederate soldiers in Fort Delaware prison in the Delaware River, and I think there is only one issue and it's in the exhibit. We also have the papers of Robert McCallister. Now as most of you know, some of his letters have been published, but we have the original letters and I believe some of his descendants may be in the audience today.

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And I'm looking forward to meeting them. Last night,

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some of you probably saw there was a documentary on PBS called *Death in the Civil War* and the point, the main point of the documentary was the importance that the U.S. government and various groups in the former Confederate States gave after the war to try to locate and preserve the graves of the soldiers who were killed during the war. Another way to preserve them their memory is through their voices. And we have their voices here at Special Collections in the letters they wrote and we have their images as well. And I also realized in the exhibit, as you'll see, I tried to feature a few characters. There's a very common soldier, Aaron Von Fleet, who you know can barely read and write as you could see from his letter. But many of those that I featured, several doctors, didn't survive the war. Now Special Collections has had a previous exhibit on the

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Civil War back in the Centennial, back in 1961, which was curated by Don Sinclair who was the founder of Special Collections at Rutgers and I saw Don's notes for the exhibit and his approach was by regiment. New Jersey had -- there were 40 state regiments -- and Don represented each regiment in a different case. That was his approach and I decided I was going to take a broader approach and I wanted to include the political and social context of the war, including the experience of women and African-Americans. And of course we have a great collection of the political history of that period in Special Collections which has been well-mined by Rutgers' own Civil War historian, Bill Gillette. But I found ironically in the past couple of weeks I've been talking myself -- I hear myself talking regiments -- talking about the Bloody 15th and who had a glorious career and then the Undistinguished 38 where my own great-grandfather or great-great-grandfather served. Before introducing our speaker, I would like to briefly thank some of the many people who helped with this exhibit and a more complete list can be found on your

programs and in the exhibit catalog downstairs in the gallery. But I would just like to mention a few people and organizations. First of all I would like to acknowledge the support of the New Jersey Council for the Humanities that's generously supported the exhibition. I would like to thank Paul Lone who's a Rutgers graduate and retiree from Rutgers Camden Admissions and he lent many of the artifacts that you'll see in the exhibit. And it's made such a difference to have some of those three-dimensional items as well as the many documents from Special Collections. I'd like to thank my colleague, Albert King who's our manuscripts curator, who probably knows the Civil War collection better than anybody. And he found many great items to use in this show including one just last week I think. I'd like to thank our wonderful exhibits preparation team, particularly my colleague Tim Corliss. You'll see a Springfield rifle in the exhibit which was loaned by Paul Lone, but also -- I'm sure you'd like to see the rifle -- but also note how the rifle is suspended from the top of the case.

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That's Tim's handiwork. And also my wonderful assistants, Sarah Brown, Kathy Fleming and Sharon Grough (sp) and without them this exhibit would not have happened. I would also like to thank James McPherson for agreeing to be our speaker, which has greatly increased the visibility of this event. And as Marianne said, James McPherson is one of the most distinguished historians of our time. He received a B.A. from -- got to get the name right -- Gustavus Adolphus College and a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins. In his early career, he was looking at Reconstruction, became a professor at Princeton in 1962, but I think it was with the publication of *The Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era in 1899, in 1989* which was [laughter]... I know, I'm thinking we are still in the nineteenth century. So is Jim I'm sure. It was the winner of the Pulitzer Prize in History, but it also made the jump from an academic book to become a bestseller and where I think Jim has become sort of a public historian and a public intellectual. And that was followed

by several other books including *Tried by War: Abraham Lincoln as Commander in Chief*, winner of the 2009 Lincoln Prize, *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam*. I know Jim was at Antietam two days ago for the anniversary. *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*, another Lincoln Prize winner and his most recent book, *War on the Waters: The Union and Confederate Navies* which, as Marianne mentioned, he is going to be doing a book signing and it's available for purchase in the lobby after the program. And I also wanted to tell Jim that we have a special case in the lobby downstairs on New Jersey and the Navy during the Civil War in honor of his book. And New Jersey actually had Rear Admiral Boggs was our war hero, who was from New Brunswick and had an exciting war career on his ship, the Varuna, which sank I believe.

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We actually have some artifacts from the Varuna, maybe the only ones, in the exhibit. And, of course, James McPherson has written many awards, has received many awards which you can read about in your program. I just wanted to mention that he's become very involved in battlefield preservation and was awarded the Robin Winks Award from the National Park Conservation Association in 2006. And I'm sure all of us as archivist librarians and historians realize the importance of preserving these battlefields which are being encroached on by development. Now,

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it's my pleasure to introduce James McPherson [applause].

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JAMES MCPHERSON: Well thank you Fernanda and thanks for your warm welcome. I have had the chance earlier this afternoon to see part of the exhibit and I can highly recommended it. I can also recommend the catalog which is a wonderful exhibit catalog with a great deal of information about not only the exhibit, about New Jersey and the war and about the war in a broader sense. So, and it's free [laughter].

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It's a great pleasure to be here. It reminds me of my days of teaching at Princeton University, many times in a room just like this. So it's kind of a nostalgia trip to come back and to see all of the eager faces for these eight o'clock classes in the morning. But fortunately, it's 4:30, 4:45 in the afternoon. Now even before the many conferences and commemorations and books and many public events associated with the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, back in 2009 and now with the current sesquicentennial observations of the Civil War, even before all of this, the American Civil War was the most popular historical subject in many parts of the United States. Back in the 1980s the historian at Vicksburg National Military Park declared Americans just can't get enough of the Civil War. A bookstore owner in Falls Church, Virginia said, also in the 1980s, "for the last two years Civil War books have been flying out of here. It's not just the buffs who buy, it's the general public from high school kids to retired people." Civil War books are the leading sellers for the History Book Club and that's been true for almost the whole history of the History Book Club. In 1990 at least 30 million viewers watched the Ken Burns 11 hours of television documentary on the Civil War and rebroadcasts during the past 22 years have lifted that number to at least 50 million in the United States and abroad. Some 40,000 Americans are said to be Civil War re-enactors who re-enact battles every year before thousands of spectators at or near where they took place 150 years ago. And as Fernanda said,

I'm just recently back from the Antietam National Battlefield where there was a large commemoration of the 150th anniversary of that battle just two days ago which attracted thousands of people. And a nearby re-enactment of the battle attracted thousands more. Well what accounts for this intense interest in that fratricidal conflict that almost tore the country apart; an interest that's even greater now during the 150th anniversary of the war's main events? First perhaps was the sheer size of the conflict, fought not in some foreign land as most American wars have been, but on battlefields ranging from Pennsylvania to New Mexico, from Florida to Kansas. Hallowed ground that we can all visit today and millions of Americans do visit those battlefields every year. Then there's the drama and the tragedy of the war's human cost, at least 620,000 plus an unknown number of civilians who lost their lives in the war.

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And in fact a recent revision, a recent study by a demographic historian based on some fairly complex and sophisticated analysis of census data has raised the estimated death toll of the American Civil War to somewhere in the neighborhood of 750,000.

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Now to help you understand the immensity of that figure, it was two percent or more -- if the higher figure of 750,000 is correct -- two percent or more of the American population in 1860. If two percent of Americans were to be killed in a war fought today, the number of American war dead would be more than 6 million. Or to take another statistic, 23,000 Union and Confederate soldiers were killed, wounded or missing in a single day at the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862. That was nearly four times the number of American casualties on another famous single day in American military history;



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D-Day on June 6, 1944.

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The human cost of the Civil War cast a long shadow forward in our history and continues to horrify us, but also solemnly to impress us 150 years later. Then there are the larger than life near mythical individuals on both sides whose lives and careers continue to fascinate us today. Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, Ulysses S. Grant, Stonewall Jackson, William Tecumseh Sherman, Clara Barton who's affiliated, was associated with New Jersey, and on and on. There's a kind of romance and glory as well as tragedy about these people and their times that's hard to resist. This drama and romance and tragedy help explain why the Civil War remains such a popular subject, but they don't entirely explain why that war still matters to us today 150 years later. To start getting at that, I hope you'll forget, forgive a little autobiography on my part to account for how and why I became interested in the Civil War when I was in graduate school half a century ago, because it was for many of the same reasons why the war still matters us to us today 50 years after I became interested in it. Unlike many of my friends and colleagues in the field, I did not have a youthful fascination with the Civil War. When I arrived in Baltimore in 1958 for graduate study at Johns Hopkins University, I hadn't read anything specifically on the subject apart from a couple of books by Bruce Catton. I had not taken a college course on the Civil War because my small college in Minnesota did not offer such a course. I did have a vague and rather naive interest in the history of the South. In part because having been born in North Dakota and brought up in Minnesota I found the South exotic and mysterious and puzzling. During my senior year in college, nine black students integrated Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas under the protection of the United States Army. I was well enough acquainted with history and current events to know that the constitutional basis for these students' presence at

Central High was the 14th Amendment; one of the most important products of the Civil War and of the Reconstruction period that followed it. In retrospect it, seems likely that this awareness planted the seeds of my interest in the Civil War era and that seed germinated within days of my arrival at Johns Hopkins in September of 1958, when, like other incoming graduate students, I met with a prospective academic advisor. Mine was Professor C. Vann Woodward, the foremost historian of the American South whose book, published in the mid-1950s, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, became almost the Bible of the Civil Rights Movement. My appointment with Woodward had to be postponed for a day because he had been called to Washington to testify before a Congressional committee about potential problems in Little Rock as a second year of integration of that school got underway. Well here was a revelation for a beginning history graduate student; an historian offering counsel on the most important domestic issue of the day. If I hadn't seen the connection between the Civil War and my own times before, I certainly discovered it then. That consciousness grew during my four years in Baltimore. The last two of those years were also the opening phase of the commemoration of the Civil War centennial. But that actually made little impression on me except for the initial events in Charleston, South Carolina in April 1961, when a black delegate from here in New Jersey -- from the New Jersey Centennial Commission was -- denied a room at the convention hotel. Francis, the commemoration hotel, the Francis Marion Hotel. In protest, several northern delegations walked out of the events in sympathy with New Jersey, boycotting them until President John F. Kennedy offered the integrated facilities at the Charleston Naval Base. This offer provoked the Southern delegates to secede from the National Commission [laughter].

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And to hold their own events at the hotel. In other words, we've got deja vu here. Apart from that incident, the Civil Rights Movement eclipsed the centennial observations during the first half of the 1960s.

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Those were the years of sit-ins and freedom rides in the South, of Southern political leaders vowing what they called massive resistance to national laws and court decisions, of federal marshals and troops trying to protect Civil Rights demonstrators, of conflict and violence, of the March on Washington in August 1963 when Martin Luther King stood before the Lincoln Memorial and began his *I Have A Dream* speech with these words, "Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been scarred in the flame of withering injustice." These were also the years of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which derived their constitutional basis from the 14th and 15th amendments adopted a century earlier. The creation of the Freedmen's Bureau by the federal government in 1865 to aid the transition of 4 million slaves to freedom was the first large-scale intervention by the government in the field of social welfare and had its echoes in Lyndon Johnson's Great Society Program of the mid-1960s.

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It was the parallels between the 1960s and the 1860s and the roots of the events of my own time, in the events of exactly a century earlier, that propelled me to become a historian of the Civil War and Reconstruction. I became convinced that I could not fully understand the issues and events of my own time unless I learned about their roots in the Civil War era, slavery and its abolition, the conflict between North and South, the struggle between state sovereignty and the federal government, the role of government in social change and social welfare, resistance to both government and to social welfare. These issues are of course as salient and controversial today as they were in the 1960s, not to mention the 1860s. Today we have an African-American President of the United States, which would not have been possible without the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Which in turn, would not have been possible without the events of the Civil War and Reconstruction in the 1860s. Many of the issues over which the Civil War was fought still resonate today. Matters of race and citizenship, regional rivalries, the relative powers and responsibilities of federal, state and local governments, the first section of the 14th Amendment which among other things, conferred American citizenship on anyone born in the United States, has become controversial today because of growing concern about illegal immigration. As the great Southern novelist William Faulkner once said, "The past is not dead. It is not even past." So let's take a closer look at some of those aspects of the Civil War that are neither dead nor past. At first glance it appeared in 1865 that Northern victory in the war resolved two fundamental, festering issues that had been left unresolved by the Revolution of 1776 that had given birth to the nation. First, whether this fragile republican experiment called the United States would survive as one nation, indivisible. And second, whether the "house divided" would continue to endure half-slave and half-free. Both of these issues had remained open questions until 1865. Many Americans in the early decades of the country's history were concerned about whether the nation would break apart. Many European conservatives predicted its demise. Some Americans said advocated the right of secession and

periodically threatened to invoke it. Eleven states did invoke it in 1861. But since 1865, no state or region has seriously threatened secession. Not even during the decade of massive resistance to desegregation from 1954 to 1964. Now when I say no state or region has seriously threatened secession, I don't mean to deny that some groups and individuals have indeed threatened secession. But how serious they are is often open to question. For example, the current governor of Texas, Rick Perry, who openly asserted his state's right to secede, but then - somewhat inconsistently it seemed to me -- ran for Republican nomination for President of the *United States*.

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By the 1860s, the United States which had been founded on a charter that declared all men are created equal with an equal title to liberty, had become the largest slave- holding country in the world; making a mockery of this country's professions of freedom and equal rights. As Abraham Lincoln put it in a speech in 1854, "The monstrous injustice of slavery deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world. Enables the enemies of free institutions with plausibility to taunt us as hypocrites." But with the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 and the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in 1865, that particular monstrous injustice and hypocrisy existed no more. Yet the legacy of slavery in the form of racial discrimination and prejudice long plagued the United States and of course hasn't entirely disappeared a century-and-a-half later. In the process of preserving the Union of 1776 while purging it of slavery, the Civil War also transformed that country. Before 1861, the words "United States" were a plural noun. The United States have a republican form of government. Since 1865, the "United States" is a singular noun. The United States is -- not are, but the United States is -- a world power. The North went to war to preserve the Union. It ended by creating a nation. This transformation can be traced in Lincoln's most important wartime speeches. His first inaugural address in 1861

contained the word "union" 20 times, but the word "nation" not once. In Lincoln's first message to Congress on July 4, 1861, he used the word "union" 32 times and the word "nation" only three times. In his famous public letter to Horace Greeley of August 22, 1862, concerning slavery in the war Lincoln spoke of the "union" eight times and the "nation" not at all. But in his brief Gettysburg Address -- 272 words long -- 15 months later in November 1863, Lincoln did not refer to the "union" at all but used the word "nation" five times. And in the second inaugural address, looking back over the trauma of the past four years, Lincoln spoke of one side seeking to dissolve the union in 1861 and the other side accepting the challenge of war to preserve the nation. The old, decentralized, antebellum republic -- in which the post office was the only agency of the national government that touched the average citizen -- was transformed by the crucible of war into a centralized polity that taxed people directly and created an Internal Revenue Bureau to collect the taxes, expanded the jurisdiction of federal courts, created a national currency, and a federally chartered banking system, drafted men into the army, and created the Freedmen's Bureau as the first National Agency for social welfare. Eleven of the first 12 amendments to the Constitution had limited the powers of the national government. Most of them contained some form of the words that the federal government "shall not" have certain powers. Most of the next 15 constitutional amendments, starting with the 13th Amendment in 1865, contain the words that the federal government "shall have the power" to enforce these provisions. They radically expanded the power of the federal government, much to the consternation of libertarians and some partisans of the Tea Party Movement, who would like to get rid of some of these amendments. The first three of the post-Civil War constitutional amendments transformed 4 million slaves into citizens and voters within five years; the most rapid and fundamental social transformation in American history. Even if the nation did backslide on part of this commitment for three generations after 1877. From 1789 to 1861 a Southern slave holder had been President of the United States two-thirds of those years. During that period, two-thirds of the Speakers of the House and President Pro Tem[pore] of the Senate had also been Southerners. Twenty of the 35 Supreme Court justices

during that period had been from slave states, which always had a majority on the court before 1861. After the Civil War, a century passed before another resident of a Southern state was elected President -- Lyndon Johnson in 1964. For half a century after the war only one Southerner served as Speaker of the House and none as President Pro Tem[pore] of the Senate. Only five of the 26 Supreme Court justices appointed during that half century were Southerners. The institutions and ideology of a plantation society and a slave system that had dominated half the country before 1861 and sought to dominate more went down with a great crash in 1865 and were replaced by the institutions and ideology of free-labor entrepreneurial capitalism.

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For better or for worse, the flames of the Civil War forged the framework of modern America.

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That last point requires some elaboration. Before 1865 two distinct socio-economic and cultural systems competed for dominance within the body-politic of the United States. Although in retrospect the triumph of free-labor capitalism seems to have been inevitable, that was by no means clear during most of the antebellum generation. Not only did the institutions and ideology of the rural, agricultural, plantation South based on slave labor dominate the United States government during most of that time -- as I just pointed out -- but the territory of the slave states also considerably exceeded that of the free states before 1859. And the Southern drive for further territorial expansion seemed to be much more dynamic and aggressive than that of the North. Most of the slave states seceded from the United States in 1861, not only because they feared the potential threat to the long-term survival of slavery posed by Lincoln's

election, but also because they looked forward to the expansion of a dynamic, independent, slave-holding polity into the new territory by the acquisition of Cuba and perhaps more of Mexico and Central America. If the Confederacy had prevailed in the 1860s, it's quite possible that the emergence of the United States as the world's leading industrial as well as agricultural producer by the end of the 19th century and the world's most powerful nation in the 20th century might never have happened. That it did happen is certainly one of the most important legacies of the Civil War, not only for America, but also for the world. Now of course the explosive growth of industrial capitalism in the post- Civil War generation was not an unmixed blessing. Labor strife and exploitation of workers became endemic. Violence characterized many strikes and efforts by management to break the strikes. Injustices and inequalities in the American economic order during that century-and-a-half after the Civil War have always existed. At the same time, the Civil War had left the South impoverished, its agricultural economy in shambles and the freed slaves in a limbo of second-class citizenship after the failure of Reconstruction in the 1870s to fulfill the promise of civil and political equality embodied in the 14th and 15th amendments to the Constitution. But those amendments remained in the Constitution and the legacy of national unity, a strong national government and a war for freedom inherited from the triumph of the 1860s, was revived again in the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, which finally began the momentous process of making good on the promises of a century earlier. Even though many white Southerners for generations lamented the cause they had lost in 1865

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indeed mourned the world they had lost -- a world they romanticized into a vision of moonlight and magnolias -- white as well as black Southerners are today probably better off because they lost that war than they would have been if they had won it.



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Some of them might even admit as much [laughter]. No single word better expresses what Americans believe their country has stood for from 1776 right down to the present than the word "liberty". The tragic irony of the Civil War is that both sides professed to fight for the heritage of liberty bequeathed to them by the Founding Fathers. North and South alike in 1861 wrapped themselves in the mantle of 1776, but each side interpreted that heritage in opposite ways. And at first, neither side included the slaves in the vision of liberty for which they fought, but the slaves did. And by the time of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in 1863, the North fought not merely for the Liberty bequeathed to them by the founders, but also for -- as Lincoln put it -- a new birth of freedom these. These multiplying and varying meanings of liberty and how they dissolved and reformed in kaleidoscopic patterns during the war provide the central meaning of the war for the American experience. So let's take a look at these various meanings of liberty and how they changed. Southern states invoked the example of their forefathers of 1776 who seceded from the British Empire in the name of liberty to govern themselves. Southern secessionists proclaimed in 1861, "The same spirit of freedom and independence that impelled our fathers to the separation from the British government will impel the liberty-loving people of the South to separation from the United States." In his first message to the Confederate Congress, Jefferson Davis declared that, "From the high and solemn motive of defending and protecting the rights which our fathers bequeathed to us, let us renew such sacrifices as our fathers made to the holy cause of constitutional liberty." One of the liberties for which Southern states, Southern whites contended, Lincoln had said sarcastically back in 1854 was, the liberty to make slaves of other people. In 1861 many Northerners also ridiculed the Confederacy's profession to be fighting for the same ideals of liberty that their forefathers had fought for in 1776. That, said the antislavery poet and journalist William Cullen Bryant, that was a libel upon the whole character and conduct of the men of '76. Ignoring the fact that many of the Founding Fathers had owned slaves, Bryant claimed that the founders had fought the

Revolution to establish the rights of man and principles of universal liberty, while the South in 1861 seceded, not in the interest of general humanity, but of a domestic despotism. Their motto was not liberty but slavery. In 1864,

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Lincoln, as he often did, used a parable to make an important point. In this case a point about the multiple meanings of liberty. He did so in a speech at Baltimore in a slave state that had remained in the Union and was even then engaged in bitter debates about a state constitutional amendment to abolish slavery in Maryland, which by the way, narrowly passed later that year." The world has never had a good definition of the word liberty and the American people just now are much in want of one," Lincoln said on that occasion. "We all declare for liberty. But in using the same word, we do not all mean the same thing. With some the word liberty may mean for each man to do as he pleases with himself and the product of his labor, while with others the same word may mean for some man to do as they please with other men and the product of other men's labor. Here are two not only different but incompatible things called by the same name, liberty." Lincoln went on to illustrate his point with a parable about animals. "The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat," he said, "for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as a liberator. While the wolf denounces him for the same act as the destroyer of liberty. Especially as the sheep is a black one. Plainly the sheep and Wolf are not agreed upon a definition of the word liberty and precisely the same difference prevails today among us human creatures, even in the North and all professing to love liberty. Hence we behold the processes by which thousands are daily passing from under the yoke of bondage hailed by some as the advance of liberty and bewailed by others as the destruction of all liberty." The shepherd in this fable was of course Lincoln himself.

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The black sheep was the slave. The wolf his owner. As Commander in Chief of an army of a million men, Lincoln the shepherd wielded a great deal of power and by this stage of the war that power was being used not only to defeat the Confederacy and preserve the Union, but also to abolish slavery. But traditionally, in American ideology,

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power was the enemy of liberty. Americans had fought their Revolution to get free of the power of the British crown. As James Madison put it, "There is a tendency in all governments to an augmentation of power at the expense of liberty. To curb that tendency framers of the Constitution devised a series of checks and balances that divided power among the three branches of the federal government; between two houses of Congress and between the state and federal governments as," in Madison's words, "an essential precaution in favor of liberty." Even that was not enough. In the first 10 amendments to the Constitution -- the Bill of Rights -- the power of the national government was further limited by all of those "shall nots" in those amendments. Through most of early American history, those who feared the potential of power to undermine liberty remained eternally vigilant against that threat. When the famous reformer of the treatment of mentally ill people, Dorothea Dix, persuaded Congress to pass a bill granting public lands to the states to subsidize mental hospitals in 1854, President Franklin Pierce vetoed it in the name of preserving liberty. "For if Congress could do this," Pierce warned, "it has the same power to provide for the indigent who are not insane and thus the whole field of public beneficence is thrown open to the care and culture of the federal government."

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This sound familiar to you? [Laughter]"This would mean," continued Pierce's veto message, "all sovereignty vested in an absolute, consolidated, central power against which the spirit of liberty has so often and in so many countries struggled in vain. The bill for mental hospitals therefore would be," Pierce went on, "the beginning of the end of our blessed inheritance of representative Liberty." Pro-slavery Southerners like John C. Calhoun, insisted on keeping the national government weak as insurance against a possible antislavery majority in Congress at some future time that might try to abolish or weaken slavery. State sovereignty or states' rights was a bulwark against this potential antislavery majority. The most extreme manifestation of state sovereignty of course was secession in the name of liberty of Southern states and Southern people to reject the federal government and form their own pro-slavery nation. If this version of liberty was to be used to destroy the United States, most northerners concluded during the Civil War, then it was time to take another look at the meaning of liberty. To help us understand this change in attitude toward the meaning of liberty, we can turn to the definitions offered by the famous twentieth century British philosopher, Isaiah Berlin, in an essay titled, Two Concepts of Liberty, the two concepts are negative liberty and positive liberty. The idea of negative liberty is perhaps more familiar to us. It can be defined as the absence of restraint, a freedom from interference by outside authority with individual thought or behavior. Laws requiring automobile passengers to wear seat belts or motorcyclists to wear helmets would be under this definition to prevent them from enjoying the liberty to choose not to wear seat belts or helmets. Negative liberty therefore can be described as freedom "from" and I am sure you can think of other examples. Positive liberty by contrast can be best understood as freedom "to". It's not necessarily incompatible with negative liberty, but it has a different focus or emphasis. Take freedom of the press. Freedom of the press is generally viewed as a negative liberty. Freedom from interference with what a writer writes or a reader reads. But an illiterate person suffers from a denial of positive liberty. He's unable to enjoy the freedom to read and

write whatever he pleases, not because some authority prevents him from doing so, but because he cannot read or write anything. He suffers not the absence of negative liberty -- freedom "from" -- but the absence of a positive liberty -- freedom "to" read and write. The remedy lies not in the removal of restraint, but in the achievement of the capacity to read and write. The Civil War accomplished [sic] an historic shift in American values in the direction of positive liberty. The change from all those "shall nots" in the first 10 amendments to the Constitution to the phrase "Congress shall have the power to enforce this provision", in most of the post-Civil War constitutional amendments is indicative of that shift. Especially the 13th Amendment which liberated 4 million slaves and the 14th and 15th which guaranteed them equal civil and political rights. Abraham Lincoln played a crucial role in this historic change toward positive liberty. Let's return to Lincoln's parable of the shepherd, the wolf and the black sheep. The shepherd drives the wolf from the sheep's throat for which the sheep thanks the shepherd as a liberator, Lincoln said. Here is Lincoln the shepherd using the power of the government and the army to achieve a positive liberty for the sheep. But the wolf was a believer in negative liberty. For him, the Shepherd was, as Lincoln put it, the destroyer of liberty, especially as the sheep was a black one. Positive liberty is an open-ended concept. It has the capacity to expand toward notions of equity, justice, social welfare, equality of opportunity. For how much liberty does a starving person enjoy except the liberty to starve? How much freedom of the press can exist in a society of illiterate people? How free is a motorcyclist who is paralyzed for life by a head injury that might have been prevented if he had worn a helmet? With the new birth of freedom invoked by Lincoln in the Gettysburg Address he helped move the nation toward an expanded and open-ended concept of positive liberty. "On the side of the Union," Lincoln said on another occasion, "on the side of the Union this war is a struggle for maintaining in the world that form and substance of government whose leading object is to elevate the condition of men. To lift artificial weights from all shoulders. To clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all. To afford all an unfettered start and a fair chance in the race of life." The tension between negative and positive liberty did not come to an end with the Civil War. Of

course that tension has remained a constant in American political and social philosophy. In recent years, with the rise of the Tea Party and other small government and antigovernment movements in our politics, there has been a revival of negative liberty. The presidential election this year looks like it might pit the concepts of positive and negative liberty against each other more clearly than in any other recent election. How that will play out in the midst of our sesquicentennial observations of the civil war remains to be seen.

**00:54:22**

In any case, it is another example of why the Civil War still matters today. Well, thanks for your attention and I will try to answer your questions. Now we have some time for questions, so fire away and I'll recognize you and repeat the question. Yes. AUDIENCE MEMBER #1:

[unintelligible]. JOSEPH MCPHERSON:

**00:55:20**

The question addresses the issue of white Southerners during Reconstruction who supported the Reconstruction policy of the Republican Party, called pejoratively in their time "scallywags" and asks whether I could look at the question of these white Southerners who supported Reconstruction, supported the Republican Party during Reconstruction. The usual estimate is that probably about 20 percent, give or take, and it changed over time of white Southerners from the 11 ex-Confederate States supported the Republican Party during Reconstruction.

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Most of them came from the low slave-holding, upcountry regions of those states that had been Unionists during the Civil War or had tended toward Unionism. Places like east Tennessee, western Virginia, which actually became the state of West Virginia, the Ozarks in Arkansas, the Appalachian chain in North Carolina and extending down into Alabama.

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These were regions of the South that had very few slaves where before the Civil War the whites had often been hostile to the plantation areas of those states which seemed to deny them resources and so on. So, they had actually supported the Union cause when they had the chance to do that. And of course in western Virginia they actually created a new state. And that Unionism during the war carried over during the Reconstruction into the support of the party that had preserved the Union, the Republican party. So you're quite right that the white South during the 1860s and 1870s was not solidly Democratic. But as the 1870s wore on, it became in some parts of the South increasingly difficult to support the Republican party which became increasingly identified as a black party and a carpetbagger party. So by 1877 I think that 20 percent of white Southerners who had supported the Republican Party had pretty much eroded down to a few isolated places like western North Carolina, east Tennessee and a few other scattered places elsewhere.

**00:57:58**

Yes? AUDIENCE MEMBER #2: [unintelligible]. JOSEPH MCPHERSON: During the Civil War period do you mean? Well, historically there have been many such invocations (sp). I mean the people who uphold the Second Amendment is one example -- the freedom to own guns -- for example, and the freedom from gun restriction laws. That goes back a long ways and one can come...I mean resistance of certain kinds of taxes. If you go back to the Whiskey Rebellion in the 1790s, which was concentrated in Pennsylvania, that was a resistance to federal taxation and so on. So I think you're right in suggesting that it's not just a South/

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North division. And you're quite right that on the question of the Fugitive Slave Law, it was the North that was, Northern states like Wisconsin and others, Ohio, that were resisting the power of the federal government to reach into the Northern states and return fugitive slaves to their masters and to override Northern personal liberty laws.

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So there are, you're quite right that anybody who doesn't like certain kinds of legislation or policies that affect them in some adverse way is going to use the, is going to resist in the name of liberty and what I'm calling negative liberty. And that's what I mean by the tension between negative and positive liberty has been one of the main themes running through, I think, American political ideology. At least since the Civil War.



**01:01:04**

Yeah. The question concerns east Tennessee and Unionism there and how Unionism there and in other pockets affected the Union war effort. Ironically, east Tennessee, being the most strongly Unionist part of the state of Tennessee --

**01:01:22**

middle Tennessee and especially west Tennessee were strongly Confederate -- but because of the access to west and central Tennessee by navigable rivers -- the Union forces and combined operations of Army and Navy gained control of western and middle Tennessee early in the war. Nashville fell to Union forces in February 1862 and Memphis in June 1862. In both cases it was primarily the Navy that accomplished that while East Tennessee remained under Confederate control, even though it was the most Unionist part of the state, until September of 1863, when Union armies finally penetrated that and occupied both Knoxville and Chattanooga. And then maintained control of the rest of the war. Many Unionists from east Tennessee early in the war escaped to Kentucky which was, which remained in the Union even though there were many Confederate sympathizers there and many Kentuckians escaped to Tennessee to enlist in the Confederate Army. Many east Tennesseans escaped to Kentucky to enlist in the Union Army early in the war. But once east Tennessee was controlled by Union forces from September 1863 onward, it made a major contribution to the continuing Union effort to penetrate more deeply into the South -- into Georgia. And more Union soldiers, there were more Union soldiers from east Tennessee than from any other part of the Confederate South by far.

Substantial...probably 20,000, 30,000 altogether from east Tennessee eventually wound up in the Union Army and they made something of a contribution to eventual Union victory.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #3: [unintelligible] JAMES MCPHERSON: The question concerns they kind of romanticization and glorification of the Confederate caused by many white Southerners over

the years. I think that's the first part of your question. Shelby Foote is a good example of that in the documentary. How has this played out among historians over the past 50 years?

**01:04:29**

Well Civil War historians are...the historical enterprise writing about the Civil War is... I'm going to oversimplify here and overgeneralize, but it is bifurcated into two parts. One are the academic historians, of whom I am one and here at Rutgers, Bill Gillette is one. Lou Major has joined the faculty. John Chambers has written about Civil War as well. The other, and in that fraternity, I would -- and sorority -- I would say that there's not much difference anymore between Northern academic historians of the Civil War era who come from the North and those who come from the South. I think that there's, that they have moved together as a kind of general consensus about the major themes, the major issues, the major interpretive framework of studying the Civil War. The other Civil War historical community are a disparate group of non-academic, non-professional historians. They are journalists. They are lawyers. They are freelance writers. Their focus has often been more on military history; on campaigns and battles and generals than the academic community's focus which has often been more on social and political history. Among the non-academics, I would say that there are still some good ole boys reflecting the Southern point of view. Shelby Foote died a couple of years ago, but he was one I think who did. And there have been some others as well. But they often write about issues that are not controversial in the sense of what the war was about: slavery, nationalism, secession but focus on, you know, was Robert E. Lee wise to attack at Gettysburg and that sort of thing. So, even in that particular dimension of Civil War history, I think there is less now of the Southern perspective versus the Northern perspective than there was when I first started out in this field 50 years ago.

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But that's especially true, I think, in terms of the academic field. Yeah, in the back there.

AUDIENCE MEMBER #4: [unintelligible] JAMES MCPHERSON: The question concerns the controversy in Selma, Alabama over a Nathan Bedford Forrest monument.

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And of course there's been an ongoing controversy in Memphis about the same thing. Forrest who, for a long time was regarded as something of a hero among people of Confederate heritage including Shelby Foote for example, has become an increasingly controversial character because, A) he was a slave trader before the Civil War, B) he was the Commander of the troops who carried out the Fort Pillow Massacre in April of 1864, where probably a couple of hundred black soldiers were just shot down, murdered, after they tried to surrender. And a lot of controversy about whether he tried to stop that or actually fomented it or maybe fomented it and then tried to stop it when it got out of hand. There are several books on the subject. And then after the war [he] was the reputed leader of the Ku Klux Klan. He was a kind of a nasty man [laughter]. There's no question of that, but also a genius as a military cavalry leader. I sympathize with the people who don't like Forrest. And I think I can perfectly understand the controversies about it and the arguments against it. I can, from the standpoint of people of Confederate heritage or perspective or attitude, who find themselves very much on the defensive these days

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I think. Controversies over the Confederate flag for example and such things. This is just, in many ways, this is an extension of the controversy that was at a fever pitch just a few years ago over the Confederate flag in South Carolina and Georgia and in Mississippi.

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And I think it's an indication of the way in which popular culture still fights the Civil War. That's I mean, I could have given a lecture about that I think too -- about why the Civil War still matters to many people today. That's another example of it.

**01:10:03**

Yeah. AUDIENCE MEMBER #5: It's not going away. I was in Conway, South Carolina this past April and I was in a cemetery and there were Confederate flags planted at each grave for each veterans of the Confederacy. So I don't think that controversy is going to go away [inaudible]. There are people who still...Obviously they were brand new. They weren't there from 1890 [laughter]. There were planted like planted three weeks before I was there. Or something. JAMES MCPHERSON: Sure. No, I think you're right. That kind of thing is going to go on for a long time. Well in Serbia aren't they still fighting about a battle from 1389? In New York City, there are and there are riots by Catholic Irish against the Protestant Irish when they march to celebrate the Battle of the Boyne every year. I mean these things these things do go deep and the American Civil War goes deep. AUDIENCE MEMBER #6: Following up on that point. [Inaudible] JAMES MCPHERSON: The question raises an important point, that the popularity of books on the military aspects of the Civil War, on the strategy of campaigns and the tactics of battles, which is a still a very popular part of Civil War writing, maybe the most popular in some

ways, tends to avoid the issues of what the war was about and focuses on how both sides fought bravely or maybe both sides didn't fight so bravely and so on. And it's a way of avoiding the issues and avoiding the controversy about the war and that might be one of the reasons why the war remains so popular rather than my suggestion that it remains popular because the issues are so salient and relevant and germane even today. I think that's right or it has been right up until recently.

## **01:12:56**

Let me just cite one example. About 10 years ago the National Park Service made the decision, under some pressure from Congress, in fact Jesse Jackson Jr. introduced legislation in Congress to require that battlefields, Civil War battlefield parks, national parks, try to put these battles in a broader context of what the war was about i.e. slavery. Jackson talked about going around to several national battlefield parks. [He] didn't see any other black people there. Talked to the Rangers and asked them well, what about slavery? What about black soldiers and so on and so forth and they, to hear him tell about it.

## **01:13:59**

He asked them well why don't you wanted to say more about that in your Visitors' Center, in your film and so on in your interpretive exhibits? And the Ranger said well, he didn't know who Jesse Jackson Jr. was, said well it would take an act of Congress to force us to do that. So he went back and got Congress to pass the bill [laughter]. But he was pushing the Park Service in the direction it had already decided to go or was in the process of deciding to go. And if you go to Gettysburg for example now to the new Visitor Center which opened four years ago and to some other battlefield parks or read the handbook, the Civil War handbook that the National

Park just put out about a year ago, you'll find a sincere and genuine and I think effective effort to put, let's say the Battle of Gettysburg or the firing on Fort Sumter or any other event associated with the Civil War that is memorialized by the existence of a national park,

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to put it into the context of the issues that had brought on the war and the issues that were resolved by the war. Now this was highly controversial, especially at Gettysburg, when it was carried out. But

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it's the new Visitors' Center and its emphasis on slavery. Morgan Freeman is the narrator of the 22-minute film. The park changed the dominant theme of its interpretation of Gettysburg from the high watermark of the Confederacy -- and if those of you who have been to Gettysburg in the past know that that was the great sort of overarching theme at Gettysburg.

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Now that interpretation is a new birth of freedom. So that gives you an idea. And this has been controversial and there are some people who go to that park and say they don't like this emphasis on slavery and so on and so forth, but the exhibit, the Visitors' Center and the exhibits and the film and so on have been enormously popular. The reaction of the public is overwhelmingly positive. There's the negatives, but it's overwhelmingly positive. So I think there is an effort now and I don't know whether we can take the National Park Service as a barometer on this, but there is an effort now to incorporate the military details -- which most

people who go to Gettysburg go to see and just try to understand -- with the broader question of well why were these men there? What were they fighting about? How did this battle fit into a larger narrative? And that, I think has been the dominant theme of some other people who are writing about the battles. They're now trying to say -- if they're writing a book about the Battle of Gettysburg or the Battle of Antietam for example -- because it was a Northern victory at Antietam that gave Lincoln the victory he had been waiting for to issue the Emancipation Proclamation -- that is now a theme at Antietam. So things are changing on that on that score. Yeah. AUDIENCE MEMBER #7: [inaudible] JAMES MCPHERSON: Yeah, the observation is that The Museum of the Confederacy now focuses in its first panel on the role of slavery and the Confederacy and then bringing on secession and the war. The Historical Society Center at Atlanta has a very good exhibit on Civil War soldiers and it also now has moved in that direction too.

**01:18:31**

So there's been some change. Yeah, way back there. AUDIENCE MEMBER #8: [inaudible] JAMES MCPHERSON:

**01:19:02**

New Jersey was in many ways, on the slavery issue --

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and slavery was a key theme in the 1864 election -- the most conservative of the free states. It had kept slavery longer than any other Northern state was the last Northern state to abolish slavery. It had a larger black population in terms of the percentage of its total population than any other free state.

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The Democratic party had been very powerful in New Jersey going all the way back to the 1830s and that party maintained its power,

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I think in New Jersey, remained more potent in New Jersey than it did in most of the free states. So I think that really explains why New Jersey was the only free state not to vote for Lincoln. Not to cast its electoral votes for Lincoln in 1864. But that doesn't mean that that the state was somehow opposed to the Civil War. I think New Jerseyans were just as patriotic and sent as many or as large a percentage of men to the Union Army as other Northern states did. It's just that they probably saw themselves fighting for the Union and not necessarily for the abolition of slavery and their families and voters back home felt that same way. So a lot of Northern voters in 1864 wanted to vote for a Union victory in this war, but not necessarily for the abolition of slavery. Now the Republican party managed to convince many voters in many Northern states that those two things were bound up together. But in New Jersey --because McClellan was the candidate and McClellan was a resident of New Jersey at the time -- McClellan was a war Democrat who said that you know he's all for finishing this war to Northern victory, but he's not necessarily in favor, he wasn't in favor of the 13th Amendment to



the Constitution. And I think that would explain the mindset of a lot of New Jersey voters who voted for McClellan. They were in favor of winning the war, but not necessarily in favor of abolishing slavery. Yeah. AUDIENCE MEMBER #9: [inaudible] JAMES MCPHERSON: Did everybody hear the observation? She's lived in Louisiana and Atlanta as well as now in New Jersey and many Southern whites feel like they're a conquered nation and they don't really identify with the federal government. There's a resentment and so on, although mentioning Katrina, I mean most of the money to deal with the victims of Katrina has come from the federal government. But it wouldn't be the first time when people bite the hand that feeds them. But the ironic thing about that, when you say Southerners don't feel an identity with the federal government or with the United States, but rather see themselves as a conquered nation, is that a higher percentage of Southern whites enlist in the United States armed forces than any other part of the country. So there's clearly a kind of patriotic conviction to the extent that they are people who are overrepresented in the United States Army. AUDIENCE MEMBER #9: [inaudible] JAMES MCPHERSON: Well they're fighting under the American flag. Put it that way [laughter]. Not the Confederate flag. Yeah. AUDIENCE MEMBER #10: [inaudible] JAMES MCPHERSON: Maybe the last question right here, it's six o'clock. So. AUDIENCE MEMBER #11: For the first time, many states allowed their troops to vote in

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the field for that election. A few states still make them come home on leave if they have to vote. New Jersey was one of those states that I believe told our troops they couldn't vote in the field. They had to come home on leave to vote. And there was a feeling of course that, and it ended up being true, that overwhelmingly the soldiers voted for Lincoln. And there must have been that feeling among the Democrats in New Jersey that that might happen. But do you have any insight into that debate that must have gone on in the state? Why they didn't allow New Jersey troops to vote in the field? JAMES MCPHERSON: Yeah.

**01:26:30**

You're absolutely right to suggest it was because they knew they would vote overwhelmingly for Lincoln. New Jersey and Indiana and Illinois all had elected Democratic state legislatures that were still in power in 1864 and those were the three Northern states that did not allow soldier absentee voting because the Democrats knew that they would, that the soldiers would vote overwhelmingly for Lincoln. And they did by 78 percent to 22 percent in the states where they were allowed. So it's quite possible that if New Jersey had in fact allowed soldiers to vote in the field that Lincoln might have carried that state because it was the soldier vote that actually provided Lincoln's majority in two or three closely contested states. Because New Jersey troops couldn't all go home to vote obviously. There was a war going on after all.

**01:27:29**

So their inability to vote in the field, the way the Pennsylvania soldiers could or New York soldiers could or Connecticut soldiers could and so on I think might have made some difference in that and it was because the legislature was nakedly partisan. The reason for it. AUDIENCE MEMBER #11: Like today. JAMES MCPHERSON: Like today, yeah [laughter]. The reason for it like today.

**01:27:52**

Yes. There is another reason for it. Well thanks very much. [Applause]