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# Emancipation Proclamation: The Freedom of All Men in the United States

The President is given a power known as the Ordinance Power. This power is given to him through the Constitution or acts of Congress. It enables the President to issue executive orders, which are rules, or directives that have the effect of law. The President, as Congress as found it necessary, can issue executive orders at his discretion. One executive order that was a critical turning point in American history is known as the Emancipation Proclamation, which was issued on January 1, 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln. The executive order declared “that all persons held as slaves are, and henceforward shall be free.” The proclamation, which was issued during the third year of the horrific Civil War, was true beginning of “America, the land of the free.”

Since the days of colonization, slavery had been a normal, common thing to take place. On April 19, 1775, the ‘Americans’ rebelled against England and fought for 8 years in order to get their freedom, and finally form the United States of America. Although these freedom fighters won the war and obtained their freedom, there was one issue, above all, that remained, and that was the issue of slavery. The Declaration of Independence states, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” As evident, this was not the case for another one hundred years, as slavery continued, especially in the heavily agricultural states.

Eventually, the righteous President Abraham Lincoln rose from the dust and fought against the inhumane slavery, finally using the Emancipation Proclamation to end slavery. This war sparked the revolution of freedom, it sparked the flame which was eager to burst within many of the American citizens - both in the North and the South. Lincoln used the Declaration of Independence as a ground to stand on during the Gettysburg Address, where, in just two minutes, he reiterated the principles of human equality advocated by the Declaration of Independence. Lincoln stated in the Gettysburg Address that the Civil War wasn’t just a war for the Union, but also a war for human equality.

The Emancipation Proclamation affected the United States immensely during the war, and even more so after the war. The original purpose of the Civil War, according to the South, was to preserve slavery; the North, on the other hand, fought to preserve the Union. As soon as the proclamation was declared, the purpose of the war changed for the North, they now fought for the abolition of slavery. This short term effect made the fight more passionate and meaningful; it

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made the Civil War a fight for human equality and freedom. Once the war ended and history went on, more declarations against not only slavery, but also inequality and racism were made until the point in which everyone accepted one another. The Emancipation Proclamation was the foundation, the stepping stone, for freedom and equality.

Economically, politically, and socially, America was changed forever. Over time non-whites and women were able to vote, become part of Congress, the Senate, etc. They were able to get more important jobs, and proper education, allowing them to offer their opinions with regard to the economy. Through their freedom, and complete access to human rights, all could contribute their input on how to better the economy, and release inventions, etc. which would help the development of the economy. Also, since everyone across the United States were now equal, they could communicate and work together, allowing for a more diverse and efficient society. Hate, violence, and negativity were slowly minimalized due to the new found equality, allowing the future generations to grow up in more peaceful, loving times.

The Emancipation Proclamation, without a doubt, was the most significant executive order issued. It defined the United States, as it allowed the US to become the “land of freedom and opportunity,” as the American dream advertises. The executive order was exactly what was needed during that terrible time of war, and even more necessary for today. There is a quote that states:

Democracy extends the sphere of individual freedom, socialism restricts it. Democracy attaches all possible value to each man; socialism makes each man a mere agent, a mere number. Democracy and socialism have nothing in common but one word: equality. But notice the difference: while democracy seeks equality in liberty, socialism seeks equality in restraint and servitude (Alexis de Tocqueville).

This quote by Tocqueville outlines America’s belief in democracy, as well as Lincoln’s belief in equality. If Americans truly strived for democracy and wanted equality, the country would have to be truly free. The Emancipation Proclamation, as well as the Declaration of Independence, strived to bring those points together, they strived for true democracy, true unity, true equality, and true liberty.

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