

*however, and their anger only increased. Exactly a month to the day after writing his letter to Greeley, Lincoln was to issue his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the Battle of Antietam, which, though indecisive, turned back Lee's first invasion of the North. The Greeley letter is a notable statement of the policy that governed Lincoln during the first year and a half of the war.*

*Dear Sir:* I have just read yours of the 19th, addressed to myself through the New York "Tribune." If there be in it any statements or assumptions of fact which I may know to be erroneous, I do not, now and here, controvert them. If there be in it any inferences which I may believe to be falsely drawn, I do not, now and here, argue against them. If there be perceptible in it an impatient and dictatorial tone, I waive it in deference to an old friend whose heart I have always supposed to be right.

As to the policy I "seem to be pursuing," as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt.

I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be "the Union as it was." If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree

with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause, I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views.

I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty; and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men everywhere could be free.

LINCOLN TO GREELEY, AUGUST 22, 1862.

## 25. THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION TAKES FORM

*From the outset, the conduct of the war was based by Lincoln on the principle of saving the Union. Many elements in the North from the beginning, however, demanded the liberation of the slaves. This Lincoln resisted. A large part of the North would not have been willing to support the war if they had thought it was for the purpose of freeing the slaves; and the effect of emancipation on the delicate situation in the border States might have been disastrous. By the middle of 1862, the situation had changed. Lincoln decided on the Emancipation Proclamation. He now felt that it was necessary for the successful prosecution of the war. The artist, Carpenter, who spent several months in the White House in 1864 and had Lincoln's confidence, relates in Lincoln's own words the story of the events leading up to the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation.*

"It had got to be," said he, "midsummer, 1862. Things had gone on from bad to worse, until I felt that we had reached the end of our rope on the plan of operations we had been pursuing; that we had about played our last card, and must change our tactics, or lose the game! I now determined upon the adoption of the emancipation policy; and, with-

out consultation with, or the knowledge of the Cabinet, I prepared the original draft of the proclamation, and, after much anxious thought, called a Cabinet meeting upon the subject. This was the last of July, or the first part of the month of August, 1862." (The exact date he did not remember.) "This Cabinet meeting took place, I think, upon