American Minute with Bill Federer
A Runaway Slave, An Anti-Slavery Party, and the first Republican Primaries

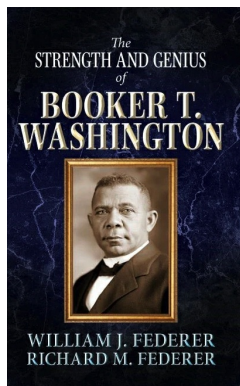*Read American Minute*

By the time of the Civil War, the slave population in the United States had grown to four million.

The two major political parties in America were the Democrats and the Whigs.... *continue reading ...*

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Democrats were pro-choice regarding slavery, wanting to protect the slave owner's choice as to whether or not to own a slave, similar to sharia Islamic countries.

The Whigs were the opposition party, taking their name from the British political party of the same name that opposed the king.

Though many Whigs were against slavery, they tried to be a "big tent party" to keep members from defecting to smaller parties, such as the Free Soil Party or the Know-Nothing Party.

Tensions over slavery grew. An attempt was made to reconcile national differences with "The Missouri Compromise of 1820" and with "The Compromise of 1850."

Slavery was opposed by Christians, most notably Quakers and Methodists, as well as Second Great Awakening preachers.

This is similar to England's anti-slavery movement being championed by Christian leaders John Newton, William Wilberforce, and John Wesley, who wrote in his Thoughts Upon Slavery, 1773:

"... that detestable trade of man-stealing ... I come back to the same point; better no trade, than trade procured by villany. It is far better to have no wealth, than to gain wealth, at the expense of virtue. Better is honest poverty, than all the riches brought by the tears, and sweat, and blood of our fellow-creatures."

American preacher Charles Finney was president of Oberlin College where he graduated the first black woman with a college degree, Mary Jane Patterson.

Finney proclaimed "I had made up my mind on the question of slavery, and was exceedingly anxious to arouse public attention to the subject ... In my prayers and preaching, I so often alluded to slavery, and denounced it, that a considerable excitement

came to exist among the people."

It is worth noting that it was Christians who pushed to end slavery; not sharia Caliphs in Arabia; nor Ottoman Sultans in Turkey; nor Shahs in Persia; nor Hindu Brahman in India; nor Ashanti chieftains in Ghana; nor Aztec Emperors in Mexico; nor Inca Emperors in Peru; nor the thousands of years of Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian Emperors in China.

It was vocal Christian preachers who championed ending slavery.

In 1850, the Democrat-controlled U.S. Congress passed the infamous Fugitive Slave Act, pushed through by Democrat Speaker Howell Cobb and Democrat Senate President William King, and signed by Democrat President Millard Fillmore.

The Fugitive Slave Act mandated that if a runaway slave escaped to the North, the Federal government mandated that citizens help capture him and return him to his Southern slave owner. This put the slavery issue in the face of the anti-slavery North, whereas before they could ignore it as being a Southern problem.

The Fugitive Slave Act imposed severe penalties on those who aided escaped slaves with food or shelter on their trek to Michigan or Canada. It made it a federal crime to interfere with the slave catchers' recovery of runaway slaves.

A person could be criminally liable, fined $1,000, and imprisoned for six months if they failed to report a neighbor suspected of helping slaves.

Some states defied the federal government by passing "personal liberty laws," effectively nullifying it, and other communities insisted on jury trials before an alleged fugitive slave could be taken by federal authorities.

Some juries refused to convict those indicted. Other communities forbade local law enforcement officials from using local jails to hold the accused.

In 1854, a slave named Joshua Glover ran away from his master in St. Louis, Missouri, and fled to Racine, Wisconsin, where he worked at a sawmill. In March of 1854, authorized by the Fugitive Slave Act, police from St. Louis traveled across state lines to Racine.

On March 11, 1854, they bribed an acquaintance of Joshua Glover with $100 to open the cabin door. They stormed in and ambushed Joshua Glover. Taking him by surprise, they hit him with the butt of a gun and St. Louis Police Deputy Marshal John Kearney clubbed him several times in the face.

The bleeding Glover was thrown in the back of a wagon and taken to the Milwaukee jail. The kind jailer treated his wounds. The next day, word of Glover's arrest spread through Racine. The largest crowd ever in the town's history gathered in the square. Over a hundred residents rushed to Milwaukee.

There they joined a crowd, which by evening had grown to 5,000. They grabbed lumber and pickaxes from a nearby construction site and broke through

the jail wall, freeing Glover. He was quickly put in a wagon and whisked out of town.

The Racine Daily Morning Advocate printed March 12, 1854: "Imagine a crowd of four to six thousand persons smashing in the jail, releasing the negro and then running as they could the distance of a mile, and every man in town running too—windows open, handkerchiefs waving."

The Sauk County Standard in Baraboo, Wisconsin, printed the Glover story, Wednesday, March 22, 1854.

After nine stops on the Underground Railroad Joshua Glover made it to the Racine harbor where he was smuggled onto a boat headed across Lake Michigan to Canada.

Racine citizens printed a resolution in the Daily Morning Advocate, March 12, 1854:

"Resolved, that inasmuch as the Senate of the United States has repealed all compromises heretofore adopted by the Congress of the United States, we as citizens of Wisconsin, are justified in declaring, and herby declare, the slave-catching law of 1850 disgraceful and also repealed."

A historical marker in Milwaukee's Cathedral Square Park is titled "The Rescue of Joshua Glover":

"Joshua Glover was a runaway slave who sought freedom in Racine. In 1854, his Missouri owner used the Fugitive Slave Act to apprehend him. This 1850 law permitted slave catchers to cross state

lines to capture escaped slaves.

Glover was taken to Milwaukee and imprisoned ... Word spread about Glover's incarceration and a great crowd gathered around the jail demanding his release. They beat down the jail door and released Joshua Glover. He was eventually escorted to Canada and safety ...

The Glover incident helped galvanize abolitionist sentiment in Wisconsin. This case eventually led the state supreme court to defy the federal government by declaring the Fugitive Slave Act unconstitutional."

A few days after Joshua Glover was freed, the same anti-slavery Wisconsin citizens met on March 20, 1854, in a schoolhouse in Ripon, Wisconsin, to form an anti-slavery party. They named it the Republican Party.

Congress made the situation worse on May 30, 1854. Democrat Senator Stephen A. Douglas pressured Democrat President Franklin Pierce to sign the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which let inhabitants in those territories have the freedom of choice to decide if they wanted to come into the Union as slave states or free states.

It prescribed "dividing the land into two territories, Kansas and Nebraska, and leaving the question of slavery to be decided by the settlers." Instead of slavery diminishing, as many founding fathers had hoped, now it was expanding.

Pro-slavery Democrats flooded into Kansas in an

effort to make it a slave state. The violence and bloody battles that followed gave rise to the name "Bleeding Kansas."

Contrary to the 1619 Project's historical revisionism, slavery was not a black versus white issue, it was a Republican versus Democrat issue. It was not a hardware problem but a software problem. It was not a skin problem but a brain problem.

Anti-slavery activists soon organized the Republican Party in other states, aided by church members who could no longer sit silent. These included Quakers, pietistic Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Scandinavian Lutherans.

Ohio's held the first "Anti-Slavery in Nebraska" Republican Convention, March 22, 1854.

Michigan held the first state-wide Republican convention on July 6, 1854.

Indiana held its first Republican "Peoples' Convention," on July 13, 1854, led by Henry S. Lane.

New York established their state Republican Party in 1855.

The first National Republican Convention met in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on February 22, 1856, calling Americans to: "resist and overthrow the present National Administration (of Democrat President Franklin Pierce) as it is identified with the progress of the slave power to national supremacy."

The first Republican Presidential Nominating Convention was in Philadelphia, June 17-19, 1856, where they selected Senator John C. Frémont of California to be the first ever Republican Presidential Candidate.

The original Republican platform was adopted June 18, 1856, being the first ever political party in history to have abolition of slavery in its official party platform:

"This Convention of Delegates ... are opposed to ... the extension of Slavery into Free Territory ...

With our Republican fathers, we hold it to be a self-evident truth, that all men are endowed with the inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and that the primary object and ulterior design of our Federal Government were to secure these rights to all persons ...

Our Republican fathers ... abolished slavery in all our National (Northwest) Territory ... It becomes our duty to maintain this provision ... against all attempts to violate it for the purpose of establishing Slavery ...

We deny the authority of Congress ... to give legal existence to slavery ... It is both the right and the imperative duty of Congress to prohibit in the Territories those twin relics of barbarism—Polygamy, and Slavery."

Dred Scott was another slave in St, Louis, Missouri, who travelled with his master to the free states of Illinois and Wisconsin, and then back to the slave

state of Missouri.

Since he was not allowed to learn to read, he was unaware that while he was in the free states of Illinois or Wisconsin he could have just walked away from his master.

Some of Dred Scott's abolitionist friends helped him sue for freedom, including Republican Congressman Henry Blow, whose wife started the first kindergarten in the United States.

On March 6, 1857, the Supreme Court, with 7 of the 9 justices being Democrat, issued their infamous Dred Scott decision.

Chief Justice Roger Taney, who had been appointed by Democrat President Jackson, wrote that Dred Scott was not a citizen, but property and belonged to his owner, writing in his decision that slaves were:

"... so far inferior ... that the Negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for their own benefit."

Instead of settling the slavery issue in hopes of averting the Civil War, the Supreme Court precipitated it.

Abraham Lincoln, a Republican, declared in Springfield, Illinois, June 26, 1857:

"Two weeks ago Judge Douglas spoke here on the ... Dred Scott decision ... He finds the Republicans insisting that the Declaration of Independence includes ALL men, black as well as white ... He

boldly denies that it includes Negroes ... I protest against that ..."

Lincoln continued:

"Chief Justice Taney, in his opinion in the Dred Scott case, admits that the language of the Declaration is broad enough to include the whole human family, but he and Judge Douglas argue that the authors of that instrument did not intend to include Negroes ...

I think the authors of that noble instrument intended to include all men ... Dred Scott, his wife and two daughters were all involved in the suit ... Judge Douglas is delighted to have them decided to be slaves ..."

Lincoln added:

"How differently the respective courses of the Democratic and Republican parties ...

Republicans inculcate ... that the Negro is a man; that his bondage is cruelly wrong ... Democrats deny his manhood; deny, or dwarf to insignificance, the wrong of his bondage; so far as possible, crush all sympathy for him, and cultivate and excite hatred and disgust against him."

Prior to the Civil War, America was divided into five categories:

1. Radical Republican North: whose attitude was slavery is wrong--end it now.

2. Moderate Republican North: whose attitude was

slavery is wrong but the country should transition out of it gradually over time so slaves could be prepared for freedom.

3. Money Motivated Voters: who did not care about the value of human life. They were more concerned about financial issues such as wages, jobs, pocketbook, economy, taxes, and tariffs.

4. Moderate Democratic South: whose attitude was slavery is wrong, but it is settled law, the nation should just live with it, just have it be rare and few, and treat your slaves nice.

5. Extreme Southern Democrats: whose attitude was slavery is good and should be expanded into new territories. They wanted Northerners, who were morally opposed to slavery, be forced to participate in it with the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 and the Dred Scott decision of 1857.

Interestingly, these same categories regarding the value of human life are similar how America is divided today:

1. Pro-Life Republicans: whose attitude is abortion is wrong, end it now.

2. Establishment Republicans: whose attitude is to gradually limit abortions.

3. Money Motivated Voters: who did not care about the value of human life. They avoid social issues and vote for candidates who will give them money, welfare benefits, and help their pocketbook--"It's the economy, stupid."

4. Pro-Choice Democrats: whose attitude is that abortion is "settled law" and the nation should live with it, just have it be "safe, legal, and rare."

5. Radical Democrats: whose attitude is that abortion is good and should be expanded world-wide though nationalized healthcare and global U.N. initiatives.

Reagan wrote in "Abortion and the Conscience of the Nation," The Human Life Review, 1983:

"Lincoln recognized that we could not survive as a free land when some men could decide that others were not fit to be free and should be slaves ...

Likewise, we cannot survive as a free nation when some men decide that others are not fit to live and should be abandoned to abortion."

In 1861, Lincoln was elected the first Republican President.

Southern states seceded and formed the Confederacy. The President of the Confederacy was the Democrat Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, who had stated: "African slavery, as it exists in the United States, is a moral, a social, and a political blessing."

Lincoln addressed the Indiana Regiment, March 17, 1865:

"Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally."
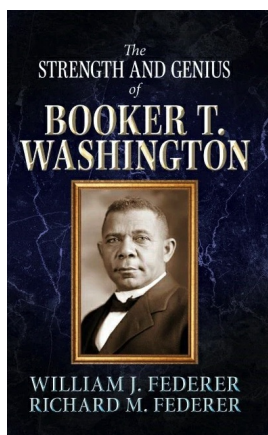
Lincoln stated in his Second Annual Message, December 1, 1862:

"In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free ... We shall nobly save -- or meanly lose -- the last, best hope of earth ... The way is plain ... which if followed the world will forever applaud and God must forever bless."

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