White Paper Report

Report ID: 100891

Application Number: HD5108310

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Institution: University of Richmond

Reporting Period: 9/1/2010-2/29/2012

Report Due: 5/31/2012

Date Submitted: 6/7/2012

Landscapes of the American Past: Visualizing Emancipation

White Paper
Submitted to the
National Endowment for the Humanities
Office of Digital Humanities

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June 2012

The spatial turn in the humanities has coincided with increasingly accessible tools

for cartography and the powerful emergence of desktop GIS computing. *Landscapes*

of the American Past: Visualizing Emancipation is a prototype study in the

possibilities for creating richly interactive, broadly accessible digital projects that

both reflect current scholarly understandings of large, complex processes and

provide tools to interrogate those understandings. The resulting project,

"Visualizing Emancipation," depends upon innovative use of earlier digital

scholarship and digitized texts and offers a compelling model for undergraduate

research in the humanities.

"Visualizing Emancipation" is the first map of the most dramatic social

transformation in American history, the freedom of four million slaves in the Civil

War. In mapping this social transformation, it takes a new perspective on a significant scholarly question: where, when, and under what conditions did slavery fall apart? It brings together three kinds of evidence to answer this question, evidence showing where slavery was protected by the US government and where it was not during the Civil War; showing the approximate locations of U.S. troops during that war; and showing "emancipation events," documented instances where the lives of enslaved men and women were changing, sometimes for good, sometimes for ill, during the war. By exposing the evidence on which it draws, it allows students and the public to access the sources to ask their own questions about emancipation and find out how their own locales and ancestors might have experienced the end of slavery. It allows scholars to ask new questions about where, when, and how enslaved men and women escaped bondage, and what their lives may have looked like when they did so.

Interpretation

Like other maps, "Visualizing Emancipation" is both a tool for interpretation and an image that makes its own point: the end of slavery did not come about in an instant, with the Emancipation Proclamation. It began before shooting started and ended long after the last Confederate armies surrendered. It followed, in W.E.B. DuBois' words, as a "dark human cloud that clung like remorse" on the rear of the Union's swift-marching columns.[1] As we indicated in "Seeing Emancipation: Scale and Freedom in the American South," the first essay to be published in the award-

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[1] W. E. B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1903; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11.

winning *Journal of the Civil War Era*, emancipation could be found in the interaction

between men and women operating at multiple scales of action. It could be found in

the escape of fugitives, in Union and Confederate armies' conscription of enslaved

men to work on fortifications, and in escaped slaves' offers to guide U.S. troops

through southern wilds.[2]

Opportunities for freedom could at times seem randomly distributed, as men and

women participated in mass exodus on some plantations while others nearby were

left enslaved. Yet emancipation proceeded in patterns, not as a chaotic, secular

rapture, in which men and women became free without discernible sequence,

rationale, or order. Enslaved people, legislators, and armies, in fits and starts,

imprinted the end of slavery on the American South.

Patterns

Enslaved men and women found release from their bonds in waves, rising and

falling with the campaign seasons, the fortunes of Union arms and the pitiful

defenses of contraband camps. Unlike the legal extension of freedom, which

gathered momentum through acts, proclamations, and amendments, enslaved men

and women did not experience emancipation as a process building on past success,

pointing toward a future without bondage. As often as liberation was welcomed

with exhilaration, men, women, and children also experienced war and freedom as

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[2] Edward L. Ayers and Scott Nesbit, "Seeing Emancipation: Scale and Freedom in the

dangerous flight and backbreaking labor, marked often by hunger, violence, and distrust of the liberating army.

Enslaved men and women were more likely to find freedom in some places than others. Freedom and Union arms pushed into the Confederacy by water and rail. Enslaved men and women living along the Atlantic seaboard—the coast and Sea Islands of South Carolina, within a day's walk of the North Carolina coast, and along Virginia's Chesapeake Bay—had the greatest and earliest opportunities to find freedom. Enslaved men and women living along the South's major rivers had a greater chance, too, especially those on the plantations of the Mississippi delta, along the Tennessee River in northern Alabama, and along Virginia tidewater's Potomac, Rappahannock, and James Rivers.

Those living or working along the South's 10,000 miles of railroads were also more likely to find freedom.[3] Confederate civilians along the line between Corinth, Mississippi, and Decatur, Alabama, complained to their government at the close of 1862 that in the past year their enslaved workers "had been carried off in very large numbers, declared free, and refused the liberty of returning to their owners."[4] Union officers had "pressed all the negroes in this country" around the Nashville-

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[3] William G. Thomas, *The Iron Way: Railroads, the Civil War, and the Making of Modern America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 27
[4] Civilians, "To the Hon. Secretary of War of the Confederate States of America," Florence, AL, January 6, 1863, *Official Records* (hereafter *OR*) I.20.ii, 442-3, http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/#event/25652.

Decatur line by the end of 1863.[5] Before he followed the rails through Georgia, Gen.

William T. Sherman moved his troops along the Jackson-Meridian line in Mississippi

with a train of refugee families extending as far as the column itself, or in Sherman's

turn of phrase, "10 miles of negroes."[6] Some ran to U.S. lines of their own accord,

others were dragged without their assent. Once under Union protection, men and

women found themselves in a legal state of freedom, yet with immediate constraints

no less coercive than those they experienced under slavery, as they were put

immediately to work cooking, digging, farming, or marching to war.

Emancipation was made of much more than the rush of enslaved people to Union

lines. *Visualizing Emancipation* breaks the actions and experiences of enslaved men

and women into what we have called emancipation event types, each carrying a

pattern distinct from but related to the others. We were particularly interested in

the experiences that marked the end of slavery. Both armies conscripted men and

women into service, pulling them away from their homes and the forms of slavery

they had known before. People of color took part in irregular fighting, raiding

plantations while not enlisted in any military unit. They passed intelligence to the

United States army and served as guides to troops. African Americans also suffered

abuse, were rushed away from oncoming Union soldiers so that their owners might

protect their human property, and were at times re-enslaved once they had escaped

slaveowners' control.

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[5] Granville M. Dodge to Ulysses S. Grant, Pulaski, TN, December 9, 1863, *OR* I.31.iii,
366, http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/#event/26307.
[6] William T. Sherman to H. W. Halleck, Meridian, MS, February 29, 1864, *OR* I.32.ii,
498-499, http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/#event/25636.

Security

The patterns made by a few of these kinds of events suggest how emancipation begins to look differently once mapped in time and space, and broken apart by the different experiences black southerners encountered. Our research into the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion* shows that African Americans were victims of war-related abuse more frequently once black men began fighting for the United States. Accounts of the abuse of men enlisted in the U.S. Colored Troops, including the atrocities at Fort Pillow are well known. Attacks against non-uniformed black southerners also rose after 1862. Occasionally this abuse came at the hands of undisciplined U.S. soldiers, such as those commanded by William Dwight who raped the enslaved women they found at New Iberia, Louisiana four months after the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect.[7] More often abuse came at the hands of Confederates, who killed unarmed men and women at Goodrich's Landing, Mississippi, on Hutchinson's Island, South Carolina, Helena, Arkansas, and a large number of other places dispersed throughout the South. Violence against African Americans composed a greater part of the war effort in the west than the east. Attacking black men and women was a regular part of bushwhackers' attempts to control Missouri, and violence against women and children who worked U.S. owned plantations along the Mississippi were at constant risk of attack by small, marauding units of Confederates.

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[7] William Dwight, Jr. to Richard B. Irwin, Washington, LA, April 27, 1863, *OR* I.15.i, 373, http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/#event/24699.

Freedom was more secure in the eastern theater of war, particularly in Virginia and North Carolina, than those in the West, but more dangerous to achieve. In Virginia, escaping slavery itself was an incredibly dangerous business because of the highly mobile and numerous Confederate units operating throughout the state. The likelihood that an enslaved man or woman would be caught while attempting to get to Union lines was great, even if they were accompanying a U.S. unit. Confederate troops were eager to attack smaller commands that had moved in advance of the main body of U.S. troops. They captured hundreds of escaped slaves after halting Brig. Gens. James Wilson's and August Kautz's raid along the Danville Railroad in June 1864.[8]

Yet once behind Union lines in a refugee camp, fugitives from slavery were relatively safe. Few raiding parties penetrated Union lines to seize black southerners living around Fortress Monroe in Virginia or in New Bern, North Carolina. The tens of thousands of African Americans who left their farms in the tidewater regions of Virginia and North Carolina were secure in their freedom after the Emancipation Proclamation. Refugee camps and U.S. owned plantations along the Mississippi River did not share the natural geographic advantages of the Atlantic seaboard. These farms and villages were often lightly guarded and suffered frequent raids, some of which re-enslaved hundreds of men and women.

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[8] "Reports from Petersburg," Richmond *Daily Dispatch*, July 1, 1864, http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/#event/26053.

Scale

The events we gathered, detailing where and when men and women became free, should be viewed together at multiple scales. From the widest vantage-point, we can discover differences at the level of the region, distinguishing between the likely experience of men and women in the East from those in the West. Examinations of differences at the local level require different vantage points and data with greater specificity. Each emancipation event is encoded with a geographic precision level, which appears as a halo around events. We surround events about which we lack great geographic precision with large halos, warning against misinterpretation. Events about whose location we have very specific knowledge do not receive these marks, and can be used for detailed, local-level analysis.

For example, it is clear that, from the widest vantage point, enslaved men and women ran away in greater numbers when United States army units came near. In many cases, this was because these units visited southern farms and either invited or forced enslaved men and women to leave with them. Our research suggests more complicated dynamics at work as well. When U.S. units led by Maj. Gen. David Hunter entered Augusta County, Virginia, in June 1864, they created new opportunities for enslaved men and women there. Twenty enslaved men and women working at the Central Asylum in Staunton left with the Union troops. Confederates stationed nearby reported the next day that the "Yankees" were

"capturing negroes," and were intent on burning the railroad bridge at the cusp of

the Blue Ridge Mountains.[9]

Not all those who left their owners, however, went with Hunter's troops. Some took

advantage of the disruption created by U.S. forces in the area to leave the area for

their own purposes. Shortly after U.S. troops came through, a man named Jack left

the plantation on which he was held. His owner guessed that the enslaved worker

was headed, not to the Southwest with the Union forces but east, toward his family's

home in Petersburg.[10] The patterns that we see turn out often to have complex

backstories. Enslaved men and women used armies to find freedom and each other.

Evidence

The patterns that emerge from "Visualizing Emancipation" are complex, operating at

multiple scales and revealing the violence that attended freedom and the

connections tying widely disparate actions. Gathering and encoding the evidence

upon which this project rests likewise required attention to patterns and potential

linkages between disparate sources and depended upon robust collections of

digitized sources and the interpretive abilities of undergraduates, given a controlled

research environment.

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[9] Staunton *Republican Vindicator*, July 15, 1864, *Valley of the Shadow*; Francis T.
Nichols to John C. Breckinridge, Lynchburg, Virginia, June 11, 1864, *OR* I.37.i, 757-
758, http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/#event/27879.
[10] Staunton *Republican Vindicator*, July 8, 1864, *Valley of the Shadow*.

Mapping the movement of United States troops required algorithmic manipulation of previously digitized texts. When we began the project, we intended to map the movements of United States armies using the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion* at the level of the army and army group. It quickly became apparent that this task was at once too large and too small, too large because even acquiring this level of detail from the collected reports was far too ambitious and too small because this level of detail would not enable us to capture the movements of smaller units that moved throughout the American South. When it became clear that mapping the units from the *Official Records* was impracticable, we began looking for other ways of finding the places Civil War armies moved. One source, Frederick Dyer's *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, contained this information, though it was published one hundred years ago. Fortunately, we discovered that Dyer's *Compendium* was among the sources that researchers at the Tufts University Perseus Digital Library had recently digitized and deeply marked up according to the Text Encoding Initiative standards. Perseus researchers had tagged Dyer's *Compendium* with structured xml data, indicating the names of regiments, places, and dates mentioned in the text.

Dyer had written his text as a sequential list of actions taken by Union regiments in a highly structured fashion. Because he had structured the text sequentially, we were able to develop relatively straightforward algorithms that associated the places he mentioned with the appropriate dates. We then worked with University of Richmond undergraduates to clean the resulting dataset of obvious errors. The

result is the most robust map to date of Union army movements, a dataset including more than forty thousand individual unit location/date pairs (for more on this dataset, see Appendix I).

"Visualizing Emancipation" depends on the generosity and excellence of an earlier generation of digital humanities projects. We would not have been able to build a map of Union army movements in the limited scope of a Digital Start-Up grant without prior digitization efforts and experiments in automated, deep encoding of texts by the Perseus Digital Library. The emancipation events that form the core of our project's dataset likewise relies on exemplary, freely accessible archival projects in the digital humanities published within the last two decades, particularly the University of Virginia's *Valley of the Shadow*, Cornell University Library's *Making of America*, and the University of Richmond's own *Daily Dispatch* archive. Making use of these sources in order to harvest and encode emancipation events required a variety of methods and enabled us to think purposefully about the role of undergraduates in humanities research.

Finding and encoding emancipation events required much more nuance than we could achieve using algorithms alone. It instead required a recursive, careful weighing of evidence and refinement of our hypotheses about what emancipation looked like in the Civil War. While we knew that finding evidence of men and women becoming free would be a complicated task, we did not anticipate the difficulty we had in judging who was becoming free and who was not during the

war. We quickly decided that we would look for a much more general set of events; we asked students to look for any document in which slavery was changing, or any evidence of African Americans acting (outside their normal course of duty as members of the United States Colored Troops). While giving this broad directive, we asked students to describe what they found. After a few months of describing these emancipation events without a controlled vocabulary, we began refining the ways that we discussed emancipation events, combining some categories with large overlap, eliminating others that seemed too vague. Together with our student-researchers, we decided on nine emancipation event types that described much of what we found in the *Official Records* and other sources. We describe these event types in Appendix II.

Expanding Research Opportunities

While we anticipate that the results of this research will be significant, we believe that the model of undergraduate research we pursued brings just as important ramifications for undergraduate education in the humanities. Humanists have often labored under the assumption that undergraduates are not able to do the kinds of careful work required for effective research in the humanities. Our experience with this project leads us to believe that, given proper controls and guidance, undergraduates can be effective researchers in large-scale humanities projects.

We made two decisions that we believe were essential for coordinating undergraduate researchers. First, we created opportunities for controlled, interpretive decisions that did not rely on large bodies of contextual knowledge. By asking students to describe in a few words the actions they found within the documents, we enabled them to practice historical interpretation on a very modest scale. By recursively moving from the texts they studied to their determinations of emancipation event types, they did historical work manageable for many undergraduate students. Second, we offered students assignments that could yield interpretive insight at multiple scales. Undergraduates could find patterns within their own documents simply by examining a season of the American Civil War in a single place using one source. Their contribution to the larger project had its own coherence as a research agenda, over which they could rightly claim deep knowledge and on which they might write their own interpretations.

Organizing our research as an extensible project, amenable to the contributions of undergraduate researchers, has also enabled us to open the project beyond its initial creators at the University of Richmond, to the public and undergraduates involved in coursework at other institutions. Azavea, a geospatial development firm in Philadelphia, proved to be an excellent partner in developing the project's user interface. Developers at Azavea built a crowdsourcing system for "Visualizing Emancipation," by which registered users of the project from anywhere in the world might submit emancipation events to be approved by scholars at the Digital Scholarship Lab and published on our map. Members of the public have begun

contributing their own emancipation events to the project. They have drawn on sources available online and in archives across the country as they ensure that the places they know intimately are properly represented on a map of the end of slavery.

Since we believe that "Visualizing Emancipation" offers a model for undergraduate research, we have encouraged instructors at other universities, colleges, and advanced undergraduate classes to organize research assignments around the site. We look forward to partnering with classes to upload emancipation events based on local, archival newspaper sources and those held by the Library of Congress as part of its *Chronicling America* newspaper digitization project beginning in Fall 2012. Instructors teaching a wide range of courses, from graduate research seminars to American History survey and Advanced Placement U.S. History courses, have expressed interest in contributing to "Visualizing Emancipation" in this way.

We wholeheartedly encourage efforts such as these that combine face-to-face classroom instruction with digital tools and materials. We have been interested in such challenges for a number of years, starting with the History Engine, which we created at the University of Virginia in 2005 and which is now hosted and directed by the Digital Scholarship Lab. Asynchronous collaborations such as these encourage early on the practices of history that we find most compelling: research in primary sources, the careful weighing of evidence, and the crafting of narratives based on research in primary source materials. By adding to ongoing, large-scale

datasets, these collaborations among strangers bring to light new sources for the public and scholars alike.
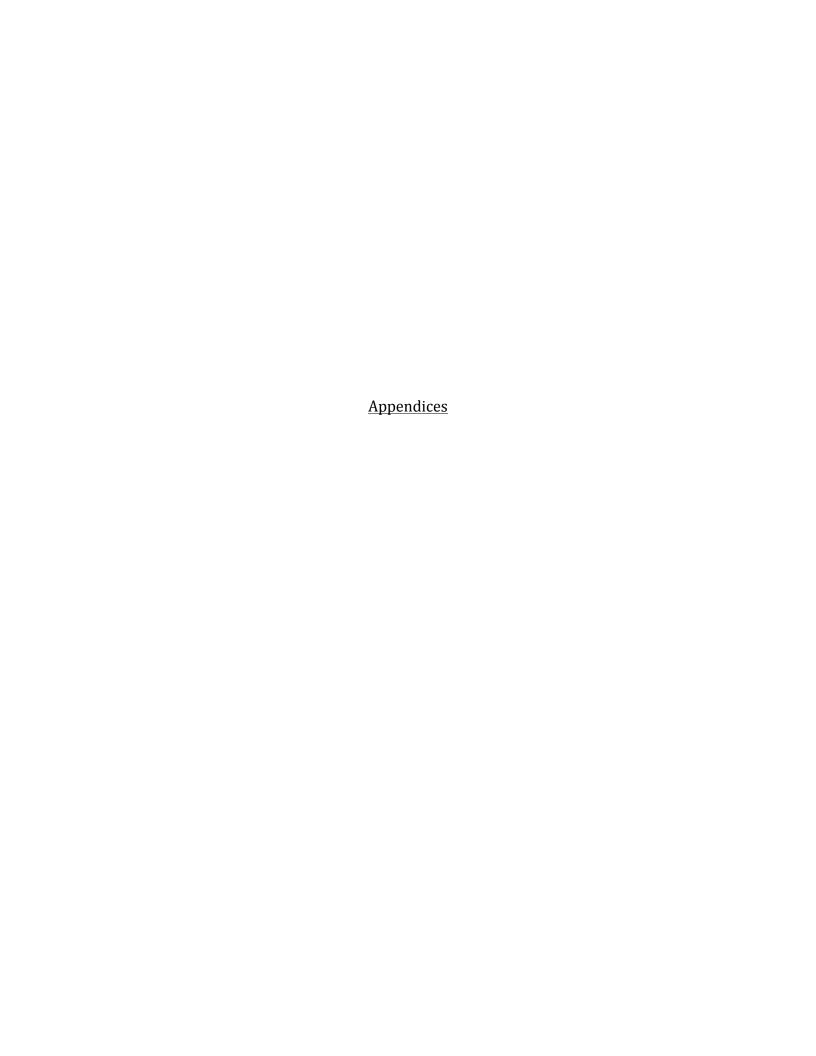
"Visualizing Emancipation" is an ongoing research project--necessarily incomplete, since it invites the contributions of the public and classrooms across the country. We have also begun thinking about the ways in which "Visualizing Emancipation" might be extended beyond public contributions to its dataset. Extending the usefulness of databases and collaborative projects such as "Visualizing Emancipation" remains an opportunity.

As the project grows, we expect to add functionality in two areas. In order to share data more effectively, it is important that we build a tool that will allow for download of the latest version of our data. As we build a data download tool, we will also continue to clean our dataset and refine our metadata descriptions, so that our data will be of use to others. These modifications will make use of our strict division of data from the visualizations that rely on those data, enabling us the flexibility to adapt our project as visualization technology changes in the future.

Extending the usefulness of the project will also involve analyzing the effectiveness of the current user interface. We believe that the simple message to be taken away from "Visualizing Emancipation"—that the end of slavery occurred not simply through fiat in Washington D.C., but through the actions of individuals throughout the American South—is best learned through exploratory interaction with primary

sources. In order to make this exploratory environment accessible to teachers and students, we have begun developing lesson plans and learning modules to facilitate use of the project in classrooms at the middle and high school levels. These will modules will include video tutorials introducing the project, its interface, and a number of narrative threads, pointing out to visitors some of the patterns in our large and growing database.

"Visualizing Emancipation" aims to organize the sources for the study of the end of slavery in time and space for a broad audience. The fundamental patterns of emancipation were geographic, as soldiers and slaves moved about the war-torn South. Their interactions followed recognizable patterns, along rails and riverbeds, up coastlines and at strategic junctions across the South. We provide a platform for thinking about these patterns and for encouraging other scholars, teachers, and students to understand the end of slavery in increasingly sophisticated ways, fulfilling our ongoing goal of creating technically innovative, engaging, scholarly applications for the public good.

Appendices

Appendix I: Union Army Regiment Locations

"Visualizing Emancipation" for the first time plots the locations of regiments in the United States army. These locations should be regarded as approximations subject to a number of caveats.

Our information on the location of U.S. regiments comes from the careful cataloging of Frederick H. Dyer, a former drummer boy in the United States Army who went on to compile the *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (1908). The Compendium supplies a nearly complete list of Union regiments during the Civil War along with detailed descriptions of those units' movements over the course of the war. The Perseus Digital Library at Tufts University digitized this text, creating approximately 3500 files, one for each regiment, encoded according to the standards established by the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI). Scholars at Perseus used algorithms to recognize the places and dates mentioned in Dyer's text.

Scholars at the Digital Scholarship Lab transformed these files into a format that mapping applications, such as Google Earth, can read. We paired the places and dates that Perseus identified in the *Compendium*, then went about checking for errors.

We are aware that errors, unfortunately, remain in this dataset. These arise from a few different sources. Frederick Dyer's Compendium is quite reliable, yet even more detailed and thoroughly researched sources exist for tracking U.S. Civil War military units, particularly the *Supplement to the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*. Some errors were introduced into Dyer's text through digitization, and more errors appeared during the process of identifying place-names; some historical places are not listed in even the best modern gazetteers, while other places remained ambiguous to the computational models because they are shared by multiple locations. The Digital Scholarship Lab introduced further errors in computationally pairing dates and locations. While we have caught hundreds of errors, we know that many others still remain to be corrected. We are currently looking for ways to correct remaining errors in the armies dataset.

Appendix II: Emancipation Event Types

The end of slavery in the United States was a complex process that occurred

simultaneously in courtrooms and plantations, on battlefields and city streets. It

involved a wide variety of human interactions, many of which we represent in this

map as emancipation events. We have identified ten distinct but interrelated kinds

of events:

a. African Americans Helping the Union

Over the course of the Civil War, African Americans helped Union troops in a variety

of ways. This event type tags those places where former slaves aided troops in

informal capacities, usually outside their conscription as laborers on plantations, as

soldiers, or as cooks in military camps. We have especially used this tag to note

where people of color gave information to U.S. forces or served as guides for troops

navigating the southern terrain. They did so throughout the South, unevenly over

the course of the war. Isaac I. Stevens found enslaved men of great help during his

navigation of the Sea Islands. Near Coosaw Island he found Cyas, who, he wrote,

"subsequently proved of great service from the intimate knowledge he possessed of

the country." (*OR* I.6.i, 91-92)

b. Abuse of African Americans

Emancipation caused chaos on the land, and African Americans bore the brunt of this disruption. This category indicates places where whites in either the Union or the Confederacy abused people of color during the war. Documents tagged under this event include incidents of murder, discriminatory pay, beatings, and starvation. Perhaps the most infamous of these were the events at Fort Pillow. Brig. Gen. M. Brayman wrote to his superiors, describing the events there: "Fort Pillow was taken by storm at 3p.m. on the 12th, with six guns. The negroes, about 300, murdered, after surrendering with their officers. Of the 200 white men, 57 have just arrived, and sent to Mound City; about 100 are prisoners, and the rest killed. The whole affair was a scene of murder." (*OR* I.32.ii, 361)

c. Orders or regulations

Emancipation came about not only through the initiative of enslaved people or the actions of individual soldiers, but through official orders, policies, and regulations. Events tagged within this category were policy changes directly affecting the slave regime issued the Union and Confederate governments. Among other events, these include orders declaring enslaved men and women in a territory free, orders requiring commanders to send enslaved men and women to the quartermaster, and Confederate responses to emancipation and the enlistment of black troops. In Louisiana, for example, Confederate authorities struggled with the best approach to

captured African American troops. While they saw the benefits of taking a hard line against black troops by enslaving them, they worried that such a policy could backfire. The Assistant Adjutant General in Confederate Louisiana in 1864, Charles Le D. Elgee, proposed treating US Colored Troop soldiers "with all proper leniency," as prisoners of war in order not to dissuade dissatisfied black troops from deserting the enemy. (*OR* I.34.ii, 953-54).

d. Conscription and Recruitment, Union

These events detail the marshaling of enslaved men and women in the fight against the Confederacy. Included in this category are the drafting of contraband men and women to work in military camps, fortifications, as soldiers, or as servants in various capacities. In some places, this was a systematic effort to draw upon black labor to the greatest possible degree. By July 1863, Gen. Nathaniel Banks reported from Louisiana that "every negro within the present lines of this department, or within reach of them, without distinction of age, sex, or condition, is in the service of the Government, either in the army or in producing food for the army and its dependents." (*OR* I.26.i, 573)

e. Conscription, Confederate

The Confederacy depended upon slave labor on plantations to provide food and the normal operations of its slave society, and near the front lines in direct service to the government. These events describe the ways that Confederates were able to use African American labor for their war effort. It includes orders and reports of

impressment of slaves for use in building fortifications, railroads, and other efforts while bypassing most mentions of African Americans working as on privately held farms. Confederate conscription began early in the war. In late July, 1861, Gen. John B. Magruder ordered that half the male slaves and all free men of color in Gloucester, Middlesex, and Matthews Counties muster "to finish the works around Gloucester Point. Magruder promised recompense to the slaveowners: "fifty cents a day and a ration for each negro man during the time he is at work." (*OR* I.2.i, 1007) Magruder sent agents into the county to enforce the order.

f. Irregular fighting

This event category documents African Americans' involvement in irregular fighting and appropriation of property that accompanied the Civil War, either as willing participants or as victims. Within this category we have collected incidents involving African Americans taking or destroying property claimed by landowners, enslaved men and women killing white civilians or military personnel, and instances where people of color were the objects of irregular fighting or pillaging.

Included among these events are the regrets of Maj. Gen. Samuel R. Curtis in a letter to Colonel N. P. Chipman in Helena, Arkansas the day after the emancipation proclamation went into effect. "I am sorry indeed," Curtis wrote, "to hear of the loss of Mrs. Craig's house by burning." Curtis wrote of their wealthy mutual acquaintance in a mournful tone. Alas, this is war; although it was the negroes who

did it, still, it is the result of war." (Samuel R. Curtis to N. P. Chipman, St. Louis, MO, January 2, 1863, *OR* I.22, 10-11.)

g. Capture/enslavement/re-enslavement of African Americans by Confederates

Confederate troops and civilians made concerted efforts to re-enslave African Americans who had escaped their control during the war and to enslave free blacks who lived in northern states. This effort included counterattacks and ambushes on smaller Union regiments travelling with people of color, raids on contraband camps along the Mississippi and Atlantic seaboard, and dragnets at the edges of Confederate-held territory watching for the escape of African Americans from the southern interior.

During Confederate General Sterling Price's series of attacks in Missouri in the autumn of 1864, for example, a Confederate scouting party ran into a train of wagons manned by a small number of federal troops. Brig. Gen. John Shelby reported the results. They "captured 25, 2 caissons, 20 artillery horses with harness, 100 negroes, and 30 prisoners, besides killing and wounding a large portion of the guard." (*OR* I.41.iii, 978) Confederate attacks on African Americans such as this one appear throughout the U.S. South.

h. Fugitive Slaves/Runaways

Men and women ran from slavery to Union lines before any major battles had been fought. Events tagged as "Fugitive Slaves/Runaways" are instances where enslaved people ran away from their owners or turned up before Union units seeking protection. Many of these events are taken from newspaper advertisements seeking the return of escaped slaves. Typical is John Werth's complaint to the Richmond Daily Dispatch, promising a fifty dollar reward "for the apprehension and delivery to me, in Richmond, of Jack Oseen, a slave, who absconded last week from the fortifications in Chesterfield county. Jack is a black negro, about 19 years of age, slightly built, good teeth, but rather far apart, has a scar on the right hand, and another on the left wrist; was lately purchased from near Goldsborough, N.C." ("Fifty Dollars Reward," Richmond *Daily Dispatch*, April 1, 1863)

i. Capture of African Americans by Union troops

If many African Americans eluded slavery by leaving their plantations without outside intervention, others escaped through the direct intervention of United States troops. In many of these cases, military reports leave some ambiguity to the question whether enslaved men and women had any choice about leaving their property, neighbors, and homes. We have assigned instances of direct military intervention on plantations to this category, "Capture of African Americans by Union Troops." Brig. Gen. Grenville M. Dodge reported the results of his unit's expedition in northern Alabama in just this way: "It has rendered desolate one of the best granaries of the South, preventing them from raising another crop this year, and taking away from them some 1,500 negroes." (*OR* I.23.i, 249).

j. Protecting slave property from Union troops

Slave owners in the border South and Confederate states sought to protect their property in human beings from emancipation in any way they could. For slaveholders in the border South, this often meant pressing soldiers to return the men and women they claimed. In the Confederate states, especially after the Emancipation Proclamation, slave owners transported men, women, and children to places they hoped would be "safe" from Union troops and freedom. Events of this type document the efforts of slave owners to retain their property. Before his assault on Atlanta, Gen. William T. Sherman complained that he was encountering very few African Americans in northern Georgia, "because their owners have driven them" to the southwest corner of the state. "Negroes are as scarce in North Georgia as in Ohio. All are at and below Macon and Columbus, Ga." (*OR* I.39.ii, 132)

These event types together capture most of the events we gathered in Visualizing Emancipation. Because these types of events are interrelated, many events are encoded with multiple types.

Undergraduate researchers at the University of Richmond recorded and coded events from a number of different sources. They searched through letters, diaries, and newspapers—particularly newspapers gathered in the *Valley of the Shadow* project and in the Richmond *Daily Dispatch*. They spent by far the most time on a full canvas of the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*. In most cases, we

depended on the *Making of America* project at Cornell University for access to these texts, though in some cases we supplemented this version with the version digitized and managed by *e-history* at Ohio State University.

Students searched through this corpus for words commonly used during the Civil War to refer to African American men and women in the South: contraband, negro, black, colored, slave. If the document detailed the changing practice of slavery or its dissolution, students recorded it along with a number of pieces of information about that event, particularly its date, location, and an event type.

We were not always certain where an event occurred. Some events we were sure occurred on a certain city block; we had only the vaguest sense of where others happened. Because of this uncertainty, students recorded a precision level for each event. We represent this level of uncertainty as a halo around the events: if the map displays events at a zoom level that implies greater certainty than is warranted, the event is displayed with a halo that grows larger with our uncertainty about that event.

Undergraduate students also recorded the number of African Americans affected by events. Some events describe the actions of only one or two enslaved men or women; others describe the activities of thousands. More often, the sources give only the vaguest suggestion of the numbers of men and women involved: there were "several," "many," "masses." Because these descriptions are so unreliable, we do not

currently represent on the map the number of men or women involved in an event.

Each documented event is represented with a dot of the same size and color.