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# What is commonly misunderstood about the Confederacy?



John Stege

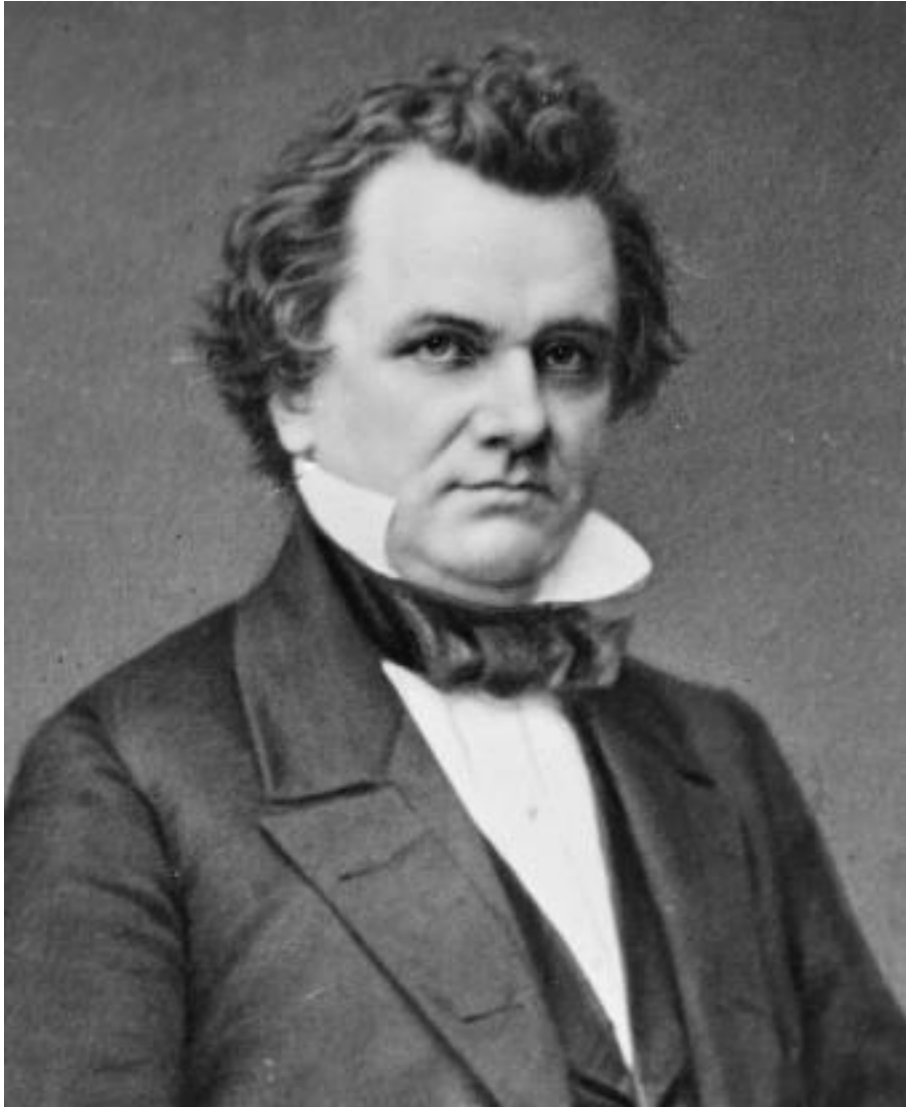
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What is almost never mentioned is that a huge reason that the South rebelled and formed the

Confederacy was so that Northern politicians would be unable to block them from attacking and seizing more land for slavery by invading and conquering Mexico as far south as the Yucatan, Cuba and the Caribbean Islands, and Central America as far south as Nicaragua. It is almost unknown today by most people the extent to which these plans were formulated and carried out by Southern Leaders.



*Sen. Stephen Douglas gave a speech in 1860 that openly declared the South's agenda of foreign conquest for slavery.*

As Lord Charnwood, in his masterful and still surpassed biography of [Abraham Lincoln](#)

eloquently put it; the South had a really aggressive policy that was well on its way to succeeding in making slavery legal in every Northern state and in all the territories.; something that is hardly ever talked about today — stultified as we are by 150 years of Southern apologist historiography of burying the real truth about slavery amid the Myth of the Lost Cause:

“And there is ample evidence that he [Lincoln] understood rightly the policy of the South. It is very doubtful whether any large extension of cultivation by slave labour was economically possible in Kansas or in regions yet further North, but we have seen to what lengths the Southern leaders would go in the attempt to secure even a limited recognition of slavery as lawful in a new State.

They were not succeeding in the business of the Kansas Constitution. But they had a very good prospect of a far more important success. The celebrated dicta of Chief Justice Taney and other judges in the *Dred Scott* case had not amounted

to an actual decision, nor if they had would a single decision have been irreversible. Whether the principle of them should become fixed in American Constitutional law depended (though this could not be openly said) on whether future appointments to the Supreme Court were to be made by a President who shared Taney's views; whether the executive action of the President was governed by the same views; and on the subtle pressure which outside opinion does exercise, and in this case had surely exercised, upon judicial minds.

If the simple principle that the right to a slave is just one form of the ordinary right to property [the “Property Theory of Slavery” of James Calhoun that slaves were not human beings with inalienable rights, but merely a species of property like any other] once became firmly fixed in American jurisprudence it is hard to see how any laws prohibiting slavery could have continued to be held constitutional except in

States which were free States when the Constitution was adopted. . . .

*If attempts to plant slavery further in the West with profit failed, there was Cuba and there was Central America, on which “filibustering raids” [freebooting Southern piratical expeditions] already found favour in the South, and in which the national Government might be led to adopt schemes of conquest or annexation. Moreover, it was avowed by leaders like Jefferson Davis that though it might be impracticable to hope for the repeal of the prohibition of the slave trade, at least some relaxation of its severity ought to be striven for, in the interest of Texas and New Mexico and of possible future Territories where there might be room for more slaves. Such were the views of the leaders whose influence preponderated with the present President and in the main with the present Congress. When Lincoln judged that a determined stand against their policy was required, and further that no such stand could be possible to a party which had*

*embraced Douglas with his principle, "I care not whether slavery be voted up or voted down," there is no doubt now that he was right and the great body of Republican authority opposed to him wrong.* Lord Charnwood; The Abraham Lincoln Book Collection. Abraham Lincoln (Optimized for Kindle) (p. 101). . Kindle Edition Collection. Abraham Lincoln (Optimized for Kindle) (p. 101).

In an attempt to shore up support among Southern Democrats for his 1860 Presidential run (they hated him after his advocacy of the "Freeport Doctrine" (That despite the S.Ct's ruling in *Dred Scott*, [slavery](#)

could be prevented from any territory by the refusal of the people living in that territory to pass laws favorable to slavery) Stephen Douglas explicitly embraced this agenda of attacking and conquering foreign countries to expand the number of slave states of America; totally accepting their views on Slavery expansion:

“Whenever a Territory has a climate, soil, and production making it the interest of the inhabitants to encourage slave property, they will pass a slave code.” Wherever these preclude the possibility of slavery being profitable, they will not permit it. On the sugar plantations of Louisiana it was not a question between the white man and the negro, but between the negro and the crocodile. He would say that between the negro and the crocodile, he took the side of the negro; but between the negro and the white man, he would go for the white man. *The Almighty has drawn the line on this continent, on the one side of which the soil must be cultivated by slave labor; on the other by white labor.* That line did not run on 36° and 30' [the Missouri Compromise line], for 36° and 30' runs over mountains and through valleys. But this slave line, he said, meanders in the sugar-fields and plantations of the South, and the people living in their different localities and in the Territories must determine for themselves whether their "middle bed" is best adapted to slavery or free labor. . .



*Our destiny has forced us to acquire Florida, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, and California. We have now territory enough, but how long will it be enough? One hive is enough for one swarm of bees, but a new swarm comes next year and a new hive is wanted. Men may say we shall never want anything more of Mexico, but the time will come when we will be compelled to take more. Central America is half-way to California and on the direct road. The time will come when our destiny, our [slave] institutions, our safety will compel us to have it. . . "*

*So it is with the island of Cuba.... It is a matter of no consequence whether we want it or not; we are compelled to take it, and we can't help it".* Stephen Douglas, New Orleans Speech, Dec. 6, 1858. Nicolay, John George; Hay, John. Abraham Lincoln, a History — Volume 02 (Kindle Locations 2319-2324).

The South had a long history of trying to seize Cuba, demanding the seizure of more territory in Mexico and sending “filibustering expeditions”

(basically Southern pirates) to Central America to conquer a slave empire there. But, the Northern representatives in Congress relentlessly blocked these efforts to seize more lands for slavery.

Northern Antislavery newspapers denounced the “shame and dishonor” of this ‘Manifesto of the Brigands,’ this “highwayman’s plea” to “grasp, to rob, to murder, to grow rich on the spoils of provinces and toils of slaves.”

Edward A. Pollard, a Virginia journalist and future participant-historian of the Confederacy. “The path of our destiny on this continent,” wrote Pollard, lies in . . . tropical America [where] we may see an empire as powerful and gorgeous as ever was pictured in our dreams of history . . . an empire . . . representing the noble peculiarities of Southern civilization . . . having control of the two dominant staples of the world’s commerce—cotton and sugar. . . . The destiny of Southern civilization is to be consummated in a glory brighter even than that of old.

McPherson, James M.. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford History of the United States Book 6) (pp. 115-116). Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition.

William Walker launched 4 separate expeditions to conquer Cuba, Mexico or parts of Latin America for slavery. He sailed from Mobile on his second expedition to Nicaragua.

“But the navy caught up with him and carried his army back to the states. Southern newspapers erupted in denunciation of this naval “usurpation of power.” Alexander Stephens [later Vice President of the Confederacy] urged the court-martial of the commodore who had detained Walker. Two dozen southern senators and congressmen echoed this sentiment in an extraordinary congressional debate. “A heavier blow was never struck at southern rights,” said a Tennessee representative, “than when Commodore Paulding perpetrated upon our people his high-handed outrage. . . .”

“I want Cuba, and I know that sooner or later we must have it. I want Tamaulipas, Potosi, and one or two other Mexican States; and I want them all for the same reason— for the planting and spreading of slavery.” Senator Albert Gallatin Brown, MS. . . .

“With Cuba and St. Domingo, we could control the productions of the tropics, and, with them, the commerce of the world, and with that, the power of the world.” Indeed, pronounced De Bow’s Review, “we have a destiny to perform, ‘a manifest destiny’ over all Mexico, over South America, over the West Indies. . . .”

At the 1856 commercial convention a delegate from Texas proposed a toast that was drunk with enthusiasm: “To the Southern republic bounded on the north by the Mason and Dixon line and on the south by the Isthmus of Tehuantepec [i.e. all Mexico north of the Yucatan], including Cuba and all other lands on our southern shore. . . .”

“The Gulf of Mexico is a basin of water belonging to the United States. . . Cuba must be ours” in order to “increase the number of slaveholding constituencies.” Sen. Jefferson Davis. *See* McPherson, James M.. *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford History of the United States Book 6) (p. 104). Oxford University Press. Kindle Edition.

Northern politicians however, resisted all these efforts, which would have involved the United States in a series of squalid and dangerous foreign wars; all to ensure the expansion of a gigantic slave empire from the Mason-Dixon Line to Nicaragua.

Thus, the South found itself blocked north and south. Kansas voters refused to endorse a slave constitution for Kansas, the Republican Party emerged and started winning elections on a platform of resisting the expansion of slavery into the U.S. territories, and finally elected Abraham Lincoln in 1860 on an explicit policy of confining slavery to its existing territory and

refusing to accept any further foreign expansion for the U.S that would involve adding more slave states to the Union.

It was clear to Southern politicians that the North would never agree to permit further foreign wars to conquer new slave territory and would not force settlers in the territories to accept slavery when they were bitterly opposed to it (mostly because white workers did not want to be forced to compete with slave wages).

In 1860, the South had a choice of accepting that slavery would be limited and would never be permitted to expand; or rebelling and forming their own slave republic that could continue the conquest and subjugation of Mexico, the Caribbean and Latin America.