The Brooklyn Daily Eagle at War

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Abstract

“The Brooklyn Daily Eagle at War” analyzes how one Democratic newspaper navigated its role in the political minority during the Civil War. The paper studies how the Eagle responded to three different events over the course of the war: the local Brooklyn Tobacco Riot of 1862, the regional New York Draft Riots of 1863, and the national election of 1864. Despite periods of high tension, the newspaper remained a staunch advocate for the rule of law and consistently called for restraint in the face of civil unrest.
Acknowledgments

I must first thank my advisor, Professor Louise Stevenson. Her encouragement and constant belief in me kept this project alive.

I would also like to my parents, Josh and Linda, for keeping me on track with this thesis and in life.
Introduction

While the Union and Confederacy were waging a war of bullets and shells in fields from Pennsylvania to Louisiana, in the North, there was a different yet equally potent form of combat: a battle of words. During the nineteenth century, most newspapers were partisan and could clearly be sorted based on their political or ethnic affiliation. Republican and Democratic papers traded barbs. For instance, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (hereafter the *Eagle*) ran a headline on September 14, 1864, criticizing the conduct of some Republicans, “Republican Slanderers Disgusting the People.” As this headline illustrates, the *Eagle*’s editors’ had no difficulty expressing their displeasure with the Republicans in emphatic terms.

In recent years, historians such as Harold Holzer and Mark Neely have explored political opposition to Lincoln during the Civil War. From their research, it is clear that the Democrats were not a monolithic party during the Civil War. For instance, Holzer, in his book, *Lincoln and the Power of the Press: The War for Public Opinion*, notes that during the New York City Draft Riots, some Democrats encouraged outright civil disobedience and rioting. However, Democratic paper’s like the *Eagle* remained more moderate in their position. Although the *Eagle* condemned the implementation and timing of the draft, it did not defend or encourage the rioters.

Mark Neely points out variation in the Democratic Party and its press. For instance, during the election of 1864, Neely maintains the Democratic Party was divided, so its platform

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2 “Republican Slanderers Disgusting the People,” *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* (hereafter BE), Sept. 14, 1864.
4 See section “New York Draft Riots of 1863.”
became a “buffet tossed together by competing factions.”⁵ The Eagle tried to play off the divisions, but in doing so hinted at the disorganization and split in the party. On September 14, 1864, just a few weeks after the Convention, the Eagle published an article, “A United Democracy--All hail!” alleging that the “the disaffection of the two extreme peace organs in N. York has helped us in this section.”⁶ A day later, the Eagle continued beating the drum of unity, criticizing the Tribune for supporting a nonexistent peace candidate, “Sorry to disappoint the Tribune, but there will be no peace party run.”⁷ The political divisions did not start and end in September 1864 but rather carried through the entire duration of the Eagle’s commentary. On November 4, 1864, four days before the election, the Eagle printed a long address given by John Van Buren, where he mentioned how recently some War Democrats “met in the City of New York, and who are so discontented with our platform and our candidate’s letter of acceptance … they are going to support, in all probability, Abraham Lincoln.”⁸ The Eagle confirmed Neely’s argument that Democrats were divided between Peace and War Democrats, and the divisions emerged in the party’s platform and message. Thus, Neely and Holzer have illuminated that there was not a unified Democratic response during the Civil War.

The Eagle, a major daily paper, offered one Democratic voice among a sea of papers, pamphlets, and journals. During the Civil War, daily newspapers like the Eagle kept the public up to date on the war and general news, supplied political commentary, ran fictional stories, and acted as bulletin boards for announcements of all type. Among northern daily papers, the Eagle was particularly popular and according to its own metrics, by 1856 the paper had the, “largest

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⁵ Neely, 113.
circulation of any evening paper published in the United States.”

Curiously, despite the Eagle’s size, it is rarely cited in histories of the Civil War. Historian of the Eagle, Raymond Schroth makes a similar point, “The Eagle is usually mentioned only in passing in the standard histories of American journalism.”

For instance, Charles Flood, in his 2009 monograph on the election of 1864 fails to mention the Eagle, but does cite the New York Daily News, the New York Examiner and the New York Herald, just to name a few titles. The list of prominent works that overlook the Eagle extends to Doris Kearns Goodwin, Team of Rivals, which cites the Eagle in passing in one instance, while drawing on the New York Herald 21 times. Mark Neely, Jr., in his recent monograph, Lincoln and the Democrats, makes no mention of the Eagle, and yet cites four different New York papers. Such an exercise, repeated across major Civil War authors yields a consistent result: the Eagle is under-utilized during the Civil War relative to its readership.

This paper examines the opposition party in the Civil War through the lens of the Eagle. It studies the Eagle’s reaction to three different events during the Civil War: the local Brooklyn Tobacco Factory Riot of 1862, the regional New York City Draft Riots of 1863, and finally the national presidential election of 1864. What emerges through analyzing the Eagle’s perspective on these three events is a more complex picture of the Democratic Party, one which is consistent with Mark Neely’s recent assessment that during this period, the Democratic Party’s “opposition was loyal—but not at all helpful, upbeat, or cheering.” To contextualize the Eagle’s coverage of

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9 BE, March 3, 1856.
10 Ibid.
12 Doris Kearns Goodwin, Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln, 904.
13 Neely, 209.
14 Neely, 1.
the three events, this paper will first provide an overview of Brooklyn’s economy, racial
composition, and political outlook during the Civil War. Second, this paper will outline the role
of newspapers during the antebellum and Civil War periods with an emphasis on newspapers’
circulation, their growth, and relationship with politics. Third, it will more narrowly explore the
history of the Eagle, the layout and style of the paper, and its readership during the Civil War.
Fourth, this paper will set forth the historical background for each of the three events. From that
background, the paper will analyze the Eagle’s reaction to the three events in order to
demonstrate that the Eagle, despite its stinging attacks against Republican positions, revered the
rule of law as a guiding principle.
Brooklyn During the Civil War

A. Demographics

During the Civil War, Brooklyn was the third largest city in the United States with a population of 266,661.\(^{15}\) The city also was home to a sizeable immigrant community. In fact, 37 percent of the population was born outside of the United States.\(^{16}\) Of those over 104,000 immigrants, approximately half came from Ireland, a quarter from Germany and the rest from a collection of other nations.\(^{17}\) Brooklyn also had a small black population of just under 5,000.\(^{18}\)

The Irish were the largest ethnic group in Brooklyn and quickly became associated with rule-breaking and hard drinking.\(^{19}\) Many Irish settled into manual jobs, including working at the massive Brooklyn Dockyard. While many Irish worked low paying, manual labor jobs, some did find avenues for economic advancement. Politics and journalism were two such paths for ambitious men. For instance, the *Eagle* was operated and founded by Irish immigrants. Henry C. Murphy was one of the founders of the paper and Thomas Kinsella was an editor of the *Eagle* for part of the Civil War.\(^{20}\) Both men went on to become U.S. Congressmen and held other notable public and private positions.\(^{21}\)

The second largest immigrant group were the Germans, of whom many arrived after the failed revolutions of 1848-1849.\(^{22}\) The newcomers fiercely held onto many home comforts, including their beer, language, and music. The new immigrants founded dozens of German

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17 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
19 Livingston, 16.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Livingston, 20.
language newspapers. The papers introduced many Germans to American politics while also allowing them to retain their cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{23} The German-language newspapers were such a potent political tool that in 1859, Abraham Lincoln, then an up and coming politician, bought a German-language paper, the \textit{Illinois Staats-Anzeiger} in order to reach German voters.\textsuperscript{24}

Due to the ethnic mix in Brooklyn, it became known as the “City of Churches.”\textsuperscript{25} Within the “City of Churches” the most notable was Plymouth Church, home to Henry Ward Beecher, an influential Protestant minister and abolitionist.\textsuperscript{26} Beecher was an ardent abolitionist who used his pulpit to attack slavery. For instance, Beecher held a mock slave auction at Plymouth Church to raise money to buy a girl’s freedom.\textsuperscript{27} Plymouth Church and its influential minister were also a potent political force. For example, in 1859 Lincoln was supposed to give a speech at the church. The event was moved to Cooper Union, but Lincoln still went to a service at the church—a nod to Beecher and his congregation’s influence during the period.\textsuperscript{28}

From mid-nineteenth century onward, two developments shifted the population dynamics of Brooklyn. First, in 1855 Brooklyn initiated a horsecar “mass transit system” which moved people from growing suburbs like Bedford to the city center.\textsuperscript{29} Second, between 1860 and 1870, Brooklyn went through an economic transformation, shifting from a predominantly shipping and storage city into a booming industrial hub with heavy industry, manufacturing, chemical

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\textsuperscript{25} Livingston, 11.
\textsuperscript{26} Livingston, 33.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
production, and sugar refineries. Together, the new mass transportation system and the arrival of heavy industry created a push-pull environment. The horsecar system pulled middle-class families from the congested city center to the quieter periphery. At around the same time, the growing industry pushed middle-class households away from the port due to the noise and pollution. Meanwhile, the wealthy professionals and Yankee merchants who lived in Brooklyn Heights and Cobble Hill remained unaffected by the industrial or transportation developments. The population movement scrambled ethnic divides that had existed in the antebellum period while increasing “occupational segregation.” Thus, while Irish and German largely integrated, new economic divides emerged as the middle class moved to the suburbs and the poor remained in the center.

B. Racial Divisions

Brooklyn in 1864 had deep racial divides and prejudices. Dating back to the election of 1860, the immigrant population vociferously opposed Lincoln and his perceived agenda of black suffrage. In that same year, Brooklyn voted down a black suffrage amendment on the New York State ballot by an overwhelming 4-1 margin and Lincoln only won 4 out of 19 wards and 43 percent of the vote in the election. White antipathy towards blacks was widespread in the North during the Civil War. For instance, historian Mark Neely, Jr., in his latest monograph relates that, “racism was an attitude that marked the period indelibly” and that racism, “was nearly universal among white people at the time.” Indeed, historian Craig Wilder notes that in

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30 Schoenbaum, 7
31 Schoenbaum, 10.
32 Ibid.
33 Schoenbaum, 18-19.
34 Craig Steven Wilder, A Covenant with Color, 78.
35 Wilder, 93. Also see James L. Terry, Long Before the Dodgers, 1855-1884, 117.
36 Neely, 2.
Brooklyn specifically, the “subjugation of Africans was in the interest of the Southern Planter, the Northern Merchant, and the laboring Irish.”\textsuperscript{37} In Brooklyn, the wealthy merchants relied on southern agricultural products to fill their warehouses and keep commerce flowing through the port.\textsuperscript{38} While increased demand for wheat from Europe supplemented some of the lost southern trade during the war, the city’s “economic health was tied to the misfortune of black labor.”\textsuperscript{39} The Brooklyn Yankee merchants did not run the southern plantations but were still complicit in the slave economy that supported businesses and jobs across the eastern seaboard.\textsuperscript{40}

Brooklyn during the Civil War was also far from an integrated city. Just as in the segregated South and other northern cities, there was racial separation in churches, schools, railway cars, and other public and private spaces.\textsuperscript{41} Meanwhile, across the bay in New York City, Democrats were organizing themselves into political groups called “White Boys Club” established, in part, on early doctrines of white supremacy.\textsuperscript{42} Also, it did not help that the \textit{Eagle}, Brooklyn’s largest daily paper, often printed speeches and slogans that referred to blacks as “niggers,” rather than “negro,” the respectful term of the day and the preferred label for Republican papers.\textsuperscript{43} For instance, on November 1, 1864, the \textit{Eagle} published a short racist commentary from the supposed banter of two Irish dockworkers, “Are you going to vote for the nigger?”\textsuperscript{44} Or, on September 13, the paper published excerpts from a local Democrat, Mr. Fenn “who made some excellent remarks” that included a complaint about “fighting for the nigger.”\textsuperscript{45}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{37} Wilder, 66.
\bibitem{38} Wilder, 58.
\bibitem{39} Edward Spann, \textit{Gotham at War}, 7. Also see Wilder, 58.
\bibitem{40} Wilder, 58.
\bibitem{41} Livingston, 24.
\bibitem{42} Neely, 107.
\bibitem{43} Neely, 104.
\bibitem{44} “The Scenes in the Streets,” \textit{BE}, Nov. 1, 1864.
\end{thebibliography}
Such racial language commonly appeared in speeches and slogans printed and endorsed in the pages of the *Eagle*.

The warehouses and ports of Brooklyn relied heavily on manual unskilled laborers who often were new immigrants. Beginning in the 1830s, the Irish poured across the Atlantic looking to escape oppressive British rule and to find better economic opportunities. Many of those Irish immigrants took low paying jobs in Brooklyn and other eastern cities. The new immigrants, although white, faced discrimination for their religion, culture, and association with poverty. Irish were often portrayed with apish features in the Republican press and labeled as an inferior race.\(^\text{46}\) Despite their low status, the Irish laboring class generally cared little about blacks, who they viewed as an economic threat.\(^\text{47}\) Such economic fears were further stoked by the Democratic press that played up the rush of black labor supposed to follow from emancipation. For instance, the Democratic *Herald* argued that business owners would turn out or fire “white men and women by the hundreds” only to “fill their places with blacks.”\(^\text{48}\) Thus, blacks faced resentment from unskilled white laborers who were conditioned by their new environment to feel economically threatened by an influx of black labor.

**D. Economy**

Brooklyn was also a manufacturing hub that played a key role during the war. Due to crop failures in Europe, Britain needed to import more grain from America. Brooklyn served as a key port for shipping grain to Britain and, thus, played a role in keeping England from


\(^{47}\) Terry, 117. Also see Wilder, 102.

intervening on behalf of the Confederacy.\textsuperscript{49} Brooklyn’s manufacturing proved invaluable for the war effort. After the Confederacy constructed the \textit{Virginia}, an ironclad ship, the Union relied on the Continental Ironworks in Brooklyn to produce the hull of the \textit{Monitor}--the Union’s answer to the \textit{Virginia}.\textsuperscript{50} The city went on to manufacture dozens more of the ships and ensure that the Union could maintain an effective southern blockade.\textsuperscript{51} Finally, during the Civil War, Brooklyn housed the largest naval installation in the country, which employed thousands of dock workers.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{C. Politics}

For political purposes, the city was divided into wards, the historical equivalent of today’s electoral districts.\textsuperscript{53} Voting records after the election of 1864 reveal that much of the population did not support Lincoln’s administration. According to data from the \textit{Eagle}, McClellan won Kings County in 1864, which contains Brooklyn, by a margin of 5,000 votes.\textsuperscript{54} He only won the entire state by a margin of 6,749 votes.\textsuperscript{55} Despite leaning Democratic, the city was fully committed to the war effort. Thirty to forty thousand men from Brooklyn enlisted during the war and Brooklyn’s Common Council doled out $75,000 to assist families of volunteers.\textsuperscript{56} The city’s war efforts culminated in a Sanitary Fair in 1864 under direction from the War Fund Committee of Brooklyn. The Fair consisted of a “Great Central Bazaar” at the

\textsuperscript{49} Livingston, 68.
\textsuperscript{50} Livingston, 75.
\textsuperscript{51} Livingston, 76.
\textsuperscript{52} Flood, 311. Also see John Strausbaugh, \textit{City of Sedition: The History of New York City During the Civil War}, 185.
\textsuperscript{53} See Image 1.
\textsuperscript{54} “The Probable Result in New York,” \textit{BE}, Nov. 11, 1864.
\textsuperscript{56} Livingston, 87.
Music Hall which featured an “emporium” and sold food and curiosities.\textsuperscript{57} In total, the Fair raised a record-breaking $400,000 which helped to support injured and sick soldiers.\textsuperscript{58}

Summing up various facets of Civil War-era Brooklyn, the city, and its people escape simple categorization. Brooklyn was politically Democratic and its economy relied in part on products that came from slave labor. Furthermore, the Irish, the city's largest ethnic group, harbored a special animus towards the black community. Together, it would seem that Brooklyn should have been a hotbed for anti-war sentiment. Instead, the citizenry of Brooklyn and its largest paper largely remained committed to the war and to the rule of law.

\textsuperscript{57} Livingston, 110.
\textsuperscript{58} Livingston, 111.
Newspapers Before and During the Civil War

A. Distribution and Circulation

Newspapers in the early to mid-nineteenth century were an essential part of daily, commercial, and political life. There were many forms of publications, including illustrated journals, weekly papers, and daily papers. Between 1830 to 1840, the number of daily papers jumped from 65 to 138 nationally and the total circulation nearly doubled to 300,000 per day.\footnote{Henkin, City Reading: Written Words and Public Spaces in Antebellum New York, 105.} To put the national figures in perspective, in New York City daily papers had a ratio of one broadsheet per sixteen people.\footnote{Ibid.} By 1850 that proportion climbed to over one paper for every 4.5 residents and on Sundays that ratio went up to one paper per 2.2 residents.\footnote{Ibid.}

Newspaper production and distribution, along with news gathering, went through a dramatic shift in the nineteenth century. For instance, in the 1840s, larger newspapers began to adopt David Napier’s cylinder press, which increased production tenfold over previous cylinder technology.\footnote{Henkin, 107.} In addition to printing speed, paper production and typesetting became increasingly mechanized.\footnote{Ibid.} The way news was collected evolved along with the production process. Starting in 1844, news began to be transmitted via the telegraph.\footnote{Ibid. Also see, Nerone, 240.} Soon telegraph lines crisscrossed the United States and by 1858 a short-lived cable even extended to continental Europe.\footnote{“The Present Posture of the Atlantic Telegraph Enterprise,” BE, Aug. 16, 1858.} The telegraph meant that instead of waiting days or even weeks for news to spread, information could be relayed in the same day.\footnote{Nerone, 240.} Soon after the advent of the telegraph, a number
of New York papers created the Associated Press (AP) in order to more efficiently collect and
then disseminate the news.67 By the late 1840s, a Brooklyn resident could pick up an afternoon
edition of the Eagle and expect to find news from that morning, hence the birth of the phrase
“news of the day.”68

B. Importance of Daily Newspapers

In the urban sphere, papers were ubiquitous in both print and oral forms. Historian
David Henkin notes that reading the paper was a public act as people would stand on street
corners perusing the daily news.69 Newspapers were part of the urban fabric, even illiterate
people could hear a paper read aloud at “ale-and-oyster houses” or hear breaking news shouted
by swarms of newsboys running through the streets.70 To consider a paper’s reach through its
circulation numbers alone would be deceptive. People who did not regularly receive the paper
still could consume the stories from yelling newsboys, men reading aloud in taverns or from
papers passed around and read many times over. Thus, the news and opinions expressed in the
daily trickled outwards to a larger audience through oral transmission in public spaces.71

Just like on a city street, at the national level, newspaper influence was determined by
more than circulation figures. The United States Post Office had an “exchange” system where
editors used franking privileges to send newspapers free of charge to editors of other papers.72
The editors of the major papers focused on material that could be “clipped” by the regional and
local paper editors. In the antebellum period through the Civil War, Whig (later Republican) and

67 David Henkin, 106.
68 Nerone, 241.
69 Henkin, 110.
70 Ford Risley, Civil War Journalism, xiii. Also see Henkin, 112.
71 Ibid.
72 Nerone, 233. Also see “Newspapers and Journals During the Civil War Era,” The People’s Contest A Civil War Era Digital Archiving Project.
Democratic press outlets funneled their ideas down from the national to the local level via the “exchange” system. While large urban papers were able to reach a national audience through the “exchange,” smaller outlets also benefited. For instance, William Lloyd Garrison’s abolitionist paper, the “Liberator,” had a high exchange list and was frequently quoted in Southern papers as an example of the dangerous abolitionist North. Despite the paper’s name recognition, the “Liberator” had an extremely low subscription list of around 400. In comparison, the New York Herald boasted a circulation of around 77,000. Thus, what should have been a radical and ignored paper, achieved outsize fame. Nerone relates that in the exchange system, “the periphery could direct mainstream discourse.”

Daily newspapers were businesses that needed a constant revenue stream to maintain operations. Revenue came primarily from two sources, advertisements and subscriptions. For advertisers, papers played an important commercial function as a public space for businesses to reach consumers. In many cases, advertisements took up half to three-quarters of a daily paper and included images and an array of different font sizes and patterns. In a standard four-page daily newspaper, the news had to fit into a small space with a crowded font that was further compressed by omnipresent advertisements. In an era before regulations on advertisements, only a blurry line separated commercial promotions and news, as advertisements were not always confined to discernable sections.

C. Role of Advertising

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73 Nerone, 235.
74 Ibid.
75 Risley, xv.
76 Ibid.
77 Risley, xv. Also see Nerone, 239.
78 Nerone, 242.
79 Henkin, 116.
Attracting advertisements was essential for the survival of daily papers. The *Eagle* included a promotion for itself in every edition, “The Paper has the Largest Circulation of any Evening Paper published in the United States. Its value as an Advertising Medium, is therefore apparent.” Papers like the *Eagle* wanted to increase their circulation in order to attract businesses. Companies such as the “Brooklyn Fire Insurance Company” or “New York Kerosene Oil Company” wanted to market products in papers with high circulation figures to reach a larger potential customer base. In a competitive urban market like Brooklyn or Manhattan, being known as the premier Democratic or Republican paper translated into a larger market share, which in turn, generated more advertisement revenue. Thus, partisanship served a political and economic function.

**D. Politics**

Newspapers were at the heart of nineteenth-century politics. Historian Ford Risley relates that “Since the country’s founding, American newspapers had been intensively partisan and aggressive.” Nerone concurs, noting that the “press itself was a necessary political institution” and Henkin follows that as early as “1840 the party press occupied the core of the newspaper system.” Newspapers were the mouthpieces of party leadership and also a politician’s best tool to reach a mass audience. For instance, in 1851 Louis Kossuth came to America for a speaking circuit to raise money and support for Hungarian independence. At various stops, the boisterous crowds often made it impossible for Kossuth to deliver a speech. Instead of giving a drowned out speech, Kossuth would give the press a copy of the address for

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80 *BE*, March 3, 1856.
81 *BE*, Sept. 12, 1861.
82 Nerone, 247.
83 Risley, 56. Also see Nerone, 231-32.
84 Nerone, 234. Also see Henkin 127.
Kossuth was an adept politician and realized that rather than address hundreds or maybe a few thousand people, he could reach a nationwide audience through newspapers. Thus, Kossuth caught the attention of the nation because by the early to mid-nineteenth century, newspapers were a core component of politics in America.

In terms of control, daily newspapers were expensive to operate and consequently remained in the hands of a relatively small number of elites. Henkin argues that such concentration of press power made dailies “actually narrow in perspective” while “unusually broad in public influence and symbolic function.”\(^{86}\) Those few elites who controlled the press represented a professional political class who presented ideas that may not have always squared with popular sentiment.\(^{87}\) Therefore, the opinions expressed in the papers often was more indicative of the editors’ many leanings than a reflection of the readerships’ views. However, the views of the partisan papers also shaped public opinion. For instance, during the New York City Draft Riots in July of 1863, historian Leslie Harris maintains that the Democratic press whipped people into a frenzy over the impending draft.\(^{88}\) Thus, while newspapers were controlled by an educated elite who were not representative of the broader population, the public opinion could still be swayed by the papers.

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85 Henkin, 127.
86 Henkin, 129.
87 Henkin, 234.
A. Founding of the Eagle

In the middle of the political fray was one daily paper from Brooklyn, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, which frequently aired its displeasure with Lincoln, his administration, and the Republican Party. The *Eagle*, first named *The Brooklyn Eagle and Kings County Democrat* was founded in part by two men, Isaac Van Anden and Henry C. Murphy in late 1841. The paper was the brainchild of Isaac Van Anden, a new resident of Brooklyn with a background in small-scale printing. Henry C. Murphy was a rising star within the Democratic Party and a “local machine politician with a strong grip on the city’s politics.” For instance, Hugh McLaughlin was a subordinate of Murphy and a local political “Boss.” In 1855 McLaughlin was put in charge of civilian employment at the Brooklyn Naval Yard. Wilder relates that through the powerful post, McLaughlin “hired and fired his way to the center of local politics.” Following the *Eagle*’s founding, Murphy became the mayor of Brooklyn and then moved on to become a Democratic U.S. Congressman and later the U.S. minister to the Netherlands.

In 1841, Van Anden proposed the idea for a temporary Democratic paper in preparation for the upcoming presidential election to Henry C. Murphy. The local Democrats agreed to fund the venture as a short-term outlet for Democratic propaganda during the election season. When the election ended, Van Anden bought out the paper and transitioned the temporary

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90 Wilder, 65.
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid.
93 Schroth, 31.
94 Schroth, 26.
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venture to a permanent business. Raymond Schroth, a historian of the paper, notes that “The Eagle was from the beginning a party paper” with a “frankly partisan tone.” Over time, Van Anden leveraged his control of the paper and became a leading Democratic figure in the city. The “partisan tone” driven by Van Anden remained a fundamental part of the Eagle, especially during the heated election season in 1864.

In terms of size and importance, the Eagle followed the same trajectory as the city that housed its presses. Brooklyn grew from 35,000 people in 1841 to 266,674 in 1860, making it the third largest city in America after New York and Philadelphia. In that time, the Eagle grew from a local organ of the Democratic press to a national force. In 1851, the Eagle installed steam power presses and shortened the name of the paper, moving away from the original wordy title to the punchier, The Brooklyn Daily Eagle. Brooklyn, always in competition with New York, finally had a paper to rival the Manhattan giants. By the time of the Civil War, the Eagle became the “most widely read afternoon newspaper in America.”

During the war, the Eagle went through a number of crises. In August 1861, Postmaster Blair suspended mailing privileges for the Eagle, and four other Democratic newspapers in the New York region on charges of encouraging the rebels. Under the pressure of suspended national circulation, the editor of the Eagle, Henry McCloskey, resigned and Thomas Kinsella took over the reins. Despite a change in editor, the Eagle could not avoid confrontation with

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95 Schroth, 29.
96 Schroth, 26, 34.
97 Schroth, 50.
98 Schroth, 19, 60.
99 Schroth, 59.
100 Schroth, 3.
101 Holzer, 345.
102 Holzer, 352.
the administration. In May of 1864, the New York World and the Journal of Commerce ran a forged presidential proclamation that called for 400,000 more men and for a day of “fasting, humiliation and prayer.” With the war effort at a low point and a presidential election on the horizon, Lincoln issued his only direct shut down of the press in the Civil War and personally signed the order to close the New York World and the Journal of Commerce. Two men, Francis Mallison and Joseph Howard, Jr., both from the Brooklyn Daily Eagle, were responsible for the forged proclamation. Mallison was hoping to generate unrest in the market and turn a profit on gold that he recently had purchased, and Joseph Howard, Jr., was a known prankster and instigator. The forgery landed both men in the prison at Fort Hamilton. Despite the flashpoints with the Republican administration, the Eagle survived the war and continued publishing well into the twentieth century.

B. Layout

Newspapers of the mid-nineteenth-century were far different from the comprehensive papers of today. For one, the Eagle was four pages in length with much of that space devoted to advertisements, notices for meeting times, and court reports. The first page contained mostly advertisements for every sort of commercial good, along with court notices, meeting notices and the occasional article or story pertaining to local, national or even international topics. The second page featured the bulk of the political articles as well as printed speeches and letters. The third page was usually dedicated to continued sections of political news, updates about the war effort, and more space for advertisements. The fourth page invariably had a fictional story

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104 Holzer, 491.
105 Holzer, 494. Also see, Louis Morris Starr, Bohemian Brigade: Civil War Newsmen in Action, 315.
106 Starr, 315.
107 Holzer, 494-95.
running from day to day and even week to week in the far left column and more advertisements.

The *Eagle* did not contain an editorial section as one would see in a modern newspaper. Instead, an article would begin with a heading, such as, “The Valor of our Armies and the Imbecility of the Cabinet,” and then weave together opinions with current events to form a story. The language was also more direct and polarizing compared to a modern journalistic tone. For instance, a prominent article from September 1864, titled, “Lincoln’s Interference with McClellan–Keep the Facts before the People” argued that “the campaign ended in disaster through the interference of Mr. Lincoln.” Such subjective reasoning was commonplace as there was little separation between editorials and articles.

C. Political Outlook

The *Eagle* reported on nearly every local political event and speech. Despite its self-proclaimed fairness, “The Eagle gives both sides of the issue, side to side,” the paper explicitly endorsed McClellan and his campaign slogan, “The Union the one condition of peace--we ask no more” while vehemently denouncing Lincoln and his “shoddy party.” The overt bias in favor of the Democratic Party and consequent demonization of the Republicans took two forms. First, the *Eagle* expressed explicit support for the Democratic Party through printed speeches and articles. Second, the paper displayed its antipathy for the Republicans by framing political speeches and meetings in a partisan fashion.

The first form was overt and thus simple to identify. For instance, pithy snippets, “A Somber Motto: ‘Vote for Lincoln, and vote yourself a coffin’” or inflammatory article headings

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“Intimidating Women and Children” showed the *Eagle’s* pro-Democratic/anti-Republican position. The second form was less glaring, but still effectively framed politics in a pro-Democratic light. Though the *Eagle* would often print speeches from Republican meetings, the editorial commentary of the meeting and the speeches would invariably be negative. For instance, the *Eagle* would diminish the Republican meetings by pointing out the crowds of women, “the hall was about three parts full, a large proportion being ladies.” Or, similarly, note the collection of blacks in the crowds, “several panting and perspiring negroes, who were in the crowd.” For further effect, the *Eagle* would compare attendance of Republican and Democrat meetings, commenting in an article on the Republican turnout, “A Slim Show” how the event had one-fourth of the crowd as an earlier Democrat meeting despite pulling from more wards. In comparing relative audiences, the paper described the Republican crowds as being full of “women and boys” versus the Democrat gatherings of “Men who know their rights, and knowing dare maintain them.” Or, in socioeconomic terms, the Democrat meeting was packed with working men after a day of “toil” as opposed to the “opera”-going Republican attendees.

Beyond the nature of the crowds, the *Eagle* also framed the content of the meetings. For example, the paper noted that while a Republican banner at a rally, “Proclaim[s] liberty throughout all the land and unto all the inhabitants thereof,” the *Eagle* added its own commentary, “It recalled the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, suppression of newspapers, gagging of free speech and the arbitrary restriction of the liberty of the citizen.”

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112 “Republican Meeting in the 11th Ward…,” *BE*, Sept. 29, 1864.
116 Ibid.
contextualizing the Republican banner, turned the positive message of “liberty” into a hollow reminder of Republican infringements of Constitutional rights. In contrast to the negative set up for Republicans, the paper would introduce Democrats in glowing terms. For instance, the *Eagle* framed the speech of a Democrat in a positive light, “This gentleman in a brief but forcible address candidly reviewed the issues of lasting peace under McClellan…” Words like “forcible” and “candidly” signaled the paper’s position on the political spectrum. In framing events and speeches, the *Eagle* was able to convey its political message in more nuanced strokes, outside of the discussion in featured articles.

D. Readership

There are some clues to establishing who read the *Eagle*. The first indication is the price. At the start of the Civil War an edition of the *Eagle* cost one cent and by the end, the cost increased 300 percent to three cents. For reference, the *Herald*, the paper with the largest circulation in the country, went from two cents at the start of the war to five cents at the end, an increase of 250 percent. A day laborer in 1860 in New York could expect to make about one dollar and two cents per day, so a daily newspaper at the start of the war would have cost around one percent of a worker’s income. The low price, however, does not reveal what classes were primarily consuming the paper but instead opens the possibility that the *Eagle* was accessible to a large swath of Democratic readers. In terms of reach, the *Eagle* proudly proclaimed that it had “the largest circulation of any Evening paper published in the United States,” a further indicator that the *Eagle* appealed to more than a narrow band of the population.

119 *BE*, April 12, 1861; *BE*, April 9, 1865.
121 “Statistics of the United States, (including Mortality, Property, &c.,) in 1860: Comp. from the Original Returns and Being the Final Exhibit of the Eighth … ,” HathiTrust.
Beyond price and distribution, the *Eagle*’s advertisements suggest the readership extended to a middle- to an upper-middle-class population. Looking at advertisements from August 9, 1864, the solicitations cover a wide range of products, from “Handsome Furniture” to “Life Syrup, Composed of Iodine Potassium.”122 The following day, the advertisements featured the consumer tastes of the day, including “Paris Made Corsets,” “French Fluting” and “French and American Clocks.”123 Based on the advertisements, it is probable that the *Eagle*’s readership had disposable income for non-essential goods. A middle-class readership would also be in keeping with the makeup of Brooklyn during the Civil War. Based on Schoenebaum’s analysis of census records, Brooklyn had a largely middle-class population with pockets of wealthy merchants and poor immigrants.124 The *Eagle* was the largest paper in the city, so it makes sense that the paper would appeal to the city’s largest socioeconomic class.

122 *BE*, Aug. 9, 1864.
123 *BE*, Aug. 10, 1864.
124 Schoenebaum, 4.
The Brooklyn Tobacco Factory Riot of 1862

A. Background--The Brooklyn Tobacco Factory Riot of 1862

Brooklyn’s black community dated back to the Colonial period, but still only accounted for less than two percent of the city’s population. Despite the black community’s small size in Brooklyn, it faced a great deal of racism and discrimination. For instance, in August 1862 there were two incidents of blatant racism. At the beginning of the month, a black doctor named Dr. Ray was denied admission to the Kings County Medical Society due to his skin color. It was sufficiently notable an issue to make it into the pages of the Eagle, “they [the Society] do not want to associate with him.” A few days later, a more violent event arose. One night, a couple of black men, employed by a nearby rosin factory, went to “Grady’s liquor store” after work and got into an altercation with some white men who demanded that the black men move out of their way. The fight was quickly broken up, but word of the incident spread and wild rumors started to circulate that black workers had insulted a white woman.

What started as a liquor store encounter gone awry turned into a full-blown riot. Two adjacent cigar factories on Sedgwick Street, a block from the liquor store, one owned by a Mr. Lorillard and the other by a Mr. Watson heard that they were going to be attacked by angry white laborers. Mr. Lorillard’s factory sent home its black workers to avoid conflict, but Mr. Watson’s factory soldiered on with work for the day by refusing to send its black workers home. When the white foremen went home, a drunken mob of 400 largely Irish and German workers stormed the

125 Livingston, 23.
126 Livingston, 24.
128 Ibid.
129 Ibid.
factory yelling, “kill the damn naygurs.” Despite police intervention, the mob was still able to break into the factory and attempted to burn the building down with the black workers barricaded on the second floor. A local Irish rebel rouser, Patrick Keenan, was apparently one of the mob ringleaders and the police arrested him along with a number of other men.

The next morning, on Tuesday, August 5, the accused appeared in court and were defended by ex-Judge Morris, a prominent local Democrat and a man frequently mentioned in the *Eagle*. From the seven names of the rioters mentioned in the *Eagle*, based on surnames it is logical to conclude that there was a large Irish showing as three of the seven are common Irish surnames. In all, from “The Anti-Negro Riots” there were some injuries and damage to property, but no deaths.

**B. The *Eagle’s* Reporting of The Brooklyn Tobacco Factory Riot**

The day after the attack, the *Eagle* was quick to condemn the violence, by calling the incident, “one of the most disgraceful riots, which has ever happened in this city.” The *Eagle* also took pains to accurately record the events preceding the riot. The paper reported that angry whites had started rumors about, “white girls [who] had been insulted by the negroes,” but the *Eagle* concluded that, “there was no foundation for such stories.” The paper also stressed the need to adhere to civil authority, “the duty of the white man is to combat, patiently, persistently, legally the bad acts of bad men” The operative word in the phrase is “legally” as the *Eagle* was no friend to mob rule and acting outside of the law. The *Eagle* reiterated the importance of

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130 Spann, 127.
131 "The Arraignment of the Parties--They are Held to Bail,” *BE*, Aug. 5, 1862.
133 Ibid.
following the law, noting that “the remedy we seek is to be had through the ballot box.”

Despite the *Eagle’s* clear condemnation of the violence, the paper still made excuses for the violent destruction of property. First, the *Eagle* rationalized the actions of the first police officers who responded to the scene and initially failed to quell the violence. The paper stated that the police, “waivered yesterday for the first time” because beneath their uniform and under the workers’ clothes, “the same blood runs.” Instead of condemning the officers’ initial failure to respond, the paper sympathized with the policemen who acted out of kinship with their fellow Irishmen over their responsibility to keep order. The *Eagle* further acted as an apologist for law enforcement’s failures, maintaining that “it is not within the power of the law-maker to place negroes on terms of equality with white men” as “the never-varying edict of God has set a barrier between them [the races].” In the paper’s view, whites and blacks, as decreed by God, were not equal and to advocate for equality amounted to blasphemy. Operating under the logic that the whites were the “superior race” it would, therefore, be to the detriment of blacks “to be saved from attentions of his pretending friends.” In a paternalistic twist, the *Eagle* claimed that the “pretending friends” of blacks were Republicans who, in trying to elevate the “colored man,” were actually placing him “in immediate antagonism” with whites. Although the *Eagle* forcefully condemned the violent and illegal acts of the rioting men, the paper still made excuses for some of the actors involved and contextualized the violent episode in the midst of a larger political fight over the status of blacks in the United States.

Part of the *Eagle’s* race argument revolved around the view that blacks were inferior and

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135 Ibid.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid.
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needed to be taken care of as women or children were. For instance, *Eagle* reporters harped on the helpless, “unfortunate negro” and asserted that “there is no manhood shown in the attack… of a few defenseless negroes.”\textsuperscript{140} The words “unfortunate” and “manhood” connote a vulnerable population that needs protection. To the white male writers of the *Eagle*, blacks—like women and children—were defenseless and therefore it behooved white men to uphold “a higher standard of manhood than the negro.”\textsuperscript{141}

The *Eagle* made sure to touch on one of the fears of white unskilled workers in Brooklyn: free black labor. For instance, in an article from August 5, the *Eagle* called attention to cheap black labor, “There is infinitely less excuse for the riot here than for those which have taken place in the cities of the border-free States. In that section there has been an influx of negroes, and a direct diminution of the fruits of the white laborer. The recent troubles have not added a single negro to the population of Brooklyn.”\textsuperscript{142} The *Eagle* raised the issue of black labor, but to its credit, the paper did not use jobs as an excuse for the violence. However, the paper’s raising the issue indicates that competition for unskilled jobs was a driving undercurrent to the violent episode.

Despite the *Eagle*’s convictions, blacks in Brooklyn during the Civil War were far from helpless and did much to advance their own political and social causes. For instance, the free black community had its own churches, societies, and baseball teams.\textsuperscript{143} One such organization, the “Colored Political Association of the City of Brooklyn and Kings County” held regular meetings and lobbied on behalf of the community.\textsuperscript{144} Regardless of black agency in Brooklyn

\textsuperscript{140} “The Anti-Negro Riots,” Aug. 5, 1862.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{143} Wilder, 74. Also see, Terry, 117.
\textsuperscript{144} Wilder, 77.
during the Civil War, the *Eagle* still regarded the community as helpless and voiceless actors.

Without looking at other papers in the Brooklyn-New York region, it is impossible to discern where the *Eagle*’s commentary fits on the political spectrum. In historian Edward Spann’s monograph, *Gotham at War*, he holds up *The New York Herald* as representative of the Democratic press reaction to the riot. The *Herald* was a Manhattan-based paper owned by James Gordon Bennett Sr., a British Catholic immigrant.\(^\text{145}\) During the Civil War, the *Herald* had the highest circulation in the North of any daily paper.\(^\text{146}\) The paper was also virulently racist and prone to name calling. For instance, the *Herald* cemented such a legacy by coining the term “Niggerhead.”\(^\text{147}\)

In its coverage of the Tobacco Riot, the *Herald* blamed the violence on other press outlets and factory owners, but not on the laborers who attempted to burn the factory.\(^\text{148}\) In an August 7 article, “The Negro Riots And Their Cause” the *Herald* found the “Cause” to rest with “abolition papers” and “capitalists and manufacturers” who “puff Sambo up with absurd ideas of his importance.”\(^\text{149}\) Unlike the *Eagle*, the *Herald* did not scrutinize claims that blacks were insulting white women, nor did the paper condemn the violence in Brooklyn or criticize the rioters. Instead, the *Herald* accused abolitionists of inflating the station of blacks “with silly notions of equality” to the point where blacks were pushing “white women off the sidewalks” and “insult[ing] them.”\(^\text{150}\) The paper did not admonish the white, largely Irish mob of men who attacked the factory but rather characterized “the Irish, as a class” as “industrious, hard-working,

\(^{146}\) Risley, xv.
\(^{147}\) Neely, 105.
\(^{148}\) Ibid.
\(^{150}\) Ibid.

32
quiet and loyal to the government.”

The Herald also played up economic fears of free black labor crowding out whites and replacing them.

Compared to the Eagle, the Herald’s commentary made similar points but did so in a more partisan and less factual manner. The Herald’s partisanship was on display when the paper did not criticize the violent attack on black workers or the senseless destruction of property. Instead, the paper laid the “real cause of the disturbances” on abolitionists. The Eagle made veiled attacks on Republicans and their ominous plans “of the highest authority” to “bring the negro into direct competition” with whites. However, unlike the Herald, the Eagle did not find such outside forces to be the “real cause” of the violence and maintained that “there is no excuse, however, for the brutal outrage of yesterday.”

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151 Ibid.
153 Ibid.
The New York City Draft Riots of 1863

The New York City Draft Riots came on the heels of the Union’s victory at Gettysburg in July 1863. In March 1863, Congress passed the federal Conscription Act in order to bolster the war effort. With 100,000 men deserted, and three-year enlistment terms coming to a close, the Union was in desperate need of reinforcements. The Conscription Act, the first use of a draft at the federal level, granted the Provost-Marshal Bureau broad authority to orchestrate the draft and thereby circumvent state and local Democratic officials hostile to it. The draft worked on a lottery system where men between the ages of 20 to 35 and then bachelors 35 to 45 years old were chosen at random from each congressional district, which was assigned a number of men that it was required to send to the army. If chosen, the man had to enlist, or pay $300, or find a substitute to serve in his stead. The exemption amount of $300 was equal to or made up a large percentage of what a day laborer could expect to earn per annum. The $300 fee set a price ceiling for substitutes, but even so, the fee still remained out of reach for many poor laborers. Despite the Union’s glaring need for troops, many Democratic newspapers attacked the draft for being elitist and unconstitutional. The same papers also stoked race tensions by pointing out that blacks were not included in the draft and that, upon conclusion of the war, there would be an influx of freed slaves to the North. Furthermore, many Democrats believed New York was unfairly tapped for additional men due to the city’s

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155 Bernstein, 7.
156 Bernstein, 8.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
160 Ibid.
161 Bernstein, 9.
Democratic leanings.¹⁶²

The New York City Draft Riots started in the early morning of the workday on Monday, July 13, 1863, and raged for five days until they were put down by federal troops. In the weeks leading up to the draft, New Yorkers were under the impression that Governor Seymour, a Democrat, and the local Democratic party machine would shield the city from the draft.¹⁶³

By the weekend of July 11, it was clear that despite the speeches denouncing the draft, the federal government was moving forward with selections. The draft began in uptown New York on Saturday and proceeded without rioting. By the following Monday, July 13, word of the draft had spread to the city’s workers and crowds formed in Central Park and began to march to the Ninth District Provost Marshal’s Office. During the march, the crowds ripped up railroad tracks, cut telegraph lines, and in some limited cases looted shops.¹⁶⁴ Upon reaching the District Office, a volunteer fire department group, in an ironic turn, burned down the office in anger over one of its men being drafted.¹⁶⁵ Throughout the rest of the day, the city ground to a halt as the streets filled with rioters who attacked well-dressed men, houses suspected of sheltering police officers, and more draft offices.¹⁶⁶ In one notable incident, a crowd attacked and set fire to the Colored Orphan Asylum, a home for orphaned black children.¹⁶⁷ The 233 children managed to escape and were assisted by Irish streetcar drivers who shepherded the children to safety.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶² Bernstein, 10.
¹⁶³ Bernstein, 13.
¹⁶⁴ Bernstein, 18.
¹⁶⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶⁶ Bernstein, 2.
¹⁶⁷ Ibid.
¹⁶⁸ Barnet Schecter, The Devil’s Own Work, 148.
Monday’s crowd included a range of people, from artisans, who largely made up the volunteer fire companies, to German immigrants, Protestants, and Irish Catholics.¹⁶⁹

The Monday riots can largely be separated from the riots later in the week. Despite some incidents of looting and a few examples of racial violence, rioters primarily went after the draft infrastructure and those in charge of its implementation.¹⁷⁰ For instance, the first targets of the mob were draft offices along with police and government officials.¹⁷¹ Monday’s more organized and focused riots gave way to chaos from Tuesday the 14th through Friday the 17th. The midweek violence was largely carried out by day laborers who worked to dismantle the Republican presence in the city.¹⁷² Targets included wealthy Republicans, Republican press outlets, men in uniform, and blacks. The rioters also worked to destroy urban infrastructures such as telegraph lines and railroad track that could be used by the government for communication and movement¹⁷³

Later in the week, the crowds became more heavily Irish Catholic and the riots transitioned into “racial pogroms,” indiscriminately targeting blacks in the streets and at their homes.¹⁷⁴ For instance, Bernstein relates that “by midweek, the rioters had virtually emptied the harbor front of people of color” and in one gruesome incident, a crowd dragged a deceased black man through the streets by his genitals.¹⁷⁵ As violence escalated, the police and soldiers resorted to using grapeshot, live fire, and clubs to subdue the crowds. Furthermore, after Monday, many

¹⁶⁹ Bernstein, 23.
¹⁷⁰ Bernstein, 40.
¹⁷¹ Bernstein, 25.
¹⁷² Bernstein, 41.
¹⁷³ Bernstein, 5.
¹⁷⁵ Barnet Schecter, The Devil’s Own Work, 28-29.
of the initial rioting groups changed course to protect their neighborhoods from destruction.\textsuperscript{176} For example, some of the fire companies that attacked draft offices on Monday were horrified by the wanton violence and took action to protect their neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{177}

By Thursday, July 16, troops fresh from the fields of Gettysburg, began to pour into New York. In tandem with the existing forces in the city, the soldiers went about securing the factories uptown.\textsuperscript{178} In a last-ditch effort, rioters fought troops in the Upper East Side factory district but were eventually cleared out by the military.\textsuperscript{179}

Brooklyn escaped the Draft Riots largely unscathed, despite several small incidents. The \textit{Eagle} noted that “affairs in the city remain quiet and orderly. No attempt appears to have been made to create a disturbance.”\textsuperscript{180} While Brooklyn stayed “quiet and orderly” the city still prepared for potential insurrections. According to the \textit{Eagle}’s reporters, the Navy Yard looked “more warlike than ever” with howitzers and ironclads on hand “to be used instantly should occasion require.”\textsuperscript{181} The military style preparations extended to the citizenry of Brooklyn. The \textit{Eagle} reported that the military was organizing volunteers to “resist mob violence and maintain the laws.”\textsuperscript{182} Brooklyn also sent 200 police officers to Manhattan to help quell the violence.\textsuperscript{183}

Despite the lack of major violent incidents in Brooklyn during the Manhattan violence, there was a climate of fear in Brooklyn--especially for its black residents. For instance, on July 14, the \textit{Eagle} discovered that “Pink row, in Canton street, is entirely vacated. It was occupied by

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{176} Bernstein, 20. \\
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{178} Bernstein, 39 \\
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{180} “The Excitement in Brooklyn,” \textit{BE}, July 14, 1863. \\
\textsuperscript{181} “The Riot in New York,” \textit{BE}, July 14, 1863. \\
\textsuperscript{182} “The Excitement in Brooklyn,” \textit{BE}, July 15, 1863. \\
\textsuperscript{183} Livingston, 107. Also see \textit{BE}, July 13, 1863.
\end{flushright}
colored people. They have gone, no one knows where.\textsuperscript{184} While blacks in the New York area fled to New Jersey and neighboring states, the white staff of the \textit{Eagle} thought the “colored people” had simply vanished.\textsuperscript{185} Those “colored people” who did not flee were treated to street harassment and the potential looting of their houses.\textsuperscript{186} In one case, a mob surrounded some houses of black citizens, but the police intervened and “found a negro the sole occupant of the premises … armed with a loaded revolver ready to defend himself.”\textsuperscript{187} Despite the \textit{Eagle}’s conviction that the city was “quiet,” one can picture the lone black man desperately clutching a revolver as the white mob gathered outside. Thus, while Brooklyn’s white citizenry and establishments largely escaped the violence that befell New York, the city’s black population still suffered.

By July 17, the \textit{Eagle} was confident that the riots had ended, “the riot in New York seems to have finally subsided.”\textsuperscript{188} On July 20, it was formally announced in the \textit{Eagle} that Tammany Hall had approved a fund of $2.5 million dollars to pay the $300 dollar draft fee for replacements or substitutes. On the night of the 27, Brooklyn followed suit and settled on a one million dollar exemption fund.\textsuperscript{189}

D. The \textit{Eagle}’s Reaction to the New York City Draft Riots

The New York City Draft Riot began on Monday morning, July 13, 1863. The \textit{Eagle}


\textsuperscript{185} Barnet Schecter, \textit{The Devil’s Own Work}, 173. The \textit{Eagle}’s confusion as to where the black residents fled is in keeping with the paper’s ignorance in terms of Brooklyn’s black population. For instance, James Terry, in his book, \textit{Long Before the Dodgers, 1855-1884}, notes, “Even though the \textit{Daily Eagle} did not regularly report on matches of African-American clubs, it is curious that the newspaper appeared not to even be aware of their existence,” (117). The \textit{Eagle} was not aware that blacks had their baseball teams by 1862, so it follows that when blacks fled Brooklyn in July 1863, the paper was again clueless.

\textsuperscript{186} “The Excitement in Brooklyn,” \textit{BE}, July 16, 1863.

\textsuperscript{187} Ibid.


announced the riot in its 2:30 edition and began its editorial commentary on the unrest on July 14. The July 13 edition of the *Eagle* lashed out at Democrats who accused the *Eagle* of “joining with ‘despots in power,’ because we [the *Eagle*] do not endeavor to throw obstacles in the way of the execution of the conscript law.” The article was written with no knowledge of the impending riot, and yet the *Eagle* was still careful to voice its adherence to the rule of law. Specifically, the paper waited in anticipation of a court decision to strike down the conscript law as unconstitutional. Despite the paper’s desire to see the conscription law struck down, the *Eagle* maintained its steadfast loyalty to the American justice process, “If the conscription law is not shown to be unconstitutional Governor Seymour will not only not oppose the law but he will aid in its enforcement and we shall justify him in so doing.” Thus, the *Eagle* proved its loyalty to the Union through its “Obedience to the Law.”

By July 14, the riot’s scope had become more apparent, and the *Eagle* criticized the Republican government, the press, and the rioters. The paper first attacked the Republican federal government for how it had crafted and executed the Conscription Act, “It would have been very easy to have devised a law much less objectionable than that which yesterday provoked a riot in New York City.” Specifically, the *Eagle* believed that the Act’s $300 exemption clause should never have been included and that men with dependents should be exempted. The *Eagle* maintained that the federal Conscription Act was implemented poorly due to “the suddenness with which it was put in operation” and “the unseemingly mystery as to

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190 “The Duty or Obedience to the Law,” *BE*, July 13, 1863.
191 Ibid.
192 Ibid.
193 “The Draft and the Riot which it has Provoked,” *BE*, July 14, 1863.
the number of men required.”\textsuperscript{195} The paper also complained about the “the selection of agents who, by prescribing arbitrary and unwise regulations, have heightened the popular discontent with the conscription.”\textsuperscript{196} Thus, in the eyes of the \textit{Eagle}, the Republicans at the national level provided the spark that set off the violence, but other actors also played a role in shaping the riots.

The \textit{Eagle} came down on the Republican press and ancillary organizations. The \textit{Eagle} condemned the “radical press” and in particular Horace Greeley’s \textit{Tribune}, which “knows that a riot is raging in New York to-day: it knows that language like that we have quoted will exasperate still further those engaged in it.”\textsuperscript{197} The \textit{Tribune} called for the federal government to intervene and enact martial law in the city, a policy which the \textit{Eagle} denounced on the grounds that Republican intervention would stoke the rioters rather than pacify them. The \textit{Eagle} also poked fun at Horace Greeley, the editor of the \textit{Tribune}, rhetorically asking, “where is Mr. Greeley’s large reserve force of 900,000?”\textsuperscript{198} Horace Greeley must have said or written about a mass of abolitionists who would take up a call to arms. In that same vein, the \textit{Eagle} mocked Republican “Union leagues” for their loud rhetoric, but lack of action, “where are the Union leagues, so valiant in talk, so mighty in resolutions?”\textsuperscript{199} In the various cases, the \textit{Eagle} pointed out that the draft was a hardship that should be shouldered by all men, regardless of their political affiliation.

Notwithstanding their attacks on the Republicans, the \textit{Eagle} targeted fellow Democratic outlets with equal vigor. For instance, the \textit{Eagle} took issue with the \textit{Herald} for not condemning

\textsuperscript{195} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{196} “The Draft and the Riot which it has Provoked,” \textit{BE}, July 14, 1863.
\textsuperscript{198} “The Draft and the Riot which it has Provoked,” \textit{BE}, July 14, 1863.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid.

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the violent and lawless rioters when the other press outlets did so at the first opportunity, “The press of New York is unanimous in condemning yesterday’s lawlessness, unless the New York Herald may be taken as an exception.” In the Eagle’s view, the Herald prioritized the paper’s popular support over responsible calls for order and restraint.

The Eagle's critique of a fellow Democratic paper demonstrates a commitment to issues over partisanship. While the Eagle's editors may have harbored economic or personal resentment towards the Herald, on its face, criticisms of the Herald point to a paper that weighed the rule of law above politics.

The Eagle condemned the rioters in New York and in particular called out those who attacked defenseless blacks. The paper’s racial criticism fell into three categories that largely echoed issues that had been raised in regard to the 1862 Tobacco Factory incident. First, the Eagle appealed to the supposed superiority of the white race and questioned whether attacking blacks who are “unable to defend themselves” was the “way to show the superior manhood of the white race?” Second, the paper worked in an attack on Republicans whom they accused of raising blacks above their God-given station, “we have insisted that the best friends of the colored race were those who would leave them in the position to which Providence assigned them.” In a logical somersault, Democrats and by extension the Eagle were the “best friend of the colored race” because they kept blacks in their lower position as determined by “Providence.” Third, the Eagle appealed to civic pride and stressed the difference between New York and Brooklyn, “let New York have a monopoly of the bad business of tyrannizing over the

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201 “An Appeal to the Manhood of the People,” BE, July 16, 1863.
202 Ibid.
weak.”

Brooklyn was a separate city in 1863 and the *Eagle* made sure to invoke Brooklyn’s distinct character relative to the larger New York. Together, the various arguments constituted a broad rebuke of both white lawlessness and supposed Republican race meddling.

Although the *Eagle* criticized the rioters for the wanton violence and lawlessness, the paper made sure to defend its Irish Catholic base. The Irish were heavily represented in the riots, but as the *Eagle* pointed out, it would be unfair to dismiss the entire Irish population as violent and lawless. For one, when rioters burned the Colored Orphan Asylum, it was a few Irishmen who helped the black children escape from the building and reach safety. Furthermore, many Irish tried to put down the riots and keep order--often at their own peril. For instance, Colonel Henry O’Brien, an Irishman, was killed and mutilated by a mob. Thus, while many Irish participated in the insurrection, it would be misleading to cast all Irish as supportive of the riots.

Furthermore, the attacks on Irish were surely personal to the *Eagle*. The *Eagle*’s editor at the time, Thomas Kinsella, was an immigrant from Ireland and the local Democratic Party relied on the Irish Catholic vote. The paper first acknowledged that “men of Irish birth were largely represented in the recent riots”

Although Irish Catholics made up a sizeable part of the riots, the *Eagle* forcefully reminded readers of the Irish contribution to the war. In some of the bloodiest battles of the war, Irishmen, in particular, sacrificed in large numbers. At the Battle of Bull Run, one-third of all casualties were from New York, and of those, many were Irish. The *Eagle* picked up on the Irish’s devotion to the Union, noting that “the soil of Virginia has drained

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203 Ibid.
205 Bernstein, 36.
207 Strausbaugh, 194.
the life blood of thousands of men in the Irish race. They fell fighting for America.”

The Eagle’s staunch defense of the Irish came in response to rumors that the Know-Nothing Party was resurging in the wake of the Draft Riots. The Eagle found an easy target in the nativists who were largely Republican. During the period, the Republican Party was associated with the former Know Nothings as well as moral reformers and protectionists; all groups anathema to Irish Catholics. The Democrats supported a less moralizing philosophy of “free behavior,” which better suited the immigrant Irish community. The Democratic Eagle derided the resurging Know Nothings as “bigots” and also called out the hypocrisy of a movement run by men who despite, “high claims to pure nativity, really is an imported specimen of a bigotry that had its birth in another land.” The Eagle’s defense of the Irish echoed that of the Herald, which characterized the Irish as “loyal to the government” and refuted the xenophobic sentiments expressed by the nativists. Thus, the Eagle maintained its rigid stance on law and order, while simultaneously attacking Republicans and defending the white Irish Catholic population.

210 Spann, 2.
211 Ibid.
The Presidential Election of 1864

A. Background on the Election

On the national stage, many of the issues that had sparked the Draft Riots continued to divide the Union. Issues over the draft, race relations, and the prosecution of the war all threatened to sink Lincoln’s reelection hopes in 1864. Thus, Lincoln’s presidential victory was far from certain. Until the fall of 1864, second presidential terms were not the norm in the antebellum period as no president since Andrew Jackson had won re-election.\(^{213}\)

The election of 1864 came at a critical moment in the Civil War. After more than three years, the nation’s people were growing weary of the deaths, high taxes, and general burdens of wartime conditions. Consequently, the wartime presidential election became a referendum on Lincoln and the Republican Party’s conduct of the war.\(^{214}\) The election also marked a crucial crossroads for the Union. Would the North stay the course and fight a war over slavery until unconditional surrender, or would it pivot and conduct a war solely over preservation of the union with the potential for a settled peace with the Confederacy and the continuation of slavery?

In the months leading into the election, Lincoln was vulnerable both militarily and politically. First and most important, the war was not going well. In July of 1864, Lincoln released a request for 500,000 more volunteers, a clear sign to the public that the path to victory would be longer and more costly than the public had hoped.\(^{215}\) In the same month, 15,000 men under Jubal Early’s command executed a near sacking of Washington, D.C., by managing to attack the city’s outer defenses.\(^{216}\) To add to the administration’s woes, in early August, Grant’s

\(^{213}\) Ford Risley, *Civil War Journalism*, 72.


\(^{216}\) Michael Burlingame, *Abraham Lincoln A Life*, 3667. Also see, McPherson, 756.
Army of the Potomac was still locked in a bloody siege at Petersburg, Virginia.\textsuperscript{217} Without decisive victories on the battlefield, the Republicans had a hard case to make to the war-weary public.

Politically, Lincoln was in a precarious position within his own party. In late May, a group of Radical Republicans met in Cleveland and selected John C. Fremont as their candidate for the presidency.\textsuperscript{218} Though still a fringe movement, third-party candidates had historically swung elections, so Fremont posed a real threat to Lincoln’s re-election hopes. Republicans were also divided over Lincoln’s controversial pocket veto of the Wade-Davis Bill in the summer of 1864. The bill called for Radical Reconstruction of the South following the conclusion of the war.\textsuperscript{219} The ever moderate Lincoln thus had to unite his party to present a cohesive front during the critical fall election cycle.

On the national stage, the Republican Party rebranded itself as the National Union Party, thereby equating itself with a unified nation.\textsuperscript{220} In Baltimore, June 1864, the National Union Party nominated Abraham Lincoln for a second term and as vice-president Andrew Johnson, a War Democrat from Tennessee, who the party hoped, would draw in Democratic voters. The platform called for war until the Confederate armies surrender: “That we approve the determination of the Government of the United States not to compromise with Rebels, or to offer them any terms of peace, except such as may be based upon an unconditional surrender of their hostility and a return to their just allegiance to the Constitution and laws of the United States.”\textsuperscript{221}

The forceful language of the war plank was further reinforced by the third platform resolution,

\textsuperscript{217} Goodwin, 645.
\textsuperscript{218} “Cleveland Convention,” Case Western University, Encyclopedia of Wisconsin History.
\textsuperscript{219} Goodwin, 658. Also see McPherson, 712.
\textsuperscript{220} Neely, 67.
\textsuperscript{221} “Republican Party Platforms: Republican Party Platform of 1864-June 7, 1864,” American Presidency Project.
which unequivocally blamed slavery for the war and called for its future demise: “That as slavery was the cause, and now constitutes the strength of this Rebellion, and as it must be, always and everywhere, hostile to the principles of Republican Government … shall terminate and forever prohibit the existence of Slavery within the limits of the jurisdiction of the United States.” Together, these two clauses constituted a clear message to the North as well as to the Confederacy; the United States would not be divided and slavery would have no place in the unified nation.

Although Lincoln won the nomination in June, by late August, Lincoln was so certain of his defeat that he wrote a memo to his cabinet that said as much, “it seems exceedingly probable that this Administration will not be re-elected.” Furthermore, during the midterm election of 1862, the Republican Party had not mobilized its party machinery due to the war and, consequently, had suffered major electoral setbacks. The results were disastrous as Republican voting levels fell by as much as 20 percent in some states, while the Democrats won gubernatorial contests in New York and New Jersey, and picked up seats in the House of Representatives. Civil War historian Mark Neely notes that “Republicans handed them the gift of inattention and naive overconfidence. It would not happen again.”

In fact, 1862 did not repeat itself in 1864; in part because the Republican leadership learned its lesson. The Party recovered by reorganizing internally while waging an effective smear campaign, associating all Democratic candidates, regardless of their policy positions, with

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222 Ibid.
223 Goodwin, 648.
224 Neely, 49.
225 Neely, 54.
226 Ibid.
the much-derided Copperhead radicals. Furthermore, the Democrats were divided. The party members could not agree on a common stance over the prosecution of the war. A small, vocal part of the party pushed a conciliatory strategy by calling for peace and an end to hostilities. The majority of Democrats belonged to the loyal opposition and supported the war but recited a litany of grievances with the Republicans. The Party ultimately passed a “Peace Platform” in late September 1864 and nominated pro-war George McClellan to be the nominee along with George Pendleton, a Peace Democrat from Ohio. The peace plank read: “immediate efforts be made for a cessation of hostilities, with a view of an ultimate convention of the States, or other peaceable means, to the end that, at the earliest practicable moment, peace may be restored on the basis of the Federal Union of the States.” The peace plank did not square with McClellan’s record as a Union general. Indeed, in his letter accepting the nomination, McClellan backpedaled from the urgent language of “immediate action” to a less defined policy of seeking peace, “So soon as it is clear and even probable, that our present adversaries are ready for peace, upon the basis of the Union.” McClellan refused to commit to a rushed peace without a guarantee that the nation would be restored in complete union. The mismatch between candidate and platform was evident from the campaign’s start and continued to serve as an overt weakness for the duration of the election season.

Within days of McClellan’s nomination, Lincoln received a godsend. General Sherman
was able to outmaneuver the Confederate forces and capture Atlanta. On September 4, 1864, Sherman reported back to Lincoln that, “So Atlanta is ours, and fairly won … Our losses will not exceed 1,200, and we have possession of over 300 rebel dead, 250 wounded, and over 1,500 well.” With one telegram, Lincoln was vindicated and the Democrats were suddenly running a defeatist campaign in the midst of a resurging war effort.

Following the capture of Atlanta, the good news for the Union kept coming. Sheridan’s forces won a resounding victory by defeating Jubal Early’s Army of the Shenandoah Valley. The improving war effort led to a drop in the value of gold and Confederate bonds, a sign of renewed confidence in the United States government. Finally, on September 22, Fremont published a letter giving tepid support for Lincoln and dropping out of the race. By late September, Lincoln’s re-election chances were greatly increased with both a united Republican Party and a winning war effort. Despite the rocky start to the campaign, the voters started to swing decisively in Lincoln’s favor, and he was able to win the election in an electoral landslide.

B. The *Eagle’s* Analysis of the Presidential Election of 1864

a. Appeal to Racial Prejudice

During the fall, the *Eagle* peppered its critiques of Lincoln with racist and ad-hominem attacks. As Michael Burlingame argues, “Democrats appealed shamelessly to race prejudice” and the pages of the *Eagle* were no exception. Its use of race served to incite the passions of the *Eagle*’s largely Democratic audience. In the *Eagle*’s many attacks on Lincoln, race carried through almost every discussion, but for purposes of clarity, this paper divides the racist content

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235 Goodwin, 654.
236 Flood, 300.
237 Flood, 301.
238 Flood, 283.
239 Burlingame, 696.
into two broad categories: complaints over negro recruitment for the army and the supposed Republican plan to have equality of the races.

Following the Emancipation Proclamation, the Union Army had begun recruiting black men to serve in negro regiments and fight for the Union. The Proclamation was unpopular with Democrats for many reasons, one of which was the policy change that allowed black troops to serve under the Union banner.\textsuperscript{240} By the fall of 1864, more than 130,000 black troops served in the Union army, and they had become an indispensable fighting force, integral to the North’s war efforts.\textsuperscript{241}

The \emph{Eagle}, however, derided black troops in the U.S. Army on the basis that they were inherently inferior to white men and also provided some competition for whites. For instance, in an article titled, “Scared Darkeys,” the paper published an account from a correspondent at Petersburg who related that a group of “colored recruits” had arrived. Upon their approach to a Confederate position, the “rebels threw a shell or two into their midst” which caused “ludicrous” panic. The colored troops proceeded to leave their equipment on the field and flee to a ditch. The sarcastic title mocking the black recruits “valor” clearly casts the new black regiments negatively, and emphasizes their disorganization, “scattering among them that was really ludicrous” and their fear, “abandoning their guns... they flew towards the fort.”\textsuperscript{242} The \emph{Eagle} continued its attacks on blacks in the army, sarcastically noting that for General Butler, a “post of honor” in the army will very soon be a command in the colored troops.\textsuperscript{243} The article went on

\textsuperscript{241} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{242} “Scared Darkeys,” \textit{BE}, Sept. 10, 1864.
to quote an unattributed black man in slang, “at first shot me break and run sure,” highlighting the view that these troops, belonging to a lesser race, were unfit to represent the Union in arms. 244

Another dimension of the *Eagle*’s attacks on blacks in the Army stemmed from a fear that blacks would take jobs from whites. The worry was that “the poor white trash” will “soon have no show in the army or out of it,” thus implying that blacks were replacing white men in every sector. 245 The *Eagle* harped on such anxiety, surely knowing that the combination of economics and race was a potent blend in an industrial port city underpinned by white labor.

The *Eagle*, throughout the election period, argued that the “Black Republicans” wanted to bring together the races and promote equality among blacks and whites. 246 To the first point, the *Eagle*, like many Democratic papers, seized on a pamphlet that men from the *New York World* in January of 1864 had created and distributed. 247 The pamphlet was a strange attempt to trick Radical Republican leaders into supporting a policy of “miscegenation,” a word created by them for intermarriage, and a synonym of the conventional term of the period, “amalgamation.” 248 Furthermore, the pamphlet talked about a policy of Irish and black mixing, an intentional ploy to inflame the immigrant Irish population that already was largely hostile towards Lincoln. 249 Playing on such fears of racial mixing, the *Eagle* printed speech after speech railing on the Republican policy. For instance, Thomas E. Pearsall attacked the administration’s policy of “Emancipation, confiscation, annihilation, amalgamation, and miscegenation,” while Ex-Governor Bigler of California decried that “after all that has been said and done about

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244 Ibid.
245 Ibid.
246 “Who Defeated the Crittenden Compromise,” *BE*, Sept. 20, 1864. Also see Holzer, 248.
247 Neely, 108.
248 Neely, 109.
249 Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North*, 160. Also see Fig. 2., “The Miscegenation Ball.”
miscegenation and social equality for the negro, there are not free men in the country who desire it.”250 Along with an array of printed speeches, the paper itself attacked the miscegenation of the Republicans, arguing that the “new faith of miscegenation” was a dangerous policy in Louisiana.251 Many Democrats did not view blacks as equal to whites. For instance, Martin Kalbfleisch delivered a speech at a meeting of the 18th Ward, where he highlighted how blacks were now “on par” with whites in the army, an evil “which can never be done by men.”252 Ex-Governor Bigler, evidently agreeing with Kalbfleisch’s assessment, continued to assail the attempts to raise the status of the negro, “you [negro] cannot associate with my family as an equal.”253 The articles and speeches bear out that the Eagle consistently used race as a component of broader policy attacks on Lincoln, his administration, and the Republican-Union Party.

b. Ad Hominem Attacks:

Building on the racist rhetoric, the Eagle also leveled a barrage of ad-hominem attacks on Lincoln; often contrasting Lincoln’s manners with those of McClellan. The personal charges infused many of the Eagle’s articles and printed speeches. The Eagle’s criticism can be divided into three categories: comments on Lincoln’s lack of education, critiques of his supposed uncultured and vulgar nature, and attacks on his physical bearing. Lincoln was born into a frontier family and was almost completely self-educated.254 In contrast, McClellan was born into a prosperous family in Philadelphia. His father was a highly successful surgeon and his mother came from a prominent Pennsylvania family.255 Furthermore, McClellan had attended the

253 “Grand Rally…,” BE, Sept. 13, 1864.
254 Carwardine, 5.
255 Tom Clemens, "George B. McClellan (1826–1885)," Encyclopedia Virginia.
University of Pennsylvania and then went to the United States Military Academy. Focusing in on the vastly different backgrounds of the candidates, the *Eagle* derided Lincoln as a “village attorney” compared to McClellan, who faced issues the same manner as the great former Democratic President “Jackson.” Though today Lincoln is celebrated for his trenchant writing, the *Eagle* thought little of his prose. In a reprinted speech, the *Eagle* demeaned Lincoln’s writing as “the laugh of European Courts and of school boys at home.” In contrast, the *Eagle* lauded the formally educated McClellan as being “capable of writing a state document.”

Apparently, the *Eagle* also thought little of Lincoln’s rhetoric, arguing that “a decent knowledge of our mother tongue ought to be among the qualifications for the Presidency of the Republic.”

For the Democratic *Eagle*, the country educated lawyer was no match for the well-schooled and proper mannered McClellan.

Tying in with Lincoln’s country upbringing, the *Eagle* constantly noted Lincoln’s manners, painting him as “vulgar joker” and a “buffoon” compared to McClellan, the “honest,” “enlightened,” “statesman and general.” In the vein of Lincoln’s vulgarness, the *Eagle* often made reference to a popular myth that Lincoln, while touring Antietam with McClellan, among the unburied dead and injured, called for “a vulgar negro melody.” The *Eagle*, in a pithy article titled “A Choice Expression” told a story that when Lincoln was asked about Haiti

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256 Ibid.
sending a black representative to D.C., he responded with a vulgar joke, “Tell Mr. Geffrard that I
shan’t tear my shirt if he does send a nigger.” For Democrats, such joking and general
vulgarity did not befit a president and the *Eagle* noted McClellan was of a different mold, a
disciplined “soldier” and a gentlemanly “statesman.”

The *Eagle*, never a paper to miss an opportunity, used Lincoln’s physical appearance in
its political commentary. In one diatribe from late September, the paper referred to Lincoln as,
“the great big awkward punster,” a dig at his height and unusual dimensions. A month later,
the paper continued on the theme of Lincoln’s build, “It is well known that Mr. Lincoln is as
emaciated, loose-jointed, awkward-built a man as ever shuffled along the streets of Washington.”
In contrast to the gangly man of Washington, McClellan was the physical representation of a
statesman, “one of the most active and powerful men in the country” who possessed such
mythical strength “he could take a silver quarter and double it.” In fact, the two candidates
physiques were so polar that “if this contest for the presidency could be decided by a bout at
fistcuffs… Mr. Lincoln would be knocked out of time in short order.”

The ad-hominem comments revealed that the editors of the *Eagle* were willing to venture
beyond policy-based critiques in order to gin up support for McClellan and the Democratic
Party. The paper did not advocate for any harmful or unlawful measure towards Lincoln, but
still expressed extreme displeasure with the president's manners and general decorum.

c. The *Eagle*’s Criticism of Lincoln and Republican Positions

The *Eagle* admonished Lincoln, his campaign, and the Republican-Union Party on almost

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262 “A Choice Expression,” *BE*, Sept. 15, 1864. Also see Fig. 3, “The Commander-in-Chief”.
every front imaginable. This paper has divided the critiques of Lincoln into core and secondary criticisms. The core criticisms constitute the heart of the Democrats opposition to Lincoln and his wartime policy, while the secondary critiques flow from those core issues, both core and secondary criticisms share rhetorical tactics that infused the *Eagle*’s commentary.

### i. Purpose of the War

The *Eagle*’s primary problem with Lincoln was that he made abolition a requirement for the end of the war. The *Eagle*, in an article titled “Will the Election of McClellan bring Peace and Union” squarely laid out the central issue, “Leaving out all minor questions, the people are called upon to decide, whether or not they accept the Union, under the Constitution, as the one condition of peace. Mr. Lincoln declares that he will not … he demands the abolition of slavery.”

For Democrats, the war was always about reunifying the nation under the Constitution—nothing more and nothing less. Lincoln, following the victory at Antietam, changed the entire tenor of the war by issuing the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, which promised to turn the contest into a struggle over the survival of the institution of slavery. Democrats specifically criticized Lincoln for backtracking from the policy announced in his inaugural address which promised to allow slavery to continue in states where it was already permitted. He had sworn to protect the property rights of the South, “I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists.” In a speech printed in the *Eagle*, Mr. Sutton noted that the Proclamation gave a “new complexion” to the war as the struggle became one of slavery instead of unification.

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Lincoln, in his first inaugural address, was clear on the issue of slavery. Taking Lincoln at his word, the Eagle and its Democratic base cared little about political and military developments over the course of Lincoln’s first term. Consequently, they viewed the Emancipation Proclamation as both deceitful and wrong. Deceitful because the Proclamation changed the rationale for the war, and wrong because it violated the Constitution.

The Democrats thought that issuing the Emancipation Proclamation was an underhanded move. For instance, Stephen Colahan, in a speech at a 4th Ward Meeting, noted that the “war was to have been for the restoration of the union” but instead, Lincoln “under this guise” changed course and sought “the abolition of slavery.” The use of the word “guise” implies that Lincoln hoodwinked the nation into fighting for abolition. The idea that Lincoln tricked the nation into war ran through numerous speeches and articles. For instance, Judge Morris argued that the “perjured administration” had now “revealed their true colors” for the purpose of the war. To this point, the Eagle quoted from Lincoln’s inaugural address, concluding that “thus out of his own mouth he [Lincoln] is condemned.” To Brooklyn Democrats, Lincoln’s bait and switch was reason enough to replace him with McClellan, the “honest” and “enlightened” statesman.

The Eagle argued that making the war about emancipation was more than deceitful, it was unconstitutional. Harkening back to Lincoln’s own inaugural address, the Eagle quoted Lincoln’s explanation that the Constitution clearly protects, “the rights of the States, and

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271 “Hold Him to the Record,” BE, Sept. 8, 1864.
272 “Meeting in the Eastern District--The Democratic Central Club--Speeches of Ex-Alderman Ternan, George Thompson, S. W. Sheffield and others,” BE, Sept. 19, 1864.
especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions.” The Eagle took the view that slavery, as a “domestic institution” remained protected as an “inviolate” right of the states. To the Eagle and its Democratic readership, Lincoln’s Proclamation clearly violated the Constitution and therefore offered an untenable base upon which to build a war effort. Resolutions from a “Grand Mass Ratification Meeting” in South Brooklyn recognized that the Constitution was under attack, resolving that it “is a base usurpation and in derogation of the constitution and the laws.” In a ward club speech, General Calvin Pratt intensified the rhetorical pitch by arguing that the Constitution has been “supplanted by the principles of a morbid philanthropy” Pratt’s “philanthropy” was none other than Lincoln’s demand for abolition, which had “supplanted” or replaced the Constitution. Following the death of Chief Justice Taney on October 12, 1864, the Eagle admonished Lincoln and his party’s policy, noting that before the Emancipation Proclamation, “no man pretended” that states had no control over the institution of slavery. Therefore, Lincoln’s policy of abolition and the rebels’ succession violated “precisely the same authority”—the Constitution. For the Eagle, two wrongs did not make a right; the rebels’ secession was the first crime and abolition as the purpose for war became the second stain on the Constitution. Thus, the Eagle argued that Lincoln acted in “defiance” of the Constitution as it pertained to the sovereignty of states.

In addition to Constitutionally based arguments, the Eagle also attacked Lincoln’s abolition policy because it had the effect of dividing the North and unifying the rebels.

273 Ibid.
278 Ibid.
Throughout the election season, speeches and articles underscored a history of northern unity. For instance, Judge Dean’s speech at a Brooklyn Democratic rally pined for the days when there was “no dissension among us” before Lincoln issued his Proclamation. Dean’s argument was echoed by Eagle articles that compared the nation under Lincoln, a “conditional Unionist” versus McClellan, a man for the “Union without conditions.” In the North, people did not fully agree on abolition, and the Eagle mentioned that nationwide, Lincoln only had the support of one-quarter of the populace. The Eagle singled out “Lincoln’s narrow and vicious policy” of “Emancipation and confiscation” to point out that abolition was not in the best interests of the North; it weakened the war effort internally and strengthened the rebels resolve and will to fight. In terms of the war effort, a divided North meant fewer recruits and conversely, a unified South made it easier for it to attract men into its armies. Consequently, Democrats argued that on a psychological and practical level, the abolition policy served to sow division at a time when unity was needed more than ever.

By strengthening the South’s resolve and will to fight, while simultaneously tearing the North apart, the Eagle maintained that the abolition policy was creating a perpetual conflict. After three years of war, the Democrats needed to play on the public’s desire for peace. Henry Birdsall, in a speech to the 15th Ward, picked on these anxieties and argued that the perpetual war will create lasting “conscription” and “eternal taxation.” The Eagle also suggested a political motivation to continual warfare, it pointed out that all Lincoln had to do to make his

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280 “The Great Meeting… Judge Dean’s Speech,” BE, Sept. 13, 1864.
284 Ibid.
power “perpetual” was to continue the conflict.\footnote{286} The implication was that by keeping the war going, Lincoln could continue to exercise wartime powers and thereby prolong his hold on executive power.

The \textit{Eagle} and the Democrats quoted in its pages were mortified at the prospect of fighting a long war to help free black slaves. In a political speech quoted in the \textit{Eagle}, Calvin Pratt raised the issue of “a few thousand black men achieving liberty over the dead bodies and dead liberties of millions of white men.”\footnote{287} Two other local speakers, Sam Morris and Henry Murphy both agreed with Pratt’s sentiment by noting respectively that there was a million dead with wide-scale “desolation” all for the negro and “freedom of the negroes” has caused “impoverishment” for the whites of the South.”\footnote{288} The \textit{Eagle} went beyond the “whites of the South” to include “the abolition of slavery and every interest of the white on the North American Continent.”\footnote{289} Driving home the utter senselessness of a war over abolition, the paper harshly criticized the Administration for letting white prisoners of war languish and rot until the “status of the negro shall be settled.”\footnote{290} For the \textit{Eagle} and its Democratic base, letting thousands of white men die and suffer in prison so a “few thousand black men” could benefit was not why the nation was founded. The \textit{Eagle} placed this into historical context by explaining that “We did not achieve our independence for them” nor was that why Northern men were fighting in their current struggle.\footnote{291}

\footnote{290} “Deceiving the Masses,” \textit{BE}, Sept. 30, 1864.
ii. Violations of the Constitution: Civil Liberties

The *Eagle* attacked Lincoln for being a tyrant, a grave charge in a nation that fought a war to escape from European despotism. In the eyes of Democrats, “Abraham the First” violated liberties enshrined in the Constitution, specifically desecrating the enumerated rights of the First Amendment and the writ of habeas corpus as defined in the Suspension Clause.\(^{292}\)

The Civil War was the first and only time the United States was tested by internal armed conflict on a wide scale. In those uncharted waters, Lincoln and his administration tested the limits of the Constitution, closing newspapers and censoring certain speakers. Joseph Strouss, as quoted in a speech to the Sixth Ward, discussed Lincoln’s assault on “freedom of the press, speech, opinion and all liberties.”\(^{293}\) The *Eagle* expanded on the list of curtailed freedoms, adding that Lincoln has used war-time powers to assert control over freedom of Congress, states, religion, individuals, and courts.\(^{294}\) Despite raising a long list of the Constitutional infractions, the *Eagle* focused on two particular cases of abuse: Lincoln’s attack on the press and his various suspensions of habeas corpus.

The *Eagle*, perhaps fueled by its own animus over being shut down, highlighted Lincoln’s various attacks on the press. General Pratt, as quoted in a speech to a large Democratic assembly, claimed that under Lincoln the press was, “muzzled” and the *Eagle* agreed that the press had been “cowed by power.”\(^{295}\) Beyond general complaints about Lincoln’s nefarious attacks on the press, the *Eagle* also raised specific examples of the administration’s

\(^{292}\) “The Soldiers’ Vote,” *BE*, Oct. 26, 1864. Also see “Powers Denied To Congress. General Purpose of Section 9,” Legal Information Institute.


abuses. For instance, an article appropriately titled, “Suppressing Newspapers,” noted that Lincoln’s agents were suppressing newspapers in the border states, under suspicion of aiding the enemy.\(^{296}\) Going into even further detail, the *Eagle* condemned the administration for closing the *Baltimore Evening Post*, the only anti-Administration paper in the city.\(^{297}\) It was the *Eagle*’s way of telling its readers that Lincoln was far from the judicious president who was reluctantly quelling a traitorous publisher, but rather was a tyrannical figure, suppressing the only dissenting voice in town.

From the *Eagle*’s perspective, Lincoln’s tyrannical reach did not stop with shuttering newspapers, he also suspended the Constitutionally protected writ of habeas corpus on several occasions. In April 1861, Lincoln had issued an executive order suspending the writ of habeas corpus along the Washington D.C.-Philadelphia railroad corridor in order to enforce the military call-up from the states.\(^{298}\) Later, in August of 1862, Secretary of War Stanton, with Lincoln’s approval, issued a nationwide suspension of the writ in order to ensure cooperation with the Militia Act of 1862, passed that July.\(^{299}\) Almost a year later Congress retroactively approved the suspensions by passing the Habeas Corpus Act in September 1863.\(^{300}\) Though Lincoln and his Cabinet thought the writ was within the bounds of clause two, section nine of the Constitution, “The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it,” the *Eagle* and the Democrats quoted within its pages were less convinced.\(^{301}\) Instead, the *Eagle* harshly criticized Lincoln for his

\(^{298}\) Carwardine, 164.
\(^{299}\) Carwardine, 255.
\(^{300}\) Ibid.
\(^{301}\) “Powers Denied To Congress. General Purpose of Section 9,” Legal Information Institute.
violation “of the inestimable writ of habeas corpus in states in which the civil law could be fully enforced…”\textsuperscript{302} In the \textit{Eagle}’s calculus, if “civil law could be fully enforced” there was no need to take draconian measure and violate the Constitution. The former Attorney General of New York, Mr. Chatfield, as quoted in the \textit{Eagle}, expressed a similar analysis, stating that the “civil law was in full force;” so suspending the writ exceeded the president’s Constitutional powers.\textsuperscript{303}

The \textit{Eagle} exhaustively raised Lincoln’s violations of civil liberties. Concluding that by closing papers and suspending habeas corpus, “Abraham the First” was more a king than a president.\textsuperscript{304}

\textbf{iii. Taxation/Debt/Economic Waste}

Lincoln’s abolition policy for the war and his suppression of civil rights formed the core of the \textit{Eagle}’s prosecution. Along with these two central issues, the \textit{Eagle} also criticized the administration for a host of related problems. With the dual assumptions that an abolition war was not a war worth fighting and that Lincoln was a tyrant violating the Constitution, the secondary criticisms expanded into more specific critiques of the side effects of war, including the costs to wage war.

In order to pay for the Civil War, the Union needed income asides from the traditional revenue sources of tariffs and excise taxes. To meet the new demand for revenue, the Union increased excise taxes, implemented an income tax, issued billions in government bonds, and created “greenbacks,” a currency not tied to gold or silver but the credit of the federal government.\textsuperscript{305} Such fiscal and economic developments were harshly criticized by the \textit{Eagle} and


Democrats for bringing hardship onto the hard-working people of the Union. The criticism was specifically focused on the high taxes that raised the prices of goods and also raised fears of a rising national debt.

The new tax burden from the war was not a welcome development. In a Democratic rally, the editor of the Eagle, Thomas Kinsella, railed against the income tax, pointing out that now one-third of people’s earnings go to taxes.306 A banner from one Democratic meeting criticized the higher excise taxes, hyperbolically claiming, “Current prices--flour $15, coal $14.”

The criticism of the taxes also came in more humorous forms, such as a poem captioned, “In what follows is more truth than poetry” about how every good imaginable is taxed, ”taxes on my bread, taxes on my butter: taxes on my salt, taxes on my supper” and signed by a “working man.”308

Along with excise and income tax, the war also brought “greenbacks.” Greenbacks were paper money issued throughout the war with a distinct green ink, hence the nickname “greenbacks.” The currency was not tied to a commodity like gold or silver, so the new fiat system could fluctuate based on the ebbs and flows of the war. Consequently, the North suffered from periods of inflation that strained an already war-weary public.309 The currency was not popular with the Eagle. For instance, a banner from a ward club meeting reported in the Eagle

306 “The Great Meeting,” BE, Sept. 13, 1864. Also see “The Civil War,” Tax History Project--The Civil War, 2018. While most of the traditional tax increases that pertained to consumption were regressive, the new income tax offset the burden placed on the lower classes. The first income tax implemented during the Civil War was the Internal Revenue Act of 1862, which levied a three percent annual tax on those making in excess of 800 dollars per year. Thus, wage earnings were not affected by the income tax. Later income taxes passed in 1864 established increasing rates based on annual earnings. The highest bracket had a rate of ten percent per year. People in the North did see high inflation and tax increases, but Kinsella’s tax complaint was nonetheless hyperbole.

307 “In what follows is more truth than poetry,” BE, Oct. 24, 1864.

308 McPherson notes that due to the North’s strong economy, inflation for the duration of the war was 80 percent which though high, paled in comparison to that of the Confederacy, which suffered through inflation of 9,000 percent over the course of the war (447).
read “Hard Cash--no Greenbacks,” an explicit complaint about the new currency. The fluctuating paper was also attacked in speeches, such as an address in the 9th Ward by John C. Donohue who explained that greenbacks hurt the working man “who finds himself, in consequence of a depreciated currency, in debt at the end of the week.” At a rally over a month later, the Democratic speaker criticized the move away from gold and silver currency, leading to the issue of “fluctuating” paper money. The *Eagle* endorsed the use of specie, stating unequivocally, that the “best fractional currency [a small denomination note] is made of silver, which will soon be introduced again if McClellan is elected” concluding with the forceful line, “The people have had enough dirty money.”

The rising national debt, while a less personal issue, still posed a threat to the nation’s viability according to the *Eagle*. In a letter published in the paper, Gov. Bramlette of Kentucky noted that the interest from all of the accumulated debt “mortgages the entire labor and production of all coming generations.” In the main article titled “Mr. Lincoln’s Election Perpetual Strife” the paper in strong terms ridiculed the Lincoln administration’s deficit asking, “of Mr. Lincoln where our dead are and where our national wealth has gone.” The paper was also capable of the same critique in more subtle tones, “The National Debt--The registered national debt incurred by Mr. Lincoln’s administration, amounted, September 30, to 1,955,973,710. Before November it will have increased to over two thousand millions of dollars”

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312 “The Meeting in the Academy of Music,” *BE*, Oct. 22, 1864. Also see Fig. 4.
315 “Mr. Lincoln’s Election Perpetual Strife,” *BE*, Sept. 28, 1864.
printing the massive number and then explaining that by “November,” the time of the election, it will continue to rise.\textsuperscript{317}

With high spending invariably comes corruption, abuse, and waste of funds. The \textit{Eagle} blasted the Republicans as the “shoddy party,” an insulting term given to war contractors who ripped off the government by providing poor quality food and uniform items.\textsuperscript{318} The \textit{Eagle}’s criticisms of the Lincoln administration and Republicans for their corruption was a broad category of complaints that included everything from using corruption to influence voting results, to abusing of patronage, to claims that Republicans were enriching themselves. For the \textit{Eagle} and Democrats, Lincoln’s economic policy was a failure. His implementation of greenbacks led to fluctuating currency that hurt working men and, to add insult to injury, the high excise taxes coupled with an income tax and a growing national debt burden further jeopardized the financial health of the country and its people.

\textbf{iv. The War Strategy/Effort}

The fall election season of 1864 came after a number of major Union victories, most notably the capture of Atlanta on September 1, 1864. Despite the change in the trajectory of the war, the \textit{Eagle} still had plenty to say on the subject. The criticisms of Lincoln’s war policy largely revolved on specific critiques of Lincoln’s direction of the 1862 Peninsula Campaign.

By the time of the election season in the fall of 1864, the Peninsula Campaign was militarily ancient history, yet politically viable. George McClellan, the Democratic candidate, had led the failed campaign from March to July, 1862. The massive advance of Union soldiers was the first full assault in the East. In planning for the campaign, Lincoln preferred an overland

\textsuperscript{317} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{318} “The Truth For Once,” \textit{BE}, Sept. 22, 1864.
route to Richmond while McClellan had pushed for an amphibious landing and then a shorter
overland thrust. Lincoln, under pressure to start the offensive, acquiesced to McClellan’s plan.
After three months of fighting, McClellan pulled his forces back, ending this campaign in
Virginia. In the election season, with McClellan’s war credentials up for public scrutiny, the
failures of the Peninsula Campaign turned into a political football.

In order to criticize Lincoln’s supposed meddling and “imbecility” during the Peninsula
Campaign, the Democrats first had to explain their presidential candidate’s credentials. The
_Eagle_ did what it could to burnish McClellan’s command history by highlighting his victories
prior to 1862 in West Virginia as well as his, “defence of the capitol” and work “to reorganize
the army.” McClellan needed to explain why one of the major campaigns that he had managed
had ended in failure.

The _Eagle_ had no trouble explaining the military record. First, McClellan was the man
who had organized the Army of the Potomac into a disciplined fighting force. Upon establishing
McClellan as a disciplined commander and a success in the field, the paper cast Lincoln as a
clumsy meddler who stuck his hands into the affairs of the military men. The _Eagle_ criticized,
“If Mr. Lincoln had not interfered with Gen. McClellan’s plans, the slaughter under Pope, under
Burnside … would all have been unnecessary.” Thus, the _Eagle_ seized on Lincoln’s
interference as the main reason for various Union Army failures. Specifically, the paper charged
Lincoln with giving John Fremont 10,000 men from McClellan’s forces out of “political
necessity” instead of for the good of the war effort. Furthermore, the _Eagle_ assailed Lincoln

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319 McPherson, 423.
320 “The Valor of our Armies and the Imbecility of the Cabinet,” _BE_, Sept. 21, 1864.
321 “Lincoln’s Interference with McClellan’s Plans--Keep the Facts before the People,” _BE_, Sept. 12, 1864.
322 “Lincoln Can Never Forgive Himself. How can He ask to be Forgiven by the People,” _BE_, Nov. 4, 1864.
323 “Lincoln’s Interference with McClellan’s Plan--Keep the Facts before the People,” _BE_, Sept. 12, 1864.
for not supplying McClellan with the appropriate number of men, “He [McClellan] declared his ability to capture the city [Richmond] if a reinforcement of thirty thousand men was sent to him” and drove the point home by noting that McClellan was “was nearer to Richmond than General Grant is today.”

The paper also directly criticized Lincoln for dividing McClellan's forces and promoting officers who opposed McClellan's plans for the 1862 campaign, “afterwards he promoted the four officers who had opposed Gen. McClellan’s campaign, three of whom he appointed to the command of the corps.”

The paper maintained that the officer reshuffling sabotaged the entire campaign.

For the *Eagle* and Democrats, Lincoln elevated politics over sound military strategy in the campaign. One article pointed out that although Lincoln was not up for reelection in 1862, he was now so “victories were not needed then; they are now.” The paper implied that in 1862, Lincoln could afford to make McClellan look like an inept general, while in the election season, Lincoln needed to win battles to bolster his electoral chances. The *Eagle* tried to prove this point by noting that Republicans printed “campaign documents” after military victories--thereby politicizing the war effort. In a speech printed in the *Eagle*, a certain John Jacobs offered a scathing report of Lincoln. He accused him of having “deliberately sacrificed” McClellan’s men for later political gains. The *Eagle* portrayed Lincoln as a guilt ridden military disaster who had sabotaged McClellan’s carefully laid plans. In contrast, the *Eagle*...
depicted General McClellan as a great general who had created the “finest army the world ever saw” out of a “disorganized mob.”

v. Reconstruction

By the fall of 1864, Lincoln had already begun testing various plans for Reconstruction. The *Eagle* derided the administration’s efforts to reintegrate the rebel states as a policy of “subjugation” that was sure to end in ruin. The case study for the *Eagle*’s position was the situation in Louisiana, where Lincoln implemented, by executive order, “The Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction,” in December 1863 which was also known as the “Ten Percent Plan.” Under this plan, ten percent of the voting population needed to sign the test oath in order for the state to “be recognized as the true government of the state” and therefore secure the Constitutional protection that, “the United States shall guaranty to every state in this Union a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application of the legislature, or the executive, (when the legislature cannot be convened,) against domestic violence.”

The *Eagle* attacked Lincoln’s early attempts at Reconstruction by equating the approach to England’s efforts to subdue Ireland; an imperialist “subjugation” doomed to fail. Under the broad heading of “subjugation,” the paper argued that Lincoln's Reconstruction would create issues such as a crippling economic burden from the confiscation and destruction of property that would invariably lead to a perpetual war with the need for standing armies. To the first point, the *Eagle* argued that the Union needed an economically productive South in order to pay back debts from the war. Consequently, taking away the rebels’ slaves—at a total economic loss of 3 billion

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330 “Lincoln’s Interference with McClellan’s Plan—Keep the Facts before the People,” *BE*, Sept. 12, 1864.

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dollars--combined with the confiscation of property could only lead to further unrest and nation-wide economic instability.\textsuperscript{333} Similar to England’s presence in Ireland, the \textit{Eagle} argued that in Louisiana, only 6,000 voted for the Constitution yet it took “30,000 bayonets” to hold the state.\textsuperscript{334} If a standing army of 30,000 men was needed in Louisiana, what would a policy look like in the rest of the rebel states under Lincoln? For the \textit{Eagle}, the answer was not optimistic. Under a Lincoln Reconstruction, the paper posited that there would be “perpetual strife” and, just as in Ireland, where it took “England 800 years to subdue Ireland,” it would take a lifetime to quell the South.\textsuperscript{335} Thus, according to the \textit{Eagle}, Lincoln’s insistence on a “vicious” and “hateful” policy was ruining the economic and social and political future of the southern states and ultimately the nation.\textsuperscript{336}

\textbf{vi. Foreign Affairs}

The \textit{Eagle} frequently reported on events in Mexico and Europe, but rarely critiqued Lincoln’s foreign policy. When the \textit{Eagle} did mention Lincoln’s foreign policy, its comments were biting. The central issue with Lincoln’s foreign policy was his perceived weakness in dealing with European states. In an article titled, “Mr. Jefferson Brick at his Old Game,” Lincoln’s policy is derided as weak on both the southern border, “The day Mr. Lincoln goes out of office, the throne of Maximilian loses the protection it now enjoys…” and the northern border, “On the Canada border another great confederation is being organized…”\textsuperscript{337} The central tenet of

\textsuperscript{333} Ibid. Also see “Will the Election of McClellan bring Peace and Union,” \textit{BE}, Oct. 22, 1864.
\textsuperscript{334} “Mr. Lincoln’s Election Perpetual Strife,” \textit{BE}, Sept. 28, 1864.
\textsuperscript{337} “Mr. Jefferson Brick at his Old Game,” \textit{BE}, Nov. 1, 1864. A reference to a fictional war correspondent of \textit{“The New York Rowdy Journal”} in Charles Dickens's satirical book, \textit{The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit}. The \textit{Eagle} compared a Republican supporter of Lincoln, Henry J. Raymond, with Mr. Jefferson Brick, a fictional character who sensationalized news. Likewise, the \textit{Eagle} accused Mr. Raymond of dramatizing European rulers fear of Lincoln when in fact they would “delight” in his re-election.
the argument, expressed in a speech by John Schumaker printed in the *Eagle* was that the Administration was “cowardly” with foreign powers. A reprinted list of resolutions articulated the cowardice in more specific terms, by arguing that Lincoln, “yielded the right to search to Great Britain and the Monroe Doctrine to France.” In regard to England, the resolution made reference to the explosive *Trent* Affair in which the Lincoln administration, after nearly sparking a war with England, “yielded the right to search” in the Democrats’ eyes and allowed two Southern diplomats to travel to England. In regards to Lincoln’s policy towards France, Democrats faulted the administration for allowing the French to install Maximillian, a European aristocrat, as king of Mexico. Thus, in the *Eagle*’s opinion, the administration suffered from a weak “apologist” foreign policy that would surely end with the incoming McClellan administration.

**vii. Past Republican Policies**

The *Eagle* vociferously criticized Republicans for historical courses not taken. In December of 1860, Senator Crittenden had proposed a resolution that came to be known as Crittenden's Compromise. It was a last-ditch effort to avoid disunion and war, which in historian Richard Carwardine’s view, “as a plan of pacification … was extremely well conceived” and if passed, would have taken “slavery from the reach of the federal government for all time.” The Compromise also proposed to re-enact the 36° 30’ line of the Missouri Compromise with slavery to the south and free labor to the north. The new line, however, did

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341 “Mr. Jefferson Brick at his Old Game,” *BE*, Nov. 1, 1864.
342 Carwardine, 140.
not limit slavery’s southern extension. Thus, under the Compromise, slavery would theoretically extend to future conquests like Cuba or Mexico.\textsuperscript{343} Furthermore, Crittenden included a provision barring attempts in the future to change the parts of the Constitution pertaining to slavery.\textsuperscript{344} The Compromise was popular in the lower North and some Eastern cities—traditional Democratic strongholds.\textsuperscript{345} Despite some Republican support for the plan, Lincoln was adamant on not allowing the expansion of slavery or the continuation of the doctrine of popular sovereignty.\textsuperscript{346} The Compromise was ultimately rejected, thereby making some type of conflict a near inevitability.\textsuperscript{347}

The \textit{Eagle}, a Democratic paper, was a major proponent of the Compromise. For instance, the paper argued that the Compromise, long dead by 1864, was nonetheless “now the policy of the Democratic Party.”\textsuperscript{348} Elaborating on such a bold proposition, a local lawyer, Henry D. Birdsall Esq., reminded Republicans that the Compromise, “could have avoided this terrible war.”\textsuperscript{349} A speaker from Albany delivering a speech in Brooklyn took the critique one step further, arguing that Republicans refused the Compromise because it would mean a loss of their political power.\textsuperscript{350} The \textit{Eagle}, in an article about the Presidency, argued that beyond union and political motives, the Crittenden Compromise would have settled the issue of slavery and then the nation could wait to let slavery die.\textsuperscript{351} As the Albany speaker highlighted, slavery was

\textsuperscript{344} Carwardine, 140.
\textsuperscript{345} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{346} Carwardine, 141.
\textsuperscript{347} Carwardine, 144.
already starting to go away with the “white line” of free labor pushing ever southward. The Eagle’s historical critiques made political sense. To a war-weary Democratic audience, complaints about how the Republican Party killed the old Crittenden Compromise was familiar music.

**viii. Voter Fraud**

Analyzing the *Eagle* for just over a two month period in the fall of 1864, one finds that most critiques of Lincoln remained consistent in terms of frequency and harshness. While various events over the two months, like the suppression of the *Baltimore Evening Post*, or the death of Chief Justice Taney, certainly created short-term spikes in coverage of specific issues, the events did little to affect the paper’s broad political commentary, with one prominent exception. Fear and complaints of Lincoln and his administration interfering with the voting process increased in frequency and severity over the election season.

In early September 1864, the pages of the *Eagle* lit up with excitement as it announced countless ward meetings, rallies, and speeches. The articles and printed speeches made but a few references to voting violations. On September 12, in an article titled “Spiking the Enemy’s Guns,” the *Eagle* predicted that under military supervision there will be a “bogus election” in Ohio. At a rally a day later, James Craig was printed in the paper expressing the need to maintain the “purity of the ballot box.” After another ten days, the Hon. S.B. Cushing was quoted raising similar fears about the administration potentially using the “bayonet” to influence the “ballot box.”

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In October, the fears of the *Eagle* and Democrats, only mildly and periodically expressed throughout September, increased in pitch and frequency as the gubernatorial and congressional elections neared. The first was that the administration would interfere with soldiers’ voting. On October 4, the *Eagle* published an article, “The Democratic Party and the Soldiers’ Vote,” accusing Lincoln of attempting to influence the army vote, “what Mr. Lincoln and his partisans desire is not that the soldiers will vote simply, but that they shall vote the Republican ticket.”

A few days after the Pennsylvania congressional election of October 10, the paper took a more strident tone, calling the soldiers’ votes rigged all “one way” after the Republican Party gained four seats at the Democrats’ expense. In mid-October, the *Eagle* picked up on a recent letter that Lincoln had written in which he stated that he would manage his side of the race as he pleased. The *Eagle* derided this “managing” doctrine as akin to “setting aside the Constitution.”

By late October, the *Eagle*’s complaints about fraud and abuses of the ballot box reached a fever pitch, with numerous articles coming out every day. The criticism changed in tone from the worries of voting abuse in September to absolute charges of interference in late October. One article accused Republicans of repeat voting and reported rampant fraud in the election in Indiana for Governor Morton. Another article from October 28 went into further depth, calculating that of the “80,000” Pennsylvania soldiers in the field, “12,000” voted and “11,000”

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357 “The Death of Chief Justice Taney,” *BE*, Oct. 13, 1864. Also see David McKelvy, Margaret Bird McKelvy, and Daniel W. Crofts, “Notes and Documents: Soldier Voting in 1864: The David McKelvy Diary,” *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. Of the 23,120 soldier ballots cast, the Republicans (Union) won 77 percent of the votes (10).
358 “Are We to Have a Fair Election,” *BE*, Oct 18, 1864.

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voted for Lincoln, concluding that the McClellan men must have been sent on “extra picket
duty.”\textsuperscript{360}

By late October into November, the \textit{Eagle} started to move on from the congressional and
gubernatorial elections and to attack purported abuse of the soldiers’ vote. With thousands of
soldiers returning home to vote and many more voting from the field, the Democrats accused the
administration of manipulating wartime conditions. For instance, on October 27, the \textit{Eagle}
declared that Lincoln was “defrauding the soldiers” on the “Ocean Queen” by keeping it at sea so
the majority Democrat sailors on board could not cast their ballots.\textsuperscript{361} On November 7, just three
days before the election, the \textit{Eagle} ran an article titled, “Defrauding the Soldier.” The article
claimed that Republican men at the post office switched ballots, citing one soldier who “stated
that he had voted the Democratic ticket,” but when he later opened the envelope for his ballot, he
found a “Republican ticket” was inside.\textsuperscript{362}

From early September to October and then deeper into October up until the election, fears
of voting fraud steadily increased in both frequency of reporting and also in the depths of the
charges against Lincoln and the Republicans.

This paper argues that the \textit{Eagle} had two core criticisms of Lincoln. First, it claimed that
as a result of his tyrannical tendencies he suppressed freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution
such as when he suspended the writ of habeas corpus. The second core charge is that Lincoln

\textsuperscript{360} “Abolition Electioneering Tricks--How Pennsylvania Soldiers Will Vote,” \textit{BE}, Oct. 28, 1864. Also see
records from the Army of the Potomac indicate that the men overwhelmingly favored Lincoln in the election. For
instance, Lincoln won with men from Pennsylvania by a wide margin of 3,494 votes out of 11,122 votes cast (455).
Lincoln won with soldiers across the board. In Atlanta, Sherman’s Army voted overwhelmingly for Lincoln (456).
In fact, soldiers voted for Lincoln at a higher rate than civilians, 78 percent of soldiers voted for Lincoln as opposed
to 53 percent on the civilian side (458).

\textsuperscript{361} “Defrauding the Soldiers,” \textit{BE}, Oct. 27, 1864

\textsuperscript{362} “Defrauding the Soldiers,” \textit{BE}, Nov. 7, 1864.
hijacked the cause of the war and turned a struggle to preserve the Union into a fight over Abolition. In the *Eagle*’s estimation, attacking rights enshrined in the First Amendment, suspending habeas corpus and violating the state’s rights to govern their own institutions all posed serious Constitutional threats. Thus, the core of the *Eagle*’s position was that in two different ways, Lincoln had thrown aside the laws of the land and pursued his own course of action.

The *Eagle* kept its composure, and rigid sense of order after Lincoln’s ultimate victory on November 8, 1864. First, the *Eagle* did not announce Lincoln’s victory with any fanfare. Conversely, the paper did not run a title bemoaning the defeat and predicting ruin for the nation. Instead, without pomp, the *Eagle* called for unity: “The people, in the exercise of their sovereign right, have legally, peacefully, and fairly entrusted the administration of the government to Mr. Lincoln. The day before yesterday Mr. Lincoln was our political opponent, and we opposed him with all the energy and ability we possessed of. Today he is our President simply, and now it is our duty to support him in all things lawful.”363 The turnaround is remarkable. Just six days before, on November 4, the Eagle ran an article, “Mr. Lincoln Can Never Forgive Himself. How can He ask to be Forgiven by the People,” accusing Lincoln of causing thousands of deaths by taking away men from McClellan in 1862 when McClellan was outside Richmond.364 And yet less than a week later, the man that caused thousands of deaths was no longer a figure to attack. He simply became the President of all Americans.

### Conclusion

364 “Mr. Lincoln Can Never Forgive Himself. How can He ask to be Forgiven by the People,” *BE*, Nov. 4, 1864.
The *Eagle* was embedded in the fabric of the Democratic Party and was the major Democratic paper in Brooklyn during the second half of the nineteenth century. As a Democratic paper with a large circulation, the *Eagle* found itself in a precarious position. First, the paper had a responsibility to call for civil order and public restraint, and yet it needed to stand by its base of Democratic whites and in particular Irish Catholics. Second, the *Eagle* was a commercial venture that relied on selling papers and advertising space to maintain its revenue stream, so it was in the paper’s interest to appeal to a large swath of the population. Third, the paper was founded and run by men who held mainstream political views and who had a stake in the continuing operation of party politics at the local and national levels. Consequently, throughout the war, the *Eagle* stayed a middle course.

As this paper has demonstrated, the *Eagle*’s focus on the rule of law carried into its coverage of local, regional, and national events. At the local and regional level, the *Eagle*, through both the Brooklyn Tobacco Factory Riot and the New York Draft Riots, was quick to condemn lawlessness and violence—especially towards the defenseless black community. On the national stage, during the election of 1864, the *Eagle* was highly critical of Lincoln and his party, but when the election was over, the paper called for unity and adherence to the rule of law. Thus, while the *Eagle* bucked, neighed, and pulled at the Republican reins, in the critical moments, the paper remained true to the Democratic Party’s, “cardinal maxim” of “obedience to the law.”

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Fig. 3. “The COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF Conciliating the SOLDIER'S VOTES on the Battle Field.” HarpWeek: American Political Prints 1766-1876. 2010. http://loc.harpweek.com/LCPoliticalCartoons/IndexDisplayCartoonMedium.asp?SourceIndex=Topics&IndexText=Antietam,battlefield at&UniqueID=33&Year=1864.


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Fig. 1. “Map of the Consolidated City of Brooklyn 1864.” The map shows the breakdown of Brooklyn by wards in 1864.
Fig. 2. “The Miscegenation Ball.” The image depicts whites and blacks dancing together under a pro-Lincoln banner.
Fig. 3. “The Commander and Chief.” In this cartoon, Lincoln stands among the dead and wounded at Antietam and calls for a humorous song.
Fig. 4. “Brooklyn Sanitary Fair, 1864.” The Academy held the Sanitary Fair of 1864 as well as numerous political rallies.