



To Douglass's great joy, the Emancipation Proclamation was passed in January 1863. Even though more than two years of war remained to be fought, the proclamation declared that all enslaved people in the South were now free. Douglass first met President Lincoln in July of 1863, at the White House. It was the first of many meetings. "I was never more quickly or more completely put at ease

in the presence of a great man than in that of Abraham Lincoln," he wrote. The purpose of Douglass's visit was, among other things, to request that black soldiers receive the same wages as whites, to assure them the same protection if taken prisoner, and to include them in prisoner exchanges. Lincoln promised to do what he could on each request.