

General John C. Frémont

John C. Fremont was born on January 21, 1813 in Savannah, GA. Before the Civil War, Fremont established himself as a national hero. During the 1840's, he led trailblazing expeditions across the Rocky Mountains and played a significant role in the campaign to win California from Mexico. It was during this time that he became known as the "Pathfinder". He was a strong supporter of the Republican Party and won the affection of many Northerners during the presidential campaign of 1856, the first for the Republicans. Fremont was one of four major generals appointed by President Abraham Lincoln at the outset of the Civil War, receiving his commission on May 14, 1861. Lincoln assigned Fremont the command of the Western Department, headquartered in St. Louis, MO in July 1861. Lincoln did



so at the urging of Fremont's many friends and supporters and would soon regret his decision.



As the Western Department commander, Fremont spent hundreds of thousands of dollars fortifying the city of St. Louis, while his field commanders were left ill equipped and inadequately supported. Union defeats at Springfield and Lexington, MO turned many of Fremont's supporters into adversaries. The general's impetuous order freeing all slaves owned by Missouri secessionists, known as Fremont's Emancipation Proclamation, cost him Lincoln's confidence. Fremont viewed his move as a brilliant war measure, whereas Lincoln viewed it as a swipe at border state loyalists – an ill-conceived attempt to turn the war to save the Union into a war to abolish slavery. In October 1861, Fremont was relieved of all duties as a Union commander.

Fremont's removal from the public eye was short-lived as in March 1862, he returned to service as commander of the newly created Mountain Department. He again proved unequal to his task as he was defeated in a confrontation with Major General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. Shortly thereafter, Major General John Pope was named as his superior, which prompted Fremont to request relief from all of his duties. In the presidential election of 1864, he made a weak attempt to head an independent third party.

After 1864, Fremont's personal wealth began to decay with the loss of his California properties. Between 1878 and 1883, he served as territorial governor of Arizona. During his later years, he depended heavily upon his wife's income as a writer. Fremont died in New York, NY on July 13, 1890.



More Information:

[Proclamations made and letters written by John C. Fremont](#)

Reference and Credits:

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John C. Frémont decided against
this run for 1864 President against
Lincoln and retired for a while from
public office. – Photo – Library of
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