

# Certification of the 13th Amendment by Secretary of State William H. Seward, December 18, 1865

No. 52

WILLIAM H. SEWARD,

SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

To all to whom these presents may come, greeting:

KNOW ye, that whereas the congress of the United States on the 1st of February last passed a resolution which is in the words following, namely:

“A resolution submitting to the legislatures of the several states a proposition to amend the Constitution of the United States.

“Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, (two thirds of both houses concurring,) That the following article be proposed to the legislatures of the several states as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which, when ratified by three fourths of said legislatures, shall be valid, to all intents and purposes, as a part of the said constitution, namely:

“ARTICLE XIII.

“SECTION 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

“SEC. 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.”

And whereas it appears from official documents on file in the department that the amendment to the Constitution of the United States proposed, as aforesaid, has been ratified by the legislatures of the States of Illinois, Rhode Island, Michigan, Maryland, New York, West Virginia, Maine, Kansas, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Ohio, Missouri, Nevada, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Vermont, Tennessee, Arkansas, Connecticut, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia; in all twenty-seven states;

And whereas the whole number of states in the United States is thirty-six; and whereas the before specially-named states, whose legislatures have ratified the said proposed amendment, constitute three fourths of the whole number of states in the United States:

Now, therefore, be it known, that I, WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State of the United States, by virtue and in pursuance of the second section of the act of congress, approved the twentieth of April, eighteen hundred and eighteen, entitled "An act to provide for the publication of the laws of the United States and for other purposes," do hereby certify that the amendment aforesaid has become valid, to all intents and purposes, as a part of the Constitution of the United States.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this eighteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five, and of

The Independence of the United States of America the ninetieth.

WILLIAM H. SEWARD.

Secretary of State.