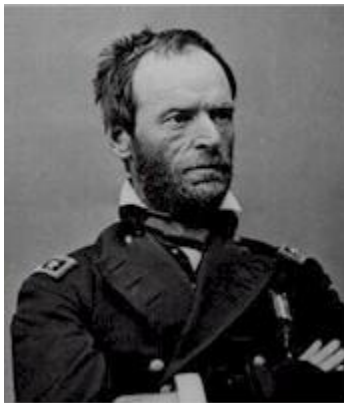


PART XIII. GENERAL SHERMAN'S ATROCITIES AND WAR CRIMES

Unit Introduction: In Part 13 we will briefly examine a few of the atrocities and war crimes that General Sherman committed against the people of Georgia. Sherman's famous march to the sea will live in infamy as one of the great acts of in-human depravity in his quest for "total war" against the innocents. The untold suffering could take volumes to report. Presented here just a few of the criminal acts.

Unit Objective: To develop an awareness of the war crimes, the scope of destruction and of terror that Sherman's troops perpetrated on the non-combatant citizens of Georgia.

A. The New Manchester and Roswell, Georgia Mills and the Roswell Women



In July of 1864, Major General William Tecumseh Sherman's troops approached Atlanta which would set the stage for a total war against the people of Georgia, commonly called his "March To The Sea." From Atlanta to Savannah, Sherman left a trail of utter destruction behind. He and his bummers stripped the land clean of all resources. What they could not use themselves, they destroyed so that nothing was left for the civilian population in the way of sustaining life.

"On July 2nd, regiments of Union cavalry and infantry arrived at New Manchester, Georgia with the mission to cause destruction to the factories and mills in the area. Former Governor Charles J. McDonald and business partner James Rogers built the mill known as the Sweetwater Manufacturing Company. The mill went into operation on December 21, 1849, and their products rapidly became known throughout the south. In addition to the textile operations, there was a flour and gristmill to the south and a water powered saw mill one mile north. In 1861 the Company contracted with the Confederate Government to produce material for Confederate uniforms. The mill/factory combination was five stories tall, bigger than any building in Atlanta at that time. By 1864 most of the men were fighting in the Confederate Army. The 60 to 70 employees at the mill consisted mostly of women and their children. A small contingent of Militia known as the "Sweetwater Guards", were stationed at the mill.



On July 5, 1864, Federal General Kenner Garrard's cavalry reached Roswell and finding it undefended, occupied the city. The cotton factory was working up to the time of its destruction, some 400 women being employed. Despite its tiny size, the town had become the center of a thriving textile industry during the war. The cotton mill was cranking out up to 191,000 yards of cloth per month and the woolen mill up to 30,000 yards of "Roswell Gray" uniforms. Each of the mills employed hundreds of women, some of them black. The Yankee troops were under orders from General Sherman to arrest everyone in the towns, as they are connected to the factory production, and destroy the resources that sustain the mills and the people. Refinements of Confederate militia posted as outlooks spotted the sizeable approaching troops commanded by Colonel Adams and Major

Tompkins. Artillery following the Union forces took aim on the mill located on the Sweetwater Creek. The site was terrorizing to the workers, mostly women who posed no threat to the Union soldiers. Henry Lovern and A.C. "Cicero" Tippens who were operating the mill were soon arrested by the Army officers. Guards ordered to escort all the workers home and to put the town on marshal law. In effect they arrested every citizen in the community, and thus closing the mill. Adams and Tompkins told the townspeople that their operation was to protect them from being in harms way when the fighting commenced. They informed the citizens that as soon as wagons could be obtained, they would be transported to a safer location miles to the west.

With the the town under control. the Union troops searched the entire town, taking some property and destroying other property out if spite. Soldiers also broke into a safe attempting to locate valuables. Union patrols were sent to other areas such as Ferguson's Merchant Mill and Alexander's Mill. Tompkins took a sizeable part of his cavalry and moved on to Roswell to confront the operators of the mills there.



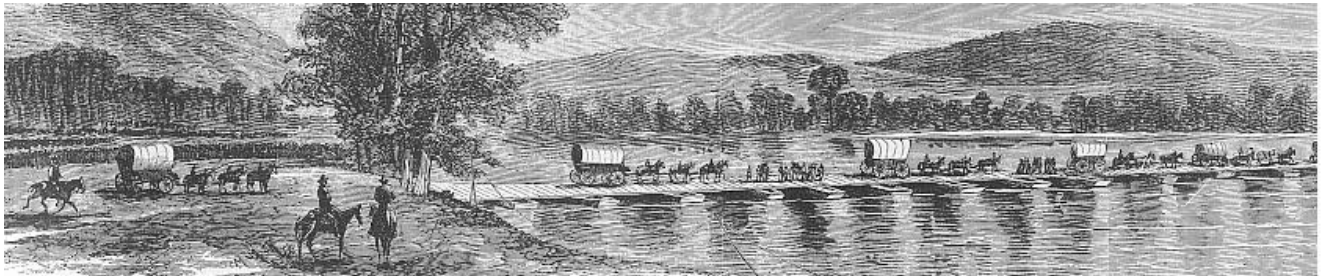
The owners of the Roswell Mills learned of the approaching Yankee marauders and in a desperate maneuver they thought might save their property, turned over ownership to Theophilie

Roche. Roach was a French citizen, not an American. He chose to fly a French government flag on the property. When asked by Tompkins why he was flying a foreign flag, Roach told him of his citizenship and that his property was under the protection of the French government. Any act against him or the property, was an act of war against France. Tompkins was stumped so he sent word back to the commanding generals. General Sherman became furious when given the news. He is quoted as saying. *"I repeat my orders that you arrest all people, male and female, connected with those factories, no matter what the clamor, and let them foot it, under guard, to Marietta, where I will send them by cars to the North. Should you, under the impulse of anger, natural at contemplating such perfidy, hang the wretch (Roche), I approve the act beforehand!"*

Tompkins returned on July 8 New Manchester. He already burnt Roswell Mills and was not ready to carry out Sherman's reiterated orders to level the mills, the town and to make prisoners all the citizens. General Garrard reported to General William T. Sherman on July 6, 1864 that *"there were fine factories here, I had the building burnt, all were burnt."* Tompkins is quoted as saying to the leaders of the town *"You must fix up to go west where you could get provisions, as they intended to destroy everything in this part of the country."* On July 9, New Manchester, mills, stores, homes were all burnt by Yankee troops. Next the Federal artillery had its turn at destroying the town. A 300 foot dam that

was built to span the creek near the mill was blown apart by cannon fire. The rush of flood waters completed the leveling of the town.

Federal wagons arrived to take the citizen prisoners North to Marietta, rather than to safety in the west as had been promised. There were simply not enough wagons to haul all the citizens away, so the officers ordered the men of the Calvary troop to take on a citizen rider. Of course the soldiers chose the women factory workers to be their riding partners. This kind of close contact between men and women of the period was considered an indecent act. The women protested being subjected to this degradation, but to no avail, they were overpowered by the soldiers. These Georgia women were not only forced to ride in close contact, they were subject to all kinds of other contact, deemed needed by the "guards" It became quite a scene as Calvary fought to pick out their preferred spoil of war. A crude Yankee stated in a letter *"It is a very fine sight we don't often see in the army. The employees were all women and they were really good looking."* and *"We always felt that we had a perfect right to appropriate to our own use anything we needed for our comfort and convenience."* One soldier confided to his diary, *"My delirium took the form of making love to the women."* These conditions hurled at the Confederate soldier's sisters, wives, nieces and mothers whom they had left behind at home. At no time did they conceive of such a dastardly, uncivilized thing happening under the protection of a General Officer's orders. By night some officers had to post their troops a mile north of the female prisoners for fear of loosing all control over them.



The "Factory Hands" or "Roswell Women" as they would be referred to in the Official Records, were gathered from the mill areas in Marietta to link up with rail transportation. The approximately 400-500 females were placed in the Georgia Military Institute building as they had been long since separated from any males in the prisoner group. Union General George Thomas reported to Sherman that *"The Roswell Factory hands, 400 or 500 in number, have arrived at Marietta. The most of them are women. I can only order them transportation to Nashville where it seems hard to turn them adrift. What had best be done with them?"* Sherman planned to send them via railroad from Marietta thru Nashville with an ultimate destination of Indiana. Remember these women had committed no crime. They were taken prisoner, abused, manhandled, molested, raped and now would be transported hundreds of miles way from their homes. In those days it was rare to travel more than 10 miles or so from home. These battered Georgia women, were in complete terror. Some felt death might be a less cruel fate.

The Roswell woman were transport to Nashville then to Louisville by the Western and Atlantic Railroad. A newspaper documented their arrival *"The train which arrived at*

Louisville from Nashville last evening brought up from the South two hundred and forty-nine women and children, who are sent by order of General Sherman, to be transferred north of the Ohio River, there to remain during the war. We understand that there are now at Nashville fifteen hundred women and children, who are in a very destitute condition, and who are to be sent to Louisville to be sent North. A number of them were engaged in the manufactories at Sweetwater at the time that place was captured by our forces."

Upon this news reaching the North, a New York newspaper wrote: *"It is hardly conceivable that an officer bearing a United States commission of Major General should have so far forgotten the commonest dictates of decency and humanity...as to drive four hundred penniless girls hundreds of miles away from their homes and friends to seek their livelihood amid strange and hostile people. We repeat our earnest hope that further information may redeem the name of General Sherman and our own from this frightful disgrace."* Sherman said the women were *"tainted with treason and...are as much governed by the rules of war as if in the ranks. ... The whole region was devoted to manufactories, but I will destroy every one of them"* Another paper wrote *"only think of it! Four hundred weeping and terrified Ellens, Susans and Maggies transported in springless and seatless army wagons, away from their loves and brothers of the sunny South, and all for the offense of weaving tent-cloth."* The women were kept in prison until they signed allegiance to the United States. Those that did sign were released and sent across the Ohio River; those that didn't stayed in prison.



When the war ended and soldiers came home, they found their communities destroyed and their relatives missing. None of the New Manchester women ever returned and only a handful of the men. There were only a few men who could be found that had a first-hand knowledge of the events at New Manchester. One can only wonder what happened to the nearly 400 women that were originally taken prisoner. One husband successfully located his wife in Louisville and brought her home, but this was an exception. Most of the

returning Confederate soldiers died never knowing the whereabouts of their wives, sisters, children or cousins. Imagine the fate of those expatriated women. How would they survive, some with children? What acts would they be forced to commit to stay alive? What suffering did they endure and for what crime? This vile act of inhumane transgressions, conceived and condoned by General Sherman, against innocent people of the South has never received atonement. It may be a classic example of why the war scars run deep in the

South and the descendants of the Confederate soldiers can not today, let this history be forgotten.

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THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN, FROM JULY 1, 1864, TO SEPTEMBER 8, 1864.--#5

B. Sherman's March Through The South



U.S. General William Tecumseh Sherman's march through the South, notably, through Georgia and South Carolina, may qualify as the most hideous of all military assaults against a non-combatant civilian population in modern history. The list of recorded accounts of wanton criminal acts that Sherman was wholly responsible for would be entirely too long to attempt to cover in this course. However a few examples from the Official Records involving Sherman's actions will surely leave the reader convinced that Sherman detested the Southern people and wished to punish them with extreme prejudice.

Immediately after his return to Atlanta from Jonesboro, Sherman determined to make that city a military camp, and issued orders accordingly. *"The city of Atlanta," these orders read, "being exclusively required for warlike purposes, will at once be vacated by all except the armies of the United States and such civilian employees as may be retained by the proper department of government."* The chief quartermaster was instructed to take possession of buildings of all kinds, and of all staple articles, such as cotton and tobacco. The chief engineer was to reconnoiter the city and suburbs for a more contracted line of defense, and designate such buildings as should be

destroyed to make room for his operations. The remaining buildings would be set apart for different military uses, and under the direction of the quartermaster the troops were to be permitted to pull down buildings and use the materials for constructing shanties and bivouacs.



In a letter to General Hood, Sherman wrote that he considered *"it to be to the interest of the United States that all citizens now residing in Atlanta should remove,"* to which Hood replied: *"This unprecedented measure transcends in studied and ingenious cruelty all acts ever before brought to my attention in the dark history of war."* Hood agreed however, for the sake of humanity, to assist in the removal of the citizens.

General Sherman also issued the following military order at Big Shanty, Georgia (presently Kennesaw) on June 23, 1864: *"If torpedoes (mines) are found in the possession of an enemy to our rear, you may cause them to be put on the ground and tested by a wagon load of prisoners, or if need be a citizen implicated in their use. In like manner, if a torpedo is suspected on any part of the road, order the point to be tested by a carload of prisoners, or by citizens implicated, drawn by a long rope."*

General Sherman also wrote to U.S. Brigadier General John Eugene Smith at Allatoona, Georgia, on July 14, 1864: *"If you entertain a bare suspicion against any family, send it to the North. Any loafer or suspicious person seen at any time should be imprisoned and sent off. If guerrillas trouble the road or wires they should be shot without mercy."*

General Sherman also wrote to U.S. Brigadier General Louis Douglass Watkins at Calhoun, Georgia, on Oct. 29, 1864: *"Can you not send over to Fairmount and Adairsville, burn 10 or 12 houses of known secessionists, kill a few at random and let them know it will be repeated every time a train is fired upon from Resaca to Kingston."*



Brigadier General Edward M. McCook, First Cavalry Division of Cavalry Corps, at Calhoun, Georgia, on October 30, 1864, reported to Sherman, *"My men killed some of those fellows two or three days since, and I had their houses burned....I will carry out your instructions thoroughly and leave the country east of the road uninhabitable."*

Sherman, on November 11, 1864, telegraphed Halleck, *"Last night we burned all foundries, mills, and shops of every kind in Rome, and tomorrow I leave Kingston with the rear guard for Atlanta, which I propose to dispose of in a similar manner, and to start on the 16th on the projected grand raid.....Tomorrow our wires will be broken, and this is probably my last dispatch."*

In Kingston, Georgia, Sherman wrote to U.S. Major General Philip H. Sheridan, *"I am satisfied...that the problem of this war consists in the awful fact that the present class of men who rule the South must be killed outright rather than in the conquest of territory, so that*

hard, bull-dog fighting, and a great deal of it, yet remains to be done....Therefore, I shall expect you on any and all occasions to make bloody results."

Captain Orlando M. Poe, chief engineer, Military Division of the Mississippi, reported: *"The court-house in Sandersonville (Georgia), a very substantial brick building, was burned by order of General Sherman, because the enemy had made use of its portico from which to fire upon our troops."*



Sherman, in Milledgeville, Georgia, issued Special Order no. 127, "In case of...destruction (of bridges) by the enemy,...the commanding officer...on the spot will deal harshly with the inhabitants nearby....Should the enemy burn forage and corn on our route, houses, barns, and cotton-gins must also be burned to keep them company."

General Howard reported to Sherman, "We have found the country full of provisions and forage....Quite a number of private dwellings...have been destroyed by fire...; also, many instances of the most inexcusable and wanton acts, such as the breaking open of trunks, taking of silver pate, etc."

Sherman reported to Grant, "The whole United States...would rejoice to have this army turned loose on South Carolina to devastate that State, in the manner we have done in Georgia."

On December 22 in Savannah, Georgia, Sherman advised Grant, "We are in possession of Savannah and all its forts....I could go on and smash South Carolina all to pieces." On December 24 Sherman wrote Halleck, "The truth is the whole army is burning with an insatiable desire to wreak vengeance upon South Carolina."

When Sherman had reached Savannah he was ordered to board ship and sail to Virginia to join Grant outside Virginia. Sherman rebelled in rage. He pledged, "I'm going to march to Richmond...and when I go through South Carolina it will be one of the most horrible things in the history of the world. The devil himself couldn't restrain my men in that state."

And, finally, Gen. Sherman writing to U.S. Major George H. Thomas on November 1, 1864: "I propose...to sally forth and make a hole in Georgia that will be hard to mend."



In his report of the march to the sea, Sherman declared that he had destroyed the railroads for more than 100 miles, and had consumed the corn and fodder in the region of country 30 miles on either side of a line from Atlanta to Savannah, as also the sweet potatoes, cattle, hogs, sheep and poultry, and carried away more than 10,000 horses and mules, as well as a countless number of slaves.

"I estimate the damage done to the State of Georgia and its military resources at \$100,000,000; at least \$20,000,000 of which has inured to our advantage, and the remainder is simply waste and destruction." After admitting that "this may seem a hard species of warfare," he comforted himself with the reflection that "it brought the sad realities of war home to those who supported it." Thus condoning all the outrages committed by an unrestrained army, he further reported that his men were "a little loose in foraging, and did some things they ought not to have done."

The ultimate attempt at total genocide by the U.S. troops under Sherman would have to be the multiple cases of troops sowing salt into the soil of an area in which they were about to leave. Thus, leaving the entire area unfit to grow any crops in the near future. Sherman's march through the South will be remembered by generations still yet to come.

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C. Sherman's Bummers

The term "bummers" refers to General Sherman's foragers during the March To The Sea and the Carolinas Campaign and is possibly deriving from the German *Bummler*, meaning "idler" or "wastrel." Many soldiers, who believed it struck terror in the hearts of Southern people, embraced the name.



On the road from Atlanta to the sea and then north, Sherman's columns left their supply bases far behind, and their wagons could not carry provisions sufficient for all the Union troops. Sherman wanted to move fast and not be encumbered by supply trains or even worrying about protecting supply lines. He therefore ordered the Yankee soldiers to live off the

land. Since it was Sherman's intent, as we have already shown in his statements in the Official Records, "*to make Georgia howl*" to cause the citizens to suffer as much as possible he accomplished both objectives with use of the bummers. The Yankees also intended to lay just as heavy a hand on South Carolina, because they considered a "*hellhole of secession.*"

Details of men were ordered to gather rations and forage of any sort and quantity useful to their commands and could appropriate animals and conveyances without limit. Soldiers committed trespass on private dwellings and farms, used abusive or threatening language especially to the women folk left at home, and often did not leave the family enough food for to sustain themselves. Often what they could not consume on the spot or carry off, was destroyed.

Commanders were advised to "*enforce a devastation more or less relentless, according to the measure of hostility.*" But some of the bummers considered silent non compliance as

hostility and destroyed the property as many Southern women and children stood aside, watch in horror, and fearing for their lives.



The bumper foraging parties became bands of marauders answering to no authority. One conscientious bumper wrote to his sister about the depredations inflicted on South Carolina: *“How would you like it, what do you think, to have troops passing your house constantly ... ransacking and plundering and carrying off everything that could be of any use to them? There is considerable excitement in foraging, but it is [a] disagreeable business in some respects to go into people's houses and take their provisions and have the women begging and entreating you to leave a little when you*

are necessitated to take all. But I feel some degree of consolation in the knowledge I have that I never went beyond my duty to pillage.”

The foraging system soon would begin to show disorganization. The system was originally designed for a brigade to send out a foraging party of fifty men. This usually was inadequate to feed an entire brigade, so the practice of regiments sending a few companies of foragers each became common. The provisions collected by that detachment would then supply their particular regiment. Even this method would not satisfy the Union commanders, or the greed of the bumpers, so even smaller detachments could be sent out to try their hand a plunder. Most of Sherman's men had taken part in foraging at one time or another in this campaign.

Because a man can only carry so many supplies on foot, the practice of bumpers confiscating mounts became not only common but also encouraged. Even the addition of a few mules however did not totally do the trick in helping carry off provisions captured, so commanders would detach wagons for service with foraging detachments.

Upon arriving at a farm, bumpers would take care of themselves first. They would usually round up food for themselves and then force some of the women of the farm to cooking a meal for them. While their meal was being cooked they would go about the business of finding the provisions for their comrades. Any wagons and mules of the farm would be rounded up and the provisions loaded up. Animals would either be shot or butchered on the spot. With no method of preservation except salt, the farm salt supply was often stolen to provide for curing the butchered meat. The meat then of course would be put on the wagons or mules. Of course many times these bumpers would take the opportunity to raid the house and take everything they could carry off. The taking from houses of food, valuables, and even clothes seems to rank among the house burnings with the most notorious actions committed by the bumpers. Of course when their meal was ready the

bummers would stop what they were doing and fill their bellies just as they had filled their mules and wagons.

As word spread of the tactics of the Union army, the farm families would try to hide as



much food and valuables as they could. Food stuffs and supplies were already in short supply. Much of what could be raised was sent on to feed the Confederate troops in the field. What was left at home was minimal. Not only did they not wish to aid the criminal Yankee bummers, they had to try to save food for themselves to live on. Most of the civilians would not be cooperative in telling the location of their valuables and provisions.

Women would often resort to placing valuables and other things worth saving under them in their chair. Sitting and refusing to move, the surmising that the Yankees wouldn't dare move the women to search. Some resorted to tying valuables under their dresses in petticoats, such as silverware. They tried to stand still so as not to clink the silverware. This worked in some cases, in others the Yankees would molest the Southern women and girls taking the goods and also taking liberties with the ladies.

Other hiding places were often discovered by Yankees who became wise to the tricks. Yankees would also resort to trickery and treats of harm to get the goods. A typically they might interrogate the women, and when the women denied they had any food stuffs, the bummers would say something like *"Since you don't have anything to eat, obviously you can not continue to live on this farm as you can not sustain yourself, so the Federal government must take care of you. We will relocate you to a refugee camp and will burn the house and outbuildings."* This would often scare the civilians into revealing their hiding spot. After the bummers got what they want, many times they would burn the outbuildings anyway. Another method to force the Southerners to give up their stores would be the time honored threat of violence to ladies or children.



After their collecting of supplies, the bummers would then make their way back to their commands. Many times when the house and outbuildings were of no more use to the bummers, they would set fire to them. There were many incidents of multiple bummer raids on a single farm. When group of bummers left

another would come marching in. If the first group didn't burn the houses and buildings, this second group might. The second and third groups would become more and more agitated as most of the goods would have been stolen by the first group. As successive groups of bummers came time and time again to the farms, the threat of violence against the citizens rose as did the terror felt by the Southerners. Some Yankee were just sadistic and mean spirited. One might understand the taking of the horse, but kill of dogs? At right is a drawing "General Sherman's Troops killing bloodhounds." An inscription on the back of the drawing reads: "*Gen. Sherman's men invariably killed all the bloodhounds and dogs of most every description by the order of the commanding general.*"

Many Confederates adopted a "No quarter for bummers" attitude. After all the criminal acts that the Yankee soldiers perpetrated against the non-combatant citizens, a militia, home guard, or Georgia Volunteer felt little remorse in dispatching them to their maker. A Confederate soldier remarked that flaming buildings and women's tears were stronger than the prayers of the Yankee prisoners begging for their lives.



General Howard, evidently ashamed of the manner of the marching through Georgia, claims that the "Sherman bummers" were not with his wing. He reported the capture of about 1,200 prisoners, 10,500 cattle, about \$300,000 worth of subsistence, 931 horses, 1,850 mules, about 5,000,000 pounds each of corn and fodder, and the destruction of 3,500 bales of cotton and 191 miles of railroad. Slocum reported a similar amount of subsistence taken, 119 miles of railroad wrecked, 17,000 bales of cotton destroyed. The limits of this chapter do not permit of an adequate description of the ruin wrought throughout Georgia. The imagination, acting upon the basis of the outline here given, cannot exceed the reality.

In his message of February 17, 1865, Governor Brown, after recounting the destruction wrought by Sherman, said: "*In these misfortunes Georgia has been taunted by some of the public journals of other States because her people did not drive back and destroy the enemy.*"



Those who do us this injustice fail to state the well-known fact that of all the tens of thousands of veteran infantry, including most of the vigor and manhood of the State, which she had furnished for the Confederate service, but a single regiment, the Georgia regulars, of about 300 effective men, was permitted to be upon her soil during the march of General Sherman from her northeast border to the city of Savannah, and that gallant regiment was kept upon one of our islands most of the time and not permitted to unite with those who met the enemy. Nor were the places of our absent sons filled by troops from other States. One brigade of Confederate troops was sent by the President from North Carolina, which reached Georgia after her capital was

in possession of the enemy. For eight months the Confederate reserves, reserve militia, detailed men, exempts, and most State officers, civil as well as military, had kept the field almost constantly, participating in every important fight from Kenesaw to Honey Hill. If the sons of Georgia under arms in other States had been permitted to meet the foe upon her own soil, without other assistance, General Sherman's army could never have passed from the mountains to the seaboard."

A part of this evidence is to be found in the following letter from a lieutenant, Thomas J. Myers, published in Vol. 12, Southern Historical Society Papers, page 113, with the following head note: "*The following letter was found in the streets of Columbia after the Army of General Sherman had left. The original is still preserved, and can be shown and substantiated, if anybody desires. We are indebted to a distinguished lady of this city for a copy, sent with a request for publication. We can add nothing in the way of comment on such a document. It speaks for itself.*" The letter, which is a republication from the Alderson, West Virginia, *Statesman*, of October 29, 1883, is as follows:
"*Camp Near Camden, S.C., February 26, 1865.*

My Dear Wife:

"I have no time for particulars. We have had a glorious time in this State, Unrestricted license to burn and plunder was the order of the day. The chivalry have been stripped of most of their valuables. Gold watches, silver pitchers, cups, spoons, forks, &c., &c., are as common in camp as blackberries. The terms of plunder are as follows: The valuables procured are estimated by



companies. Each company is required to exhibit the result of its operations at any given place. One-fifth and first choice falls to the commander-in-chief and staff, one-fifth to corps commander and staff, one-fifth to field officers, two-fifths to the company. Officers are not allowed to join in these expeditions, unless disguised as privates. One of our corps commanders borrowed a rough suit of clothes from one of my men, and was successful in his place. He got a large quantity of silver (among other things an old milk pitcher), and a very fine gold watch from a Mr. DeSaussure, of this place (Columbia). DeSaussure is one of the F. F. V.'s of South Carolina, and was made to fork out liberally.

Officers over the rank of captain are not made to put their plunder in the estimate for general distribution. This is very unfair, and for that reason, in order to protect themselves, the subordinate officers and privates keep everything back that they can carry about their persons, such as rings, earrings, breastpins, &c., &c., of which, if I live to get home, I have a quart. I am not joking. I have at least a quart of jewelry for you and all the girls, and some No. 1 diamond pins and rings among them. General

Sherman has gold and silver enough to start a bank. His share in gold watches and chains alone at Columbia was two hundred and seventy-five.

"But I said I could not go into particulars. All the general officers, and many besides, have valuables of every description, down to ladies' pocket handkerchiefs. I have my share of them, too.

*"We took gold and silver enough from the damned rebels to have redeemed their infernal currency twice over. * * * I wish all the jewelry this army has could be carried to the Old Bay State. It would deck her out in glorious style; but, alas! it will be scattered all over the North and Middle States.*

"The damned niggers, as a general thing, preferred to stay at home, particularly after they found out that we wanted only the able-bodied men, and, to tell the truth, the youngest and best-looking women. Sometimes we took them off by way of repaying influential secessionists. But a part of these we soon managed to lose, sometimes in crossing rivers, sometimes in other ways. I shall write you again from Wilmington, Goldsboro, or some other place in North Carolina. The order to march has arrived, and I must close hurriedly.

"Love to grandmother and Aunt Charlotte. Take care of yourself and the children. Don't show this letter out of the family.

"Your affectionate husband, "THOMAS J. MYERS,"Lieutenant, &c.

"P. S.--I will send this by the first flag of truce, to be mailed, unless I have an opportunity of sending it to Hilton Head. Tell Lottie I am saving a pearl bracelet and earrings for her. But Lambert got the necklace and breastpin of the same set. I am trying to trade him out of them. These were taken from the Misses Jamison, daughters of the President of the South Carolina Secession Convention. We found these on our trip through Georgia. "T. J. M." ("This letter is addressed to Mrs. Thomas J. Myers, Boston, Mass.")

Henry Stone Late Brevet-Colonel U. S. Volunteers, and A. A. G. Army of the Cumberland, responded in the letter to refute it. Branding it a hoax stating that "no officer in Sherman's command would ever be guilty of such wanton acts." His rebuttal was later published in the Southern Historical Society papers, which included "I submit that a periodical of the character of the SOUTHERN HISTORICAL PAPERS might--as I am happy to see it does, in most instances--find better material than reprinting from obscure newspapers, matter which throws no real light on any single act or motive during the whole of the great contest. "

The Southern Historical Society papers responded in the following way to Stone's rebuttal: "We are frank to admit that Colonel Stone seems to make out his case against the authenticity of this letter, and we regret having republished it. The Forager of W.T. Sherman's army will remain one of the more identifiable traits of the march. In a march that has the reputation of having few major engagements, it was the actions committed by these bummers that have gotten the most attention by history and their rebel adversaries."

Then in 1901 the Southern Historical Society followed up with this:

"This letter (above) was published in the Southern Historical Society Papers, in March, 1884. About a year thereafter, one Colonel Henry Stone, styling himself "Late Brevet-Colonel U. S. Volunteers, A. A. G. Army of the Cumberland," realizing the gravity of the statements contained in this letter, and the disgrace these, if uncontradicted, would bring on General Sherman and his army, and especially on the staff, of which he (Colonel Stone) was a member, wrote a letter to the Rev. J. William Jones, D. D., the then editor of the Historical Society Papers, in which he undertook to show that the Myers letter was not written by any officer in General Sherman's army. (This letter can be found in Vol. 13, S. H. S. Papers, page 439.) The reasons assigned by Colonel Stone were plausibly set forth, and Dr. Jones, in his anxiety to do justice even to Sherman's "bummers," after publishing Colonel Stone's letter, said editorially, he was "frank to admit that Colonel Stone seems to have made out his case against the authenticity of this letter." If the matter had rested here, we would not have thought of using this letter in our report, notwithstanding the fact (1) that we think the letter bears the impress of genuineness on its face; (2) it is vouched for by what Dr. Jones termed a "responsible source," and what the first paper publishing it cited as a "distinguished lady," who, it also stated, said that the original was "still preserved and could be shown and substantiated;" (3) the statements contained in Colonel Stone's letter are only his statements, uncorroborated and not vouched for by any one, or by any documentary evidence of any kind, and being those of an alleged accomplice, are not entitled to any weight in a court of justice; (4) we think the reasons assigned by Colonel Stone for the non-genuineness of this letter are for the most part not inconsistent with its genuineness; and (5) some of his statements are, apparently, inconsistent with some of the facts as they appear in the records we have examined, e. g., He says "that of the ninety regiments of Sherman's army, which might have passed on the march near Camden, S. C., but a single one--a New Jersey regiment--was from the Middle States. All the rest were from the West. A letter (he says) from the only Thomas J. Myers ever in the army would never contain such a phrase," referring to the fact that Myers had said this stolen jewelry, &c., would be scattered "all over the North and Middle States." Sherman's statement of the organization of his army on this march shows there were several regiments in it from New York and Pennsylvania, besides one from Maryland and one from New Jersey (all four Middle States). But we think this, like other reasons assigned by Colonel Stone, are without merit.

But, as we have said, notwithstanding all these things which seemingly discredit the reasons assigned by Colonel Stone for the non-genuineness of this letter, we should not have used the letter in this report, had not the substantial statements in it been confirmed, as we shall now see. The Myers' letter was first published on October 29, 1883. On the 31st of July, 1865, Captain E. J. Hale, Jr., of Fayetteville, N. C., who had been on General James H. Lane's staff, and who is vouched for by General Lane as "an elegant educated gentleman," wrote to General Lane, telling him of the destruction and devastation at his home, and in that letter he makes this statement:

"You have doubtless heard of Sherman's 'bummers.' The Yankees would have you believe that they were only the straggling pillagers usually found in all armies. Several letters written by officers of Sherman's army, intercepted near this town, give this the lie.

"In some of these letters were descriptions of the whole bumming process, and from them it appears that it was a regularly organized system, under the authority of General Sherman himself; that one-fifth of the proceeds fell to General Sherman, another fifth to the other general officers, another fifth to the line officers, and the remaining two-fifths to the enlisted men."

Now, compare this division of the spoils with that set forth in the Myers' letter, published, as we have said, eighteen years later, and it will be seen that they are almost identical, and this statement was taken, as Captain Hale states, from "several letters written by officers of Sherman's army," intercepted near Fayetteville, N. C., and as we have said, they confirm the statements of the Myers' letter, and its consequent genuineness, to a remarkable degree. It is proper, also, to state, that we have recently received a letter from Dr. Jones, in which he states that after carefully considering this whole matter again, he is now satisfied that he was mistaken in his editorial comments on Colonel Stone's letter, that he is now satisfied of the genuineness of the Myers' letter, and that in his opinion we could use it in this report "with perfect propriety and safety."

We have discussed this letter thus fully because we feel satisfied that the annals of warfare disclose nothing so venal and depraved. Imagine, if it is possible to do so, Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson commanding an army licensed by them to plunder the defenseless, and then sharing in the fruits of this plundering!

We can barely allude to Sherman's burning of Columbia, the proof of which is too conclusive to admit of controversy. On the 18th December, 1864, General H. W. Halleck, major-general and chief-of-staff of the armies of the United States, wrote Sherman as follows:

"Should you capture Charleston, I hope that by some accident the place may be destroyed, and if a little salt should be thrown upon its site, it may prevent the future growth of nullification and secession."

To this suggestion from this high source to commit murder, arson and robbery, and pretend it was by accident, Sherman replied on December 24, 1864, as follows:



"I will bear in mind your hint as to Charleston, and do not think that 'salt' will be necessary. When I move the Fifteenth corps will be on the right of the right wing, and their position will naturally bring them into Charleston first, and if you have watched the history of that corps, you will have remarked that they generally do their work pretty well; the truth is, the whole army is burning with an insatiable desire to wreak vengeance upon South Carolina.

I almost tremble for her fate, but feel that she deserves all that seems in store for her. I look upon Columbia as quite as bad as

Charleston, and I doubt if we shall spare the public buildings there, as we did at Milledgeville." (See 2 Sherman's Memoirs, pages 223, 227-8.)

We say proof of his ordering (or permitting, which is just as bad) the destruction of Columbia is overwhelming. (See report of Chancellor Carroll, chairman of a committee appointed to investigate the facts about this in General Bradley T. Johnson's Life of Johnson, from which several of these extracts are taken.) Our people owe General Johnson a debt of gratitude for this and his other contributions Confederate history. And Sherman had the effrontery to write in his Memoirs that in his official report of this conflagration, he distinctly charged it to General Wade Hampton, and (says) confess I did so pointedly go shake the faith of his people in him." (2 Sherman's Memoirs, page 287.)

The man who confessed to the world that he made this false charge with such a motive needs no characterization at the hands of this committee.

General Sherman set out to "make Georgia howl," and preferred, as he said, to "march through that State smashing things to the sea." He wrote to Grant after his march through South Carolina, saying: "The people of South Carolina, instead of feeding Lee's army, will now call on Lee to feed them." (2 Memoirs, page 298.) So complete had been his destruction in that State. He also says: "Having utterly ruined Columbia, the right wing began its march northward, &c. (2 Memoirs, page 288.)

On the 21st of February, 1865, only a few days after the burning of Columbia, General Hampton wrote to General Sherman, charging him with being responsible for its destruction, and other outrages, in which he said, among other things:

"You permitted, if you have not ordered, the commission of these offences against humanity and the rules of war. You fired into the city of Columbia without a word of warning. After its surrender by the mayor, who demanded protection to private property, you laid the whole city in ashes, leaving amid its ruins thousands of old men and helpless women and children, who are likely to perish of starvation and exposure. Your line of march can be traced by the lurid light of burning houses, and in more than one household there is an agony far more bitter than death."

Unit References and Resources:

"The South Was Right" by James R. Kennedy and Walter D. Kennedy, Chapter 4

"Truths of History" by Mildred L. Rutherford, Chapter 10

"The Lost Cause: The Standard Southern History of the War of the Confederates", by Edward A. Pollard, Chapter 37

"The Story of the Confederate States" by Joseph T. Derry, Part 3, Section 3, Chapter 3 & 4

"The Story of the Confederacy" by Robert S. Henry, Chapter 24, 26, 27

"The Confederate Military History," Volume 6, Chapter XVII

**"Report Of The History Committee" Southern Historical Society Papers Vol. XXIX.
Richmond, Va., January-December. 1901**

**"General Sherman's Method of Making War", Southern Historical Society Papers, Vol.
XIII. Richmond, Va., January-December. 1885**

**"History Of The Army Of The Cumberland", Southern Historical Society Papers Vol. I.
Richmond, Virginia, June, 1876. No. 6**

**"The Savannah (Georgia) Campaign. No. 4.--Reports of Capt. Orlando M. Poe", Official
Records (War of the Rebellion)--SERIES I--VOLUME XLIV [S# 92] NOVEMBER 15-
DECEMBER 21, 1864**

**"The Savannah (Georgia) Campaign. No. 1.--Reports of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman",
Official Records (War of the Rebellion)--SERIES I--VOLUME XLIV [S# 92] NOVEMBER
15-DECEMBER 21, 1864**

Confederate Military History, Vol. 5 CHAPTER XXI

Confederate Military History, Vol. 6 CHAPTER XVII



Part 13 Questions:

In short essay format support an opinion for these questions:

- 1. What were the reasons Sherman targeted the mills in Roswell and New Manchester for destruction?**
- 2. What motivations did Sherman have for the deportation of the factory workers from Roswell and New Manchester?**
- 3. Place yourself back to 1864, what socially unacceptable actions were taken by the Yankee soldiers upon the women of Roswell and New Manchester?**
- 4. Why did the Union military and government fail to protect the factory workers and failed to take action against Sherman for the kidnapping and relocation?**
- 5. What examples can one cite that define Sherman's mission in his march to the sea?**
- 6. Describe Sherman's treatment of the non-combatant civilians his troops encountered from Atlanta to Savannah.**
- 7. Explain the term "Sherman's Bummers" and define their mission in Georgia.**
- 8. Place yourself back to 1864, what socially unacceptable actions were taken by the Yankee soldiers upon the women, children and non-combatants who were in the path of Sherman's army?**

9. Based on standards of 1864, how should have commodities been obtained by Sherman's armies, and how did that compare with the methods the Yankees chose to use?

10. Why did Sherman's troops burn so many homes, barns and other buildings?

11. Were the Yankee troops justified in trespassing on private property stealing items such as silverware and other family heirlooms, or in destroying personal property not associated with the war?

12. Who is ultimately responsible for the destruction caused to the citizens in the march to the sea and why do you place the responsibility there?

13. What is your impression of the letter published from the Yankee Lieutenant from a Camp Near Camden, S.C., the response of Col Stone, and the final analysis by the Southern Historical Society?

14. Give substantiation to the statement "Sherman's tactics were not military actions, but war crimes against the Southern people."

15. Give substantiation to the statement "Sherman's war waged on the citizens of Georgia have done more to divide this country right up to the present time, than any previous acts against the South. "



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<http://www.scv674.org/SH-13.htm>