

Yankee Atrocities Against Blacks



Article was taken verbatim from 'The South Was Right' from the authors, Donald and Ronald Kennedy.

The criminal, terrorist activities of the United States military during the War for Southern Independence produced massive suffering that was endured by both the black and the white civilian population. In this section we will focus on examples of the suffering endured by black Southerners. The majority of these accounts come directly from the federal government's own official records. It should be noted that, while the official records contain some of the many accounts of atrocities committed by the Northern troops, it is by no means a complete collection. It was not the intent of the Yankee officers who completed these reports to document their crimes. Also, even if an officer wanted to report such crimes, it is very unlikely that his subordinates were eager to include their confessions in their reports. Therefore the official records could not possibly contain the whole story of our people's sufferings.

Late in the war, the Federal authorities admitted that the influence of the United States army upon the black Southern population had produced an undesirable effect.⁵² Sarah Debro, a ninety year-old former slave, gave this account in 1937: "I waz hungry most of de time an' had to keep fightin' off dem Yankee mens. Dem Yankees was mean folks."⁵³

The following is a small sample of the atrocities committed by Northern troops against black Southerners during the War of Northern Aggression.

Northern Missouri: On August 13, 1861, Secretary of War Simon Cameron received a letter containing information about United States military forces "committing rapes on the negroes."⁵⁴

Athens, Alabama: The court-martial record of Lincoln's buddy Turchin dated May 2, 1862, contains information about an attempt to commit "an indecent outrage" on a servant girl. It also notes that a part of the brigade, "quarter[ed] in the negro huts for weeks, debauching the females."⁵⁵

Woodville, Alabama: The activities of the Third Ohio Cavalry in August of 1862 included this entry: "negro women are debauched." 56

Memphis, Tennessee: The Yankee soldiers had been fed a steady diet of lies about so-called slave breeding plantations and the familiarity of Southern male slave owners with their female slaves. The reality of a black race with high moral standards was incomprehensible to the Yankee invader. Therefore the Yankee ordered much of his conduct to match his preconceived notions of the accepted social relationships down South. This can be seen in this report from Memphis on April 7, 1864: "The [white] cavalry broke en masse in the camps of the colored women and are committing all sorts of outrage."57 General Rufus A. Saxton sent a report to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton on December 30, 1864, in which he described the attitude of the Yankee soldiers: "I found the prejudice of color and race here in full force, and the general feeling of the army of occupation was unfriendly to the blacks. It was manifested in various forms of personal insult and abuse, in depredations on their plantations, stealing and destroying their crops and domestic animals, and robbing them of their money.... The women were held as the legitimate prey of lust...."59

Bayou Grande Cailou, Louisiana: The Sixteenth Indiana Mounted Infantry sent invaders into a civilian area which resulted in the following account: "Mr. Pelton . . . reported that a soldier had shot and killed a little girl and had fired at a negro man on his plantation. I . . . proceeded to the place, where I found a mulatto girl, about twelve or thirteen years old, lying dead in a field. I learned from the negro man . . . that the girl had been shot by a drunken soldier, who had first fired at one of the men ... [who] had witnessed the killing...."59 On November 20, Gen. Robert A. Cameron reported, "I heard by rumor ... one of [Capt. Columbus Moore's] men had attempted to rape a mulatto girl and had shot and killed her for resisting."60

Augusta, Georgia: "The colored citizens wander around at all hours of the night, and many in consequence have been robbed and abused by scoundrels dressed as United States soldiers.... The conduct of the Fourth Iowa Cavalry . . . was such as reflects disgrace on both officers and men.... Firing so as to cause a colored woman to lose her arm; likewise committing robberies."61

Covington, Tennessee: Late in 1862, a campaign was conducted in the vicinity of Covington that produced the following official report: ". . . some of the men [of the Second Illinois Cavalry] behaved more like brigands than soldiers. They robbed an old negro man....

Robertsville, South Carolina: The Yankee did not distinguish between white or black Southerner nor between free black or slave when he released the dogs of war upon our Southern homeland. On January 31, 1865, the following report was issued: "The indiscriminate pillage of houses is disgraceful.... houses in this vicinity, of free negroes even, have been stripped . . . shocking to humanity."63

Hilton Head, South Carolina: Politically correct Yankee propagandists masquerading as historians are quick to boast of the large numbers of Southern blacks who fought for the North during the war. They are also quick to dismiss the contribution to the Confederate war effort made by black Southerners, giving the excuse that Southern blacks were forced to serve the Confederacy. Little attention has been given to the forced conscription of blacks into the service of the United States during the War for

Southern Independence. On May 12, 1862, the following report was sent to the United States Secretary of the Treasury concerning the forced induction of black Southerners: "This has been a sad day on these islands.... Some 500 men were ... carried to Hilton Head.... The negroes were sad.... Sometimes whole plantations, learning what was going on, ran off to the woods for refuge. Others, with no means of escape, submitted passively.... This mode of [conscriptio] is repugnant."⁶⁴ The next day's report included this comment: "The colored people became suspicious of the presence of the companies of soldiers.... They [the blacks] were taken from the fields without being allowed to go to their houses even to get a jacket.... On some plantations the wailing and screaming were loud and the women threw themselves in despair on the ground. On some plantations the people took to the woods and were hunted up by the soldiers...." ⁵ A letter about this incident written to the Federal agent stated, "This conscription, . . . has created a suspicion that the Government has not the interest in the negroes that it has professed, and many of them sighed yesterday for the 'old fetters' as being better than the new liberty."⁶⁶ Old fetters of slavery better than the new liberty of Yankee dominion-what a sad commentary. No wonder Northern propagandists work so hard to keep these facts from becoming public knowledge.

Nashville, Tennessee: "Officers in command of colored troops are in constant habit of pressing all able-bodied slaves into the military service of the United States."⁶⁷ Notice the complaint is that officers are in "constant habit," not just given to an occasional infraction.

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Huntsville, Alabama: General Ulysses Grant received a communiqué on February 26, 1864, informing him that, "A major of colored troops is here with his party capturing negroes, with or without their consent.... They are being conscripted."68 Notice that the term used is "capturing negroes," not enlisting or drafting them.

New Bern, North Carolina: On September 1, 1864, Gen. Innis N. Palmer reported to Gen. Benjamin F. Butler about the difficulty he was having convincing Southern blacks to help in the fight for their liberation. He stated: "The negroes will not go voluntarily, so I am obliged to force them.... The matter of collecting the colored men for laborers has been one of some difficulty but I hope to send up a respectable force.... They will not go willingly.... They must be forced to go.... this may be considered a harsh measure, but . . . we must not stop at trifles"69 What is it called when someone forces another human being to labor against his will-sounds like slavery to us but the Yankees called it "trifles."

Beaulort, South Carolina: General Rufus A. Saxton made the following report to Secretary of War Stanton on December 30 1864: "The recruiting [of former slaves] went on slowly, when the major-general commanding ordered an indiscriminate conscription of every able-bodied colored man in the department. . . . The order spread universal confusion and terror. The negroes fled to the woods and swamps.... They were hunted.... Men have been seized and forced to enlist who had large families.... Three boys, one only fourteen years of age, were seized in a field where they were at work and sent to a regiment . . . without the knowledge of their parents...."70 What happened to the bleeding-heart Abolitionist, crying about black families being broken up and sold to different masters and about children being forcefully separated from their parents? Evidently, such high moral standards were not allowed to stand in the way of the expanding Yankee empire!

Louisville, Kentucky: Major General Innis N. Palmer on February 27, 1865, issued General Order Number 5 confirming the generally accepted theory of the laws pertaining to the enlistment of civilians for military services in an occupied country:

"Officers charged with recruiting colored troops are informed that the use of force or menaces to compel the enlistment of colored men is both unlawful and disgraceful."71

Fort Jackson, Louisiana: On December 9, 1863, a United States officer at Fort Jackson became angry with two black drummers and fell upon them, beating them with a mule whip. The black soldiers were forced to stand in formation and watch as the white officer mercilessly flogged the young drummers. When the formation was dismissed, the black men, all Union soldiers, rushed the fort's armory, seized their weapons, and with cries of "kill all the damn yankees" began to fire their weapons into the air. Two companies of black Union soldiers joined in and a general revolt against Yankee racial bigotry was underway. With great effort, the white officers persuaded the black soldiers to end their revolt and return to their quarters.⁷²

Craney Island, Virginia: Both black and white Southerners were needlessly subjected to the terror of starvation by terrorist acts of United States troops. From Virginia we find one of many examples of the sufferings borne by black Southerners: ". . . the colored people . . . have been forced to remain all night on the wharf without shelter and without food; . . . one has died, and . . . others are suffering with disease, and . . . your men have turned them out of their houses, which they have built themselves, and have robbed some of them of their money and personal effects."⁷³ This communiqué was sent on November 26, 1862. Some Yankee apologists have claimed that the horror against civilians occurred only after many years of bitter war- though we are curious to know how many years of war are necessary to justify any amount of cruel and inhumane conduct against innocent civilians?

Bisland, Louisiana: During the invasion of Cajun Louisiana, the Yankee targeted slaves as part of the loot to be acquired. "Contraband" was a term used to denote slaves enticed or forced away from their masters' plantations. These poor people very often would end up serving in the Federal army or working on a government plantation. When the Confederate forces recaptured the area around Bisland, Louisiana, they discovered the pathetic condition in which these former slaves were forced to live while enjoying the charity of the United States government. One account states that two thousand of these people perished as a result of following, or being forced to follow, the Federal army in retreat. In view of the shallow graves in which many had been hastily placed, the comment was made, "They have found their freedom." The horror of a local sugar house has been described by at least two separate eyewitnesses who were either Confederate soldiers or masters searching for their former slaves. The small house was filled with dead or dying Negroes. Some were "being eaten by worms before life was extinct." The roads "were lined with Negroes half starved, almost destitute of clothing, sick and unable to help themselves; the only question of the poor wretches, who had been two months experiencing Federal sympathy and charity, was the inquiry if their master was coming after them." The Federal army, in spite of its abundance, did not provide for these people. When their fellow Southerners discovered short on every necessity. With their fellow Southerners discovering their plight, the Confederate army, short on every necessity, assigned transportation and such food and medicine as it had at its disposal to the salvation of these poor, suffering people. Let it be remembered that it was the compassion of their fellow Southerners and the assistance of the Confederate army that saved the lives of these black Southerners.⁷⁴

The Yankee myth that the North fought the war because of its belief in human brotherhood and its love for the black race has once again been proven to be a lie.

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