

With Malice Toward All: Lincoln's War On Southern Civilians

By Walter Brian Cisco

(Author's note: Sources for quotations are cited in the endnotes. The limited space of an article can but touch on what is a huge subject. An amplified account, with comprehensive documentation, can be found in my book *War Crimes Against Southern Civilians*.)

In the midst of his 1863 invasion of the United States, Gen. Robert E. Lee issued a proclamation to his men. After suffering for two years countless crimes at the hands of their enemies, some Southerners thought at last the time had come for retaliation. Lee would have none of it, reminding his troops that the duties exacted of us by civilization and Christianity are not less obligatory in the country of the enemy than in our own. The commanding general considers that no greater disgrace could befall the army, and through it our whole people, than the perpetration of the barbarous outrages upon the unarmed and defenseless and the wanton destruction of private property, that have marked the course of the enemy in our own

country ...

It must be remembered that we make war only upon armed men, and that we cannot take vengeance for the wrongs our people have suffered without ... offending against Him to whom vengeance belongeth, without whose favor and support our efforts must all prove in vain."¹

Lee, the Christian soldier, was a firm believer in "civilized warfare." Over the centuries, by common consent within Christendom, it came to be understood that war would be confined to combatants. Yet warring against noncombatants was the implicit policy and deliberate practice of the United States in its subjugation of the Confederacy: the shelling and burning of cities, systematic destruction of entire districts, mass arrests, forced expulsions, wholesale plundering of personal property — even rape and murder.

Abraham Lincoln, commander-in-chief with a reputation as micro-manager, well knew what was going on and approved. To Lincoln, ruthless

in pursuit of his political agenda, the ends always justified the means. A "benevolent dictator" is how some apologists characterize their demigod. "The numerous civilians who were injured by Lincoln's troops, the citizens whose homes were burned and destroyed, and the parents and wives who lost their loved ones," wrote Andrew Napolitano, "would certainly not have called him a benevolent dictator." (and) "The bloodiest war in American history could have been avoided," Napolitano concluded, "But, with very little regard for honesty, Lincoln increased federal power and assaulted the Constitution."²

Lincoln claimed he wanted only to "save the Union." Thomas DiLorenzo, in his groundbreaking volume *The Real Lincoln*, made it clear that the president's obses-



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sion was to destroy the voluntary Union of the states, replacing it with a consolidated, coercive government the Founding Fathers would not have recognized.

DiLorenzo offered a striking analogy, paraphrased this way: A man was abusing his wife, causing her to leave. The husband tracked her down, grabbed her, beat her up, dragged her back into the house, and said, "If you leave again, I'll kill you!" Ought that man be applauded for having "saved the marriage?"

In waging war on civilians Lincoln returned to the barbarism of the past; he also dealt a blow to limited, constitutional government from which America never recovered.

"Hang and Burn"

In early 1862 Federal victories opened much of Tennessee to invasion. Nashville was occupied, and Lincoln appointed Senator Andrew Johnson "military governor." Less than a year earlier the people of Tennessee had voted by an overwhelming margin to free themselves of Lincoln's Union. Johnson, now backed by bayonets, would overrule their decision. "Treason must be made odious and traitors punished and impoverished," he declared.³

The clergy of Nashville were among the first to feel Johnson's wrath. A group which included ministers and educators from the Methodist, Baptist, Christian and Presbyterian denominations was ushered into the governor's office, where Johnson demanded they declare allegiance to the country at war with their own. When they refused, the pastors were jailed.

Citizens were arrested, sometimes at night, and held without being charged with any specific crime. (A pounding on the door, terrified people dragged away by authorities — that horror began not in Stalin's Russia or Hitler's Germany, but in Lincoln's America.) Some were confined in the penitentiary, a few were transferred to Fort Mackinac in Michigan or Camp Chase in Ohio, while others were simply forced into exile.

Soon after his appointment as Lincoln's proxy, Johnson allowed an election for circuit court judge to go on as scheduled in Nashville. There were two candidates — unionist M.M. Brien and Turner S. Foster, a man true to his state and people. Johnson rashly assumed the citizens would put his man on the bench. When Foster won by a large margin, Johnson was furious, vowing there would be no more elections to fill local offices in Tennessee. Judge Foster — democratically chosen by the voters — was arrested, charged with treason, and thrown in the penitentiary.

Nashville Mayor R.B. Cheatham refused to betray his country and was removed from office and hauled off to prison. Elected members of the Common Council lost their offices, and their freedom, replaced by unelected collaborators. By 1863 arrests had become a daily occurrence in Nashville, leading some to wonder where they might confine so many *traitors*. A Nashville diarist sarcastically suggested it might be more practical for the authorities to "build a wall around the city, and take out the Union men."⁴

Federal foraging parties continuously plundered rural Tennessee. A Union army commander admitted that "all suffer, rich and poor; of all methods of providing for any army this is the most wasteful." Brigadier General Grenville M. Dodge was more blunt. "I propose to eat up all the surplus, and perhaps the entire crops in the country. These people are proud, arrogant rebels ... all they possess belongs legitimately to the US Government."⁵

When Major General George Thomas was unable to discover who killed several of his soldiers, he directed that the property of noncombatants living within a radius of ten miles be assessed in the amount of \$30,000. No less than \$66,000 (well over one million dollars today) was collected by his efficient officers, and two years later the money was still unaccounted for.

Soldiers guarding the railroad north of Nashville rounded up civilians they thought had a part in de-

railing one of their trains. A telegram was sent to Major General William Rosecrans asking for permission "to make an example" of the suspects. Rosecrans wired back a murderous nod of approval: "No objection to your making an example, but do not want a report. Let them fall off a log and break their necks, for instance."⁶

Troops under the command of Brigadier General Eleazer A. Paine charged into Fayetteville, Tennessee, on the morning of June 15, 1864. There was the usual burning and theft, but in addition, four men, unarmed civilians, were arrested at random: Dr. J. W. Miller, Thomas Massey, William Pickett and Franklin Burroughs.

The four were threatened with death should no one in town volunteer information about Confederate partisans said to be operating in the area. As the hostages waited, John Massey asked to be allowed to take the place of his brother Thomas. "He has a wife and a young family," said John. "If you want Massey blood, take mine." Permission was granted.

"You G__ d__ grey-eyed bushwhacking sympathizer," shouted Paine at the doctor; "I'll have you shot at three o'clock this evening with John Massey and the other d__ scoundrels." But for reasons he never understood, Miller was spared.

The other three men were not. As the Yankee firing squad got ready, William and Franklin knelt in prayer. Massey grabbed them by their collars and pulled them to their feet. "Pray standing," he said, "Don't let these dogs think you are kneeling to them."⁷

Down in Franklin County a Unionist named Moses Pittman, in late December 1864, handed Major General Robert H. Milroy a list of so-called disloyal men and women. Milroy went down the list, marking in his own hand what he wanted done to them. By the names of Joel Cunningham and Green Denison he wrote "KILL." Next to the name of Curtis McCullum was the order "HANG AND BURN." Charlotte, the sister of Curtis, had "BURN EVERYTHING" written by her name. "SHOOT IF YOU CAN MAKE

IT LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT," the general wrote next to the name of Cynthia, Curtis' wife. There were 53 additional names on the list. Orders to carry out the murders, and other depredations, were given to Captain William H. Lewis on January 7, 1865, with detailed supplemental instructions on destroying and plundering the property of the victims.

Milroy added the names of four more civilians, in neighboring Coffee County, he also wanted executed. Three of this group were captured, unarmed, at one of their homes. Leroy Moore and Thomas Saunders were both old men; William Saunders was only fourteen. Each had his hands bound behind his back, was forced to wade into the pond at Huffers Mill, then was shot. Only after three days did soldiers allow families to retrieve the bloated bodies for burial.

On February 7, 1865, Milroy issued more orders, specifying 18 individuals who were to have their homes and property burned. Included were the names of 34 he wanted shot. Four other names were included, these to be "hung to the first tree in front of their door and be allowed to hang there for an indefinite period."⁸

Remember, these orders were not issued by some Waffen-SS thug, but by a general in the service of the United States!

What evidence do we have that Lincoln and his regime approved the crimes his officers and armies were committing? Consider one early example: In the spring of 1861, Captain Nathaniel Lyon was in charge of the small US Army garrison in St. Louis. With War Department approval, Lyon enlisted more than 6,000 German immigrants (virtually the only allies Lincoln had in Missouri), and issued them rifles. On May 10 Lyon and this horde surrounded an outnumbered contingent of Missouri Militia, took them prisoner, and marched the captives back through the streets of the city. An angry crowd gathered and began taunting the Germans and throwing rocks. Lyon's troops opened fire. In this and another clash with civilians

the following day, 38 civilians were killed and more than 75 wounded — including many women and children. In the aftermath of the St. Louis Massacre, as many as 10,000 terrified residents fled the city. Was there an investigation of the tragedy? Was Lyon perhaps relieved of duty until it could be determined who was to blame for the carnage? Not in Lincoln's America. Exactly one week after the massacre, Lyon was promoted from captain to brigadier general.

Consider another case: On May 2, 1862, Colonel John Basil Turchin, commanding the US Army Eighth Brigade, occupied Athens, Alabama. Angered that local citizens had aided the Southern army, Turchin ordered his men to stack arms and told them, "I shut my eyes for two hours. I see nothing."⁹ Those soldiers spent the rest of the day pillaging the business and residential sections of town, smashing furniture, chopping pianos to pieces, stealing silver and jewelry, and raping slave women. When Major General Don Carlos Buell learned about it, he court-martialed Turchin. Since the evidence was overwhelming, the court could only find him guilty, and sentenced him to dismissal. But back on June 20, seven weeks after the sack of Athens, Lincoln nominated Turchin for promotion to brigadier general, and in the midst of the court martial he was given his star. Instead of being dismissed from the service, Turchin — with the blessing of Lincoln and a Republican Senate — returned to duty as a general officer.

"A War of Extermination"

Under Major General Henry Halleck's edicts, partisans and guerrillas in Missouri were denied the rights of combatants. Patriots fighting invaders from behind the lines, using hit-and-run tactics — this was the heroic example from the Revolutionary War that Southerners adapted to their own struggle for independence. Confederate authorities were raising independent companies to resist the occupation, but to Halleck, "every man who enlists in such an organization forfeits

his life and becomes an outlaw."¹⁰ Commander of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department, Lt. General Theophilus Hunter Holmes, protested.

*Looking at these matters as calmly as the facts will admit of, I can see but one result of the course which the Federal Government and its officers are thus adopting. That result is a war of extermination We cannot be expected to allow our enemies to decide for us whether we shall fight them in masses or individually, in uniform, without uniform, openly or from ambush. Our forefathers and yours conceded no such right to the British in the first Revolution, and we cannot concede it to you in this.*¹¹

Federals would adopt measures which surpassed the Redcoats in brutality. Due process in Missouri was long forgotten; the whim of the military reigned supreme. Three supposed *Rebels* were hanged so high that their feet were over the head of anyone riding beneath the tree. "Don't cut them down!" read the sign posted. One Federal officer reported killing 80 civilians, suspected malefactors, adding, "I think it will largely exceed 100 before any considerable part of our troops withdraw from the pursuit. No prisoners have been taken, and none will be."¹²

In Lafayette County a group of farmers, returning from the market in Lexington, camped for the night beside the road. Union soldiers fired on them, assuming they were guerrillas instead of unarmed citizens. This happened repeatedly. If two or more men were seen together out of doors, soldiers considered this sufficient evidence they were guerrillas and opened fire. Yankee troops having earned a reputation for shooting first and asking questions later, it was common for people of all political persuasions to simply run when approached. Unfortunately, Federals viewed fleeing itself as an admission of disloyalty. Two citizens were shot by members of the Second Ohio Cavalry Regiment when they bolted on seeing blue uniforms. Troopers of the Third Missouri



Bummers looting and pillaging a farm in South Carolina.

Cavalry shot three men who tried to flee their approach. Near the village of Miami, a former judge named Robert G. Smart ran out the back door of his home when troopers of the Seventh Missouri Cavalry rode up. Though not a Confederate, troopers assumed his running was an admission of guilt and gunned him down.

"The military of this county are getting very careless of late," joked a Unionist editor, commenting on the widespread killings. "It can't be helped, 'accidents will happen.'"¹³

It happened too that women were jailed in Union-occupied Missouri. In August 1862 two women from Hainesville, Clinton County, were arrested for refusing to swear allegiance to the United States. In early December, Union troops captured letters penned by Confederate soldiers from Missouri serving in Arkansas. Addressed to their loved ones at home, these letters proved a bonanza to Federal authorities, allowing them to identify the

"disloyal" and target them for arrest.

By the summer of 1863 the second floor of the three-story Thomas Building on Grand Avenue in Kansas City had become a Federal prison for women. Incarcerated in August were as many as 27 female inmates, all accused of aiding the Southern cause and many of the family members of Confederate guerrillas. Most of the girls were in their teens; Martha Anderson was but thirteen. A general merchandise store occupied the first floor. Beneath that, in the basement, was a cell which held arrested prostitutes. Next door, and sharing a common wall, was a structure used as a Union army guardhouse. Over time, soldiers made three large entrances through the cellar wall to visit the prostitutes — in the process carelessly removing weight-supporting columns.

On the morning of August 13, spirited Martha so irritated her guards that they fastened an iron

ball to one ankle of the child. A little later there was a deafening roar and screams of horror as the building collapsed. When the huge cloud of dust cleared, citizens came running to see what had happened. Cries were coming from the rubble. One voice was heard pleading for someone to take the bricks from her head. Rescuers were helpless, most of the girls found crushed to death or mortally injured. Little Martha — shackled by her jailers — had both legs and back broken, and her face disfigured by lacerations.

The crowd watched in growing anger as bloody and mangled bodies were removed. Authorities feared a riot and summoned soldiers with fixed bayonets to the scene. Federals quickly concocted a tale that the girls had weakened the building by digging a tunnel to escape — apparently not considering how unlikely such a feat might be from a building's second story. The truth, Union persecution exacerbated by gross negligence, was

bad enough.

On August 25, 1863, Brigadier General Thomas Ewing issued General Order No. 11, commanding rural residents in four Missouri counties to abandon their homes and all they owned. They had 15 days to clear out. The territory affected made up almost 3,000 square miles, with a population of more than 20,000. George Caleb Bingham witnessed the scene.

Bare-footed and bare-headed women and children, stripped of every article of clothing except a scant covering for their bodies, were exposed to the heat of an August sun and compelled to struggle through the dust on foot

It is well-known that men were shot down in the very act of obeying the order, and their wagons and effects seized by their murderers Dense clouds of smoke arising in every direction marked the conflagration of dwellings ...¹⁴

Union militiamen stole all they could from victims before burning their homes. Fires often spread to fields and forests, giving rise to the term "Burnt District" to describe the devastated counties. "With systematic destruction," wrote a stunned Federal to his wife, "the torch was applied to the one-room cabin, the clapboard house, the porticoed mansion and to the barn, the smokehouse, and all outbuildings ... It is heartsickening to see what I have seen."¹⁵

Many refugee families were stopped on the road and robbed, even outside the evacuated district. "Everyday or two Yankee soldiers would unload our wagons in search of something to steal," remembered a victim.¹⁶ Mrs. P.H. Haggard described how some 35 Union militiamen "came swooping down ... charging and yelling" to where she and other women and children were camped.

The first act was to take possession of all our horses, which they led off a little way from our wagons and tied to some trees. The next thing in order was to search our wagons for contraband goods, of which they knew we had none. Then tearing the

wagon sheets off, two or three men would mount the wagons and pitch trunks, boxes, and everything else they contained to the ground, bursting trunks and breaking everything breakable, scattering things promiscuously; others engaged in ransacking everything¹⁷

Just days before the deadline, Union cavalry descended on the Roupe farm near Lone Jack, Missouri. Called "Redlegs," for the color of their leggings, the Kansas troopers saw the family was loading their wagons, preparing to leave. They led six men a short distance away and shot them. The dead were between 17 and 75 years old. An elderly survivor dug a common grave, lovingly placed a pillow beneath each head, covered the bodies with quilts, and prayed with the womenfolk. That very afternoon the grieving family joined tens of thousands of other homeless exiles, each with their own horrific story to tell.

"The order settled the border war by cutting off the supplies of the guerrillas," said an unrepentant Ewing in an 1879 interview with the *Washington Post*. "It was approved by Major General [John] Schofield and by President Lincoln," he continued. "General Schofield said, in a letter published two years ago, that President Lincoln, himself and myself were responsible for the order, in the proportion of our respective rank and authority."¹⁸

Subjugation in Virginia

West Virginia would join the United States on June 20, 1863 — the last slave state admitted. The conquerors and their local accomplices severed 50 counties from Virginia for inclusion, the will of the people not consulted or considered. One of those counties was mountainous Tucker. In the fall of 1862, residents, now behind enemy lines, waited helplessly as their future was determined by outsiders.

Their master would be a hot-tempered United States brigadier general by the name of Robert H. Milroy. In late November 1862, Milroy issued an edict which would make his name

well-known, North and South.

Unionists in Federally-occupied western Virginia profited by selling horses in Pennsylvania, then making claims with US authorities, contending they had been robbed by "bands of guerrillas." Milroy began assessing innocent Tucker County citizens to reimburse the fictitious losses. In late November, between 30 and 40 people were served with papers and required to appear before the general at his headquarters. All those "taxed" by Milroy had three days to pay, after which he directed that "their houses will be burned and themselves shot and their property all seized." Milroy told officers to "be sure that you carry out this threat rigidly and show them that you are not trifling or to be trifled with."¹⁹

In the same order, Milroy commanded should civilians observe Confederate soldiers approaching a Federal camp, "they must dash in and give you notice." If noncombatants failed to perform as required, "their houses will be burned and the men shot." Another edict required civilians take an oath of allegiance to West Virginia (a state which did not yet exist), and to the United States. Anyone failing to do so "shall forfeit all right to the protection" of his army.²⁰

Colonel John D. Imboden dashed off a letter to President Jefferson Davis. "This is only one of a thousand barbarities practiced here in these distant mountains," wrote the colonel to his commander-in-chief.²¹ Davis forwarded the letter to Robert E. Lee with instructions to question Milroy's superiors.

Milroy's conduct could not have been unknown to them. A copy of his infamous November order had already been published by an Ohio *Peace Democrat* newspaper. On January 10, 1863, Lee wrote General Halleck in Washington, demanding an explanation for Milroy's threats of death and destruction. Should a satisfactory response not be received in ten days, wrote Lee, the Confederate government "will be compelled to protect its citizens by the immediate adoption of

stern retaliatory measures."²²

Lee's severe words had their effect. Halleck claimed he would investigate the matter, and if Milroy's orders were genuine, they were "disapproved." But Halleck's disavowal took nearly two weeks to reach Milroy in Tucker County. There would be no telegraphic communication to instantly put a stop to confiscations and death threats. There was no promised investigation. Milroy was never reprimanded. Nothing was said or done to prevent a recurrence.

Winchester, in Frederick County, had been alternately invaded by Federals and liberated by Confederates. On Christmas Eve 1862 began an occupation by the enemy which would last for six long months, their ruler none other than Robert Milroy. He bragged to his wife, "my will is absolute law — none dare contradict or dispute my slightest word or wish ... both male and female tremble when they come into my presence ... I feel a strong disposition to play the tyrant among these traitors." Virginians had, after all, dared to resist "the best government the world ever saw."²³

Milroy ordered clerks to read civilian mail, and if a word was detected questioning the Union — or criticizing the imperious Milroy — that offending citizen could expect to be exiled. Exile or jail awaited anyone who insulted a blue-clad officer. When boys throwing snowballs accidentally hit one, a child was arrested. It became an "illegal assembly" for as many as two people to meet publicly in Winchester. Cornelia McDonald recorded in her diary that "even the little school girls are dispersed if more than two stop to talk on the street on their way home."²⁴ Another local diarist, Laura Lee, wrote "General Milroy told a girl the other day, when she went to him to ask for a pass, that Hell was not full enough of rebels yet, and would not be until more of these Winchester women went there."²⁵

Milroy employed detectives to spy on the people, eager to "report what the women talk about or if the children play with Confederate flags," recorded McDonald.²⁶ One young school

teacher, in a note to a friend, expressed an opinion critical of the general. She was taken several miles outside Winchester and simply dropped by the side of the road to fend for herself. Her school was closed.

Winchester was not the only town to feel Milroy's wrath. Berryville, Strasburg and Front Royal were repeatedly raided. Arrests were made, and troops robbed the "disloyal" and destroyed their property. "The way of the transgressor is hard," Milroy explained.²⁷

When word reached Winchester of the death of "Stonewall" Jackson, ladies created black crepe rosette badges and wore them on the shoulder of their dresses in tribute. One lady was accosted by a soldier who tore it from her dress. Women were threatened with arrest and exile should the display continue, but one African-American lady would not be deterred. She wore the badge in public, and was ordered by Federals to leave Winchester and not come back.

On March 10, 1863, Milroy was raised to major general, his promotion to date from the previous November 29, a date-of-rank coinciding with — and arguably explicit recognition of — those draconian assessments that first brought him to prominence.

"Demons of Conflagration"

Major General David Hunter had demonstrated little ability as a Union military commander, but in late spring 1864 launched a raid on Virginia's Shenandoah Valley which proved beyond doubt he could vanquish unarmed civilians.

When a Federal wagon train loaded with supplies was captured by Confederate guerrillas and at least one of his sergeants wounded, Hunter became furious, ordering the torching of homes in the neighborhood. "In case a train or a man is fired on by anyone behind our lines," wrote a member of Hunter's staff, "houses of Secessionists and their property are to be burned without mercy. ..."²⁸ Hunter ordered "secession sympathizers" within a radius of ten miles from where supplies

were lost be made to pay "five times the value of such property." His troops were ordered to "seize and hold in close military custody the persons assessed until such payment shall have been made."²⁹

It was perilous for civilians to give inaccurate information to the invaders, as reported by one on Hunter's staff. "The general asked me to go into Woodstock to ascertain who the parties were that attempted to confuse our scouts yesterday as he wished to burn a few houses."³⁰

At Harrisonburg, the newspaper was immediately targeted for destruction by the invaders. Also, "The office of the *Rockingham Register* was gutted," reported an officer, "the press broken up, and the debris burned in the street, the rain falling on the heap of ashes."³¹

On June 11 began a two-day occupation of Lexington. Soldiers charged into homes looking for valuables, and vandalized what they did not take. "Some persons were left destitute and almost starving," wrote a victim.³² Another remembered "dresses torn to pieces in mere wantonness: even the Negro girls had lost their finery."³³ Homes, including that of former governor John Letcher, were burned; his singled out, according to Hunter, because the owner was guilty of "inciting the population" to resist invasion. Yankees sacked Washington College, "pelting the statue of the father of their country," wrote an officer, "supposing it to represent Jefferson Davis." Viewing the progress of destruction from a nearby hill, the officer declared it "grand," noting that Hunter too "seemed to enjoy this scene."³⁴

Hunter was soon forced to retreat, but victory over outnumbered Confederates at the Battle of Third Winchester on September 19, 1864, gave Major General Philip Sheridan opportunity to make the Valley, in his words, "a barren waste." What followed came to be known by victims simply as "The Burning."

First there would be an execution. Henry Rhodes, teenaged civilian from Front Royal, had hoped to join the partisans. "Rhodes was lashed with ropes



Ruins in Richmond, Virginia.

between two horses," recounted a friend who witnessed his death, "and dragged in plain sight of his agonized relatives to the open field of our town, where one man volunteered to do the killing, and ordered the helpless, dazed prisoner to stand up in front of him, while he emptied his pistol upon him."³⁵

Unoffending Mennonites lost their homes — as well as barns, livestock, grain, and all they owned — when Sheridan demanded vengeance for the death of a favorite member of his staff. Everything was torched within a radius of five miles. "Splendid mansions in great number, in the vicinity, were laid in ashes," remembered a *New Yorker*. Most neighboring families spent the night outside, said a witness, the morning "marked by a dense blanket of smoke and fog that had settled over the country as it were to hide from view the awful effect of the great holocaust of fire of the evening before."³⁶

Sheridan's incendiaries were characterized by one of Colonel John S. Mosby's men as "demons of conflagration, rejoicing in the mischief they had wrought."³⁷ The colonel's policy was to ruthlessly punish those who burned houses, but only if the guilty could be identified. In one incident, 29 Federals were caught in the act of house-burning and summarily executed.

"I have destroyed over 2,000 barns, filled with wheat, hay, and farming implements," Sheridan reported to Grant, along with "over 70 mills, filled with flour and wheat."³⁸ That told but part of the story, of course, and only hinted at the suffering of civilians.

Imprisoned Women and Children

When the troops of Brigadier General Kenner Garrard entered Roswell, Georgia, on July 6, 1864, they found a factory operating capable of producing 30,000 yards of woolen cloth per month. A cotton mill nearby held 216 looms, and could turn out 191,000 yards of cotton cloth monthly, in addition to huge quantities of thread and rope. Not surprisingly, primary customer for textiles produced by the mills was the Confederate government. About 400 women held jobs there, all glad to have gainful employment. Many children accompanied their mothers to work.

Upon discovery of the mills, Major General William Tecumseh Sherman expressed outrage. He ordered Garrard to "arrest the owners and employees and send them, under guard, charged with treason, to Marietta."³⁹

For the *crime* of working for a living, 400 women and their children were loaded onto 110 wagons and transported thirteen miles in the July heat over rutted roads to Marietta. First held at the Georgia Military Institute, from Marietta the prisoners were sent by rail to Nashville. They finally began arriving in Louisville, Kentucky, about two weeks after their arrest. "Only think of it!" wrote the *New York Tribune*: "Four hundred weeping and terrified Ellens, Susans, and Maggies transported ... away from their lovers and brothers of the sunny south, and all for the offense of weaving tent-cloth and spinning stocking yarn!"⁴⁰

The prisoners were confined to a house which had been recently seized, on Broadway between Twelfth and Thirteenth streets, and a newly-constructed building between Tenth and Eleventh. The Federal prison for men was close by, as was the terminal

of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad.

A Wisconsin reporter visited the women, and came away thoroughly disgusted. He was appalled by the prisoners, not by their plight. "They uttered loud and bitter curses on General Sherman,"⁴¹ asking why he drove them from their homes, why he left them nothing, why he arrested women and children and sent them to far-away imprisonment. Rather than consider those rather serious issues, the Wisconsinite preferred to make fun of the girls' grammar and accent. The *Louisville Daily Journal* invented a tale that the women had begged to leave Georgia, that Sherman's "enlarged and generous spirit of humanity" prompted him to send them to where "they could find work and security." The editor of that paper declared their new rooms "clean and airy," their children "rosy-cheeked."⁴²

Inmate Rose McDonald knew better. She described her imprisonment as "a living death." and "We slept on the bare floor without a pillow, blanket or bedding of any kind, and were never alone, for day and night an armed guard was with us After a time I sickened and lay for several days unnoticed on the bare floor, suffering from a scorching fever."⁴³

Despite unionist propaganda, people outside began learning the truth. A notice appeared in the *Journal*, a call to Louisville citizens from the Commission for the Aid of Refugees, appealing for funds. "There are children of every age, some so attenuated as to be living skeletons, perishing for want of proper care." Dozens of families were crowded together, many were sick, and all needed "proper care and support."⁴⁴

Dr. Mary Edwards Walker was dispatched by Federal military authorities, appointed Surgeon in Charge in late September. Idolized today as a pioneer for women's rights, the doctor was in fact a disturbed tyrant. "It was during my illness that I first saw the anomalous creature that was put over us for our sins," wrote McDon-

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ald. "If ever a fiend in human guise walked this earth it did it in that woman's body." A two-year-old, the child of a prisoner, sat at the top of stairs when Dr. Walker "came storming along," Rose remembered. "Get out of my way, you little brat!" she cried, and kicked the little thing down the stairs."⁴⁵ McDonald continued,

Some kind ladies of Louisville promised us a Christmas dinner, and every day we talked of it over our scanty means. At last the long wished-for day arrived, but we did by no means spend it as we had hoped, for the doctor furnished each room with a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water and locked up the inmates for the day. She received the dinner and she alone knew what became of it.

During Christmas morning some Confederate prisoners were marched past our window ... I and others waived our handkerchiefs to them. The doctor saw us, consequently we spent the rest of that day in the dungeon.⁴⁶


When an army inspector showed up, inmates complained about Dr. Walker's thieving and cruelty and presented a statement of grievances. He was deaf to their pleas. Walker heard of the protest, and "She was like an insane person after that," said McDonald.⁴⁷

"We Can Pick Out Almost Any House in the Town"

After a two-month campaign through northern Georgia, by mid-July the Union army was camped outside Atlanta. Over the next three weeks Sherman's field artillery fired on the city. "Let us destroy Atlanta and make it a desolation," said Sherman as shells rained down. "One thing is certain, whether we get inside Atlanta or not, it will be a used up community by the time we are done with it."⁴⁸

"A battery of twenty pieces is posted near my headquarters and is booming away night and day into Atlanta," one Federal officer wrote home. "In the night it is particularly noisy and rest-breaking."⁴⁹ Superintendent of the Atlanta gas works was himself attempting to rest at 11 o'clock on the night of August 3 when one of those iron projectiles crashed into his home at the corner of Elliott and Rhodes streets. Both legs severed by the missile, he died within two hours. His six-year-old daughter was cut in two by the same shot. Elsewhere that day, a man, his wife and daughter were killed by shell fragments. A woman died when shrapnel shattered the window of a train arriving from

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WAS YOUR GREAT-GRANDFATHER A TERRORIST OR PATRIOT?

It's been very politically correct the past few years to classify as traitors, or even worse, terrorists the citizen-soldiers of the South who resisted an illegal invasion of their homes during the War Between the States. We see it differently. Outmanned, out-gunned, and out-supplied – but never out-fought – Confederate soldiers wrote a proud chapter in this country's history for independence, toughness, bravery, patriotism, and honor. If you want Confederate symbols to remain a part of our cultural history, and you're the male descendant of a Confederate soldier, we invite you to join us.

The SCV is a non-political heritage organization, not affiliated with any other group, dedicated to the preservation of the reputation of men like Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson – and your great-grandfather.

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Macon. One lady, a refugee from Rome, was ironing clothes when a shell hit her directly, tearing her to pieces.

Field artillery was not enough; Sherman ordered heavy guns be sent by rail from Chattanooga, "with which we can pick out almost any house in the town," he boasted. "Let me know if the 4 ½-inch guns have come and where you will place them," he wrote Major General George H. Thomas on August 8. "I would like to have them at work to-morrow."⁵⁰ Every Union gun within range of the city — 223 cannon of all sizes — opened fire on August 9. As many as 5,000 rounds of shot and shell fell on Atlanta that one day — the heaviest bombardment ever inflicted on an American city. It went on day and night for another three weeks. Six members of one family were killed by a direct hit on their shelter. A 42-pound shell crashed through the roof of the Presbyterian Church on Marietta Street, penetrated the floor, and exploded in a crowded basement. Another shell hit the sidewalk on Alabama Street, mortally wounding black barber Solomon Luckie as he stood outside his shop. One lady was killed instantly by an explosion on the street in front of the Express Office. There seemed no end to the carnage. During the shelling, one surgeon reported having performed 107 amputations on men, women, and children.

An Indiana doctor serving in Sherman's army toured Atlanta after its evacuation.

"I had often heard of the terrors of a bombardment of a crowded city but I never realized it before. Houses were shattered and torn in every shape that can be imagined, some utterly destroyed and some but little injured. Some had shell through the doors, some places the shell had burst inside of a house and torn it all to pieces.

"I would not for a great deal have

missed that ride through Atlanta," concluded the sadistic Hoosier. "It almost paid me for the whole campaign."⁵¹

"You defended Atlanta on a line so close to town that every cannon-shot ... that overshot their mark, went into the habitations of women and children," wrote Sherman to General John Bell Hood only weeks later.⁵² His duplicity defied description. For his own carefully planned, openly executed bombardment of civilians — Sherman now blamed the Confederate commander!

Professor Harry Stout of Yale University Divinity School made a statement about Sherman (applicable to all of his ilk): "For Sherman, God had long ceased to be governor of this war. Sherman's religion was America, and America's God was a jealous God of law and order, such as all those who resisted were reprobates who deserved death."⁵³

"Swing the Old Rebel Up Again!"

"Can we whip the South?" wrote Sherman to Halleck in 1863. "If we can, our numerical majority has both the natural and constitutional right to govern. If we cannot whip them, they contend for the natural right to select their own government." To insure that Southerners not select their own government, "we will remove and destroy every obstacle — if need be, take every life, every acre of land, every particle of property, everything that to us seems proper."⁵⁴

In Sherman's March to the Sea, Georgians were to experience that Federal doctrine in all its hellish fury.

In Henry County, southeast of Atlanta, when soldiers came to the plantation home of Jim Smith they were not content to merely steal and destroy. Charlie Tye Smith, then a slave, recalled how "Ole Marse Jim" was made to pull off his boots and run

barefooted through a cane brake with half a bushel of potatoes tied around his neck; then they made him put his boots back on and carried him down to the mill and tied him to the water post. They were getting ready to break his neck when one of Master's slaves, "Ole Peter Smith," asked them if they intended to kill Marse Jim, and when they said "Yes," Peter choked up and said, "Well, please, suh, let me die with old Marse!"⁵⁵

With that, the Yankees ended their fun and left.

"Madam, I have orders to burn this house," said one Federal to a resident on the road from Madison to Milledgeville. She hoped they would not burn the home of defenseless women.

"I'll insure it for fifty dollars," he said.

"I've got no fifty dollars to pay for insuring it; and if it depends upon that, it must burn."

An offer to "insure" property was one ploy used to extort hidden cash from victims. "Soon as he saw he couldn't frighten me into giving him anything, he went to plundering," she said.⁵⁶

Kate Latimer Nichols, twenty-seven, was sick and bedridden when the Yankees arrived at her farm home near Milledgeville. Two soldiers forced their way past a servant who guarded the door to her room, and raped Kate. "Poor woman," wrote a neighbor in her diary; "I fear that she has been driven crazy."⁵⁷ Indeed, the victim never recovered from the ordeal, dying in a mental institution.

Nora Canning and her elderly husband offered no resistance when Federal troops arrived at their home near Louisville. Soldiers insisted that Mr. Canning show them where a quantity of syrup had been hidden in the swamp. Unable to walk that far, they brought a mule for him to

ride. While he was gone troops fired the gin house, granary, and a large quantity of cloth. "The Negroes went out and begged for the cloth," wrote Mrs. Canning, "saying that it was to make their winter clothes."

"Well, madam," sneered one of the soldiers, "how do you like the looks of our little fire. We have seen a great many such, within the last few weeks."

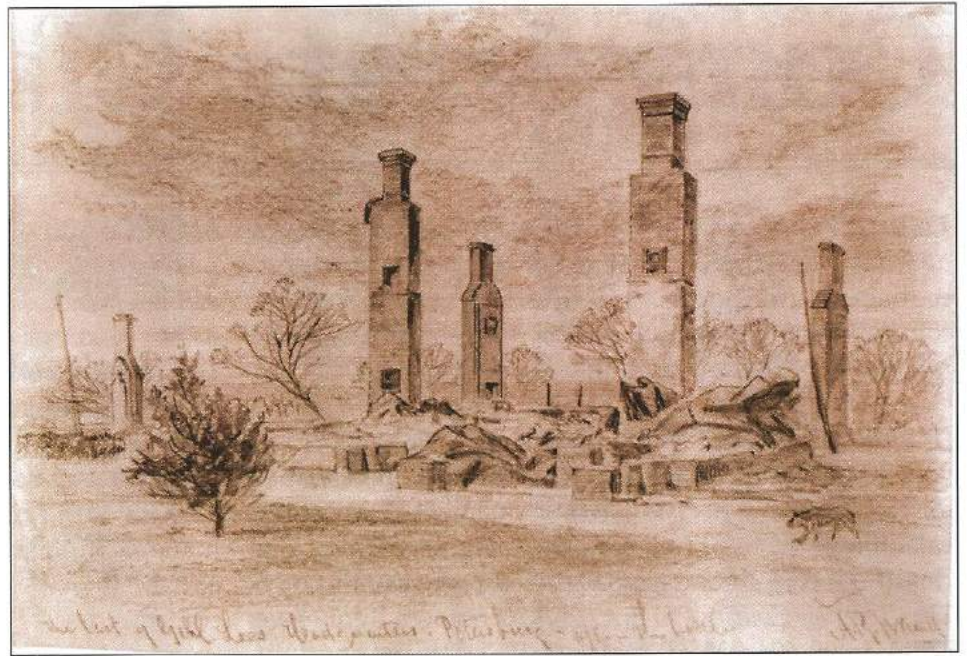
Meanwhile, Mr. Canning's interrogators got down to business in the swamp, two miles from the house.

"Now, old man, you have to tell us where your gold is hidden." When he replied that his money was in the bank, they cursed and led him to a tree, tied a rope around his neck, threw it over a branch, and lifted him up until his feet were off the ground. Just before he lost consciousness they demanded again, "Now where is your gold?" Another denial led to another jerking off the ground until he nearly suffocated. Lowered again, they shouted, "now tell us where that gold is or we will kill you, and your wife will never know what has become of you."

"I have told you the truth — I have no gold," he insisted. "I am an old man and at your mercy. If you want to kill me you have the power to do it ... I have a gold watch at the house, but nothing else."

"Swing the old Rebel up again!" shouted the leader.⁵⁸ This time the old man heard a sound like rushing water, followed by blindness, before losing consciousness. Finally convinced that he must be telling the truth, the blue-clad gang poured water on his face and brought him back to the house. Where they stole his gold watch.

Freed Blacks following the Federal army were stopped at Ebenezer Creek when troops were ordered to remove a pontoon bridge and leave thousands of the unwanted civilians on the other bank. Attempting to ford the creek, many panicked and drowned. Sherman defended his corps commander's actions, claiming he merely did not want to lose the pontoon bridge. In a letter to Washington on the matter, Sherman tried to dispel similar rumors "that I burned 500 n__s at one



Ruins of the house General Robert E. Lee used as his headquarters near Petersburg.

pop in Atlanta, or any such nonsense. I profess to be the best kind of a friend to Sambo."⁵⁹ Sherman's anti-black bias was becoming notorious. To a friend, the general privately confided that "I like n__s well enough as n__s," but only "fools & idiots" promoted their advancement.⁶⁰

A Union officer estimated his army in marching through Georgia "cleaned up the country generally of almost every thing upon which the people could live." The path of destruction he estimated forty miles wide, and "I do not see how the people can live for the next two years."⁶¹ Sherman himself calculated the damage done at one hundred million dollars (13.8 billion dollars today), eighty percent of which was "simple waste and destruction."⁶²

"Sherman's Bummers are Upon You!"

South Carolina, first state to secede, was marked for special vengeance. One bizarre undercurrent of Sherman's onslaught came to be known as the "war on dogs." Convinced bloodhounds were used to track escaped Union prisoners of war, the invaders became obsessed that all dogs must be destroyed. A Federal colonel said that "we were determined

that no dogs should escape, be it cur, rat dog or blood hound; we exterminate all." And he saw no need to waste ammunition on the creatures. "The dogs were easily killed. All we had to do was to bayonet them."⁶³ Some animals, such as cats, "seemed to feel it in the air that something was approaching," observed one woman in the path of Sherman's army. "The watchdog had, in fear, crouched under the dining table," she said, "when a soldier, spying him there, shot him."⁶⁴ Another lady, living in Barnwell, wrote that the first act of the invaders upon breaking into her home was to kill her pet dogs. They barked and growled at the intruders, "but in an instant both were hushed, two sharp pistol reports followed the last growl as the faithful dogs bounded forward only to fall in their tracks, dead." Her terrified children stood by, "shedding silent tears."⁶⁵ Sometimes soldiers used the butts of their rifles to bludgeon beloved pets in the presence of children.

Near Aiken, Confederate cavalry met an old man, a Baptist pastor, standing in front of his home, leaning against a fence post for support. "My daughter," he sobbed. "A bunch of

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Yankees raped her — they just left here.” The troopers charged down the road and quickly overtook the party of foragers. “Boys, I know why you do this, but I had nothing to do with it,” said a wounded Federal as he begged for his life.⁶⁶ The Confederates spared him, but executed the others.

There were so many gold watches, rings, chains, silver cups, canes, and similar treasures in the Federal camps that soldiers jested about the plunder. When asked where he got such a valuable item, the standard reply was that it was presented by a lady “for saving her household goods from destruction.” As one expressed it, “a soldier must have his joke.”⁶⁷

Federals camped in and around the Baptist church in Winnsboro, and staged cockfights inside that house of worship. The Episcopal church was burned. “They stole much that was useless to them,” remembered one, “for even Bibles were taken, one, I remember belonging to a little girl.”⁶⁸ Famed Mount Zion Institute had been converted into a hospital, and there a Confederate soldier named Manigault died just before the invaders arrived and was buried in the Episcopal churchyard. “His new-made grave was dug open,” said a witness, “his coffin placed across the grave and split open with an axe, and left so. This was done by those who termed themselves soldiers. ‘Hunting for buried treasures’ was the reason for such desecration.”⁶⁹

Plantation owner Thomas Lyles, at seventy-eight, was far too old to serve in the Confederate army. When enemy troops arrived they found him in bed and unable to walk. “They thought he was shamin’, playin’ ‘possum, so to speak,” remembered bondsman Abe Harris. “One of the raiders, a Yankee, came with a lighted torch and said, ‘Unless you give me the silver, the gold, and the money, I’ll burn you alive.’” The flaming torch was then thrust

under the bed. “I haven’t many more years to live. Burn and be d_____d!”⁷⁰ Stunned by the man’s bravery — and convinced he concealed no valuables — they withdrew.

At a dwelling in Lancaster an elderly lady was having her morning devotions when the Federals burst in. “Get up, old woman, praying will do you no good now, for Sherman’s bummers are upon you!” Gold-rimmed spectacles were ripped from her face as soldiers plundered the house. A six-year-old girl hid under a bed, clutching her doll in one hand and a bar of sweet soap in the other. A Yankee dragged her out. “The child was too terror-stricken to cry,” said a witness, “but clasped her little doll and her soap fast to the throbbing little heart. The man wrenched both from her and thrust the little one away with such violence that she fell against the bed.”⁷¹

The Reverend Dr. John Bachman, Lutheran minister, was present when Yankee soldiers forced a woman to publicly undress, claiming she was hiding jewels under her clothing. They then turned their attention to him, demanding to know where he kept his valuables. They cocked pistols and held them to his head, promising to send him “to hell in five minutes” if he did not talk. He told them to go ahead and shoot. A lieutenant, with “the face of a demon,” kicked the pastor in the stomach, and then in the back. Bachman was knocked down as many as eight times.

“How would you like to have both your arms cut off?” shouted the lieutenant, a man who seemed unable to speak a single sentence without swearing. That officer hit the clergyman in the left arm with his sheathed sword, breaking the bone. He then did the same to the right arm. The pain was, said Bachman, “most excruciating.” Bachman’s daughter begged for her father’s life, pleading they have mercy

on a man who had served his church for decades. “I don’t believe in a God, a heaven or a hell,” replied the lieutenant.⁷² Finally the torturer gave up, allowing the old man to seek medical attention.

Confederate Brigadier General James Chesnut was informed by cavalrymen of a worse crime. The home of a family, identified as the “M.s.,” was found plundered. A party of seven Federals had come upon only Mrs. M and her teenaged daughter at home. They tied up the mother and each then proceeded to rape the daughter. By the time Confederates arrived, the girl was dead and the mother was out of her mind. The Yankees were overtaken on the road by Southern troopers who shot them down, cut their throats, and left the bodies with a sign, “THESE ARE THE SEVEN.”⁷³

“We Mean to Wipe You Out!”

“Should you capture Charleston,” wrote Halleck to Sherman in December 1864, “I hope that by some accident the place may be destroyed, and if a little salt should be sown upon its site it may prevent the growth of future crops of nullification and secession.” Sherman thought Charleston already wrecked by shelling, and since “I look upon Columbia as quite as bad,” he would turn his attention to South Carolina’s capital.⁷⁴

Sherman’s devotees claim he is to be admired for burning Columbia — applauded for all his depredations, for that matter — as it “shortened the war.” (Of course, the war would have ended instantly had the invaders simply gone home; there would have been no war had Lincoln not launched one.) Some like to minimize what happened in Columbia, or divert Union army responsibility for the city’s destruction. What did victims have to say?

On the day Sherman’s army entered Columbia, reported a witness,

"robbery was going on at every corner in nearly every house." Purses, watches, hats, boots, overcoats or any item of value were taken from victims, white or black. "Nor were these acts [entirely] those of common soldiers," he noted. "Commissioned officers, of a rank so high as that of a colonel, were frequently among the most active." At one home soldiers stabbed knives into a mattress between terrified children, searching for hidden valuables, "thinking that the children were put there as a blind."⁷⁵

Countless women had earrings ripped from bleeding ears. "I have myself seen a lady with the lobes of both ears torn asunder," wrote a foreign diplomat.⁷⁶ A bedridden, dying woman had rings removed from her fingers.

"In several cases, newly made graves were opened," remembered a witness, "the coffins taken out, broken open, in search of buried treasure, and the corpses left exposed."⁷⁷

On one street a Union soldier, "seeing some children playing with a beautiful little greyhound, amused himself by beating its brains out."⁷⁸

Churches were pillaged. At the Catholic convent "soldiers drank the sacramental wine and profaned with fiery draughts of vulgar whiskey the goblets of the communion service. Some went off reeling under the weight of priestly robes, holy vessels and candlesticks."⁷⁹

"Columbia is a doomed city!" hissed one. "And what do you think of the Yankees now?" taunted another. "We mean to wipe you out! We'll burn the very stones of South Carolina." One victim observed, "To inspire terror in the weak ... seemed to these creatures a sort of heroism."⁸⁰

On Washington Street the Methodist pastor twice smothered fires set at his church. Soon he saw the parsonage was burning. Quickly he wrapped his child in a blanket and they escaped to the street, only to witness flames breaking out anew at the church. Angered that he had tried to frustrate their arson, a Federal ripped the blanket away and threw it

into the conflagration. "D___ you!" he snapped, "if you say a word, I'll throw the child after it."⁸¹

Witnesses saw soldiers torching the Catholic Convent. "What do you think of God now?" they shouted to the nuns. "Is not Sherman greater?"⁸²

Sherman said to Mayor Thomas Goodwyn the morning after, "It is true our men have burnt Columbia, but it was your fault."⁸³ Columbia's civilian population, he insisted, had made his men drunk. Sherman privately confided in a letter to his brother, "I know that the general judgment of the country is that no matter how it began, it was all right."⁸⁴ In his official report he pointed the finger at Wade Hampton, claiming the Confederate general left burning cotton in the streets. In his memoirs Sherman confessed that he had charged Hampton only "to shake the faith of his people in him."⁸⁵

Perhaps the most pointed observation was that of Edwin J. Scott, a man who was in Columbia the night it burned and saw what happened. "If a transaction that occurred in the presence of forty or fifty thousand people can be successfully falsified, then all human testimony is worthless."⁸⁶

"Fiends Incarnate"

Federal theft, arson, and murder continued once Sherman crossed into North Carolina — and went on even after Confederate armed forces surrendered.

In Anson County a man was robbed of his watch and money, and the next band of blue-clad troops to arrive at his home demanded the very same items. Angered, they killed him when he could not produce more plunder.

Anson County resident Esther Alden grieved about the suffering of her neighbors, as well as over what the Yankees did to the animals.

It is like some horrid nightmare. When I shut my eyes I see nothing but creatures and human beings in agony. The poor suffering horses! Some fortunately dead and out of their misery, others groaning in death pains, some with disabled limbs



A bummer dragging a captured pig back to camp.

*freely hobbling about to glean a blade of grass; the cows and oxen slaughtered and left to rot! I counted eight beautiful calves lying dead in one pen; many times we saw two or three lying dead side by side!*⁸⁷

Teenager Janie Smith was appalled by the soldiers' obsession to spare no living thing, however insignificant, calling them "fiends incarnate." At her home an old hen "played sick and thus saved her neck, but lost all her children," said Janie. Chicks were chased by soldiers, who "would run all over the yard to catch the little things to squeeze to death."⁸⁸

In Fayetteville the Yankees destroyed 1,000 horses and mules they had no use for. There were two killing grounds: one a field on the bank of the Cape Fear River, the other a corral in town. It took hours to shoot them all. Trying to run, some of the terrified animals plunged into the river. Most were left where they fell, with no effort made by their killers to dispose of the carcasses, as troops abandoned the town. "They were burned," wrote a witness, "and you may try to imagine the odor, if you can."⁸⁹

A dozen miles outside Fayetteville, at the home of Duncan Murchinson, Yankee cavalymen charged into the bedroom of a small girl desperately sick with typhoid. They were looking for items to steal, but found nothing and were asked to leave. "Go ahead boys," growled an officer, "Do all the mischief you can."⁹⁰ Seventy-year-old Mr. Murchinson was dragged to the swamp and assaulted, while vandals destroyed furniture, slashed family

portraits, and poured molasses into the piano. The little girl died while the troopers were still in her home.

A woman who lived near Fayetteville told of Yankees murdering two citizens. "They hung up three others and one lady, merely letting them down just in time to save life, in order to make them tell where their valuables were concealed; and they whipped — stripped and cowhided — several good and well known citizens for the same purpose."⁹¹

Young Josephine Worth remembered "the sky was lurid with the flames from the burning homesteads, but it has passed into a proverb that Sherman's route could be traced by solitary chimneys where happy homes once stood." At her uncle's place, four miles from Fayetteville, they vandalized everything. "Even the family Bible was not sacred," wrote Josephine. "One of them opened it and spread it over a mule's back and rode off on it for a saddle."⁹²

Another witnessed Federals torture and murder her neighbors. "J.P. McLean was hung up by the neck three times and shot at once, to make him disclose hidden valuables. W.T. Horne, Jesse Hawley, and Alexander McAuthor were all hung up until nearly dead. John Waddill was shot down and killed in his own house."⁹³

"What Kind of Folks These Here Yankees?"

Federal invaders stole whatever they liked from rich or poor; vandalized or burned the homes, businesses, farms, and churches of everyone in their path, and cared nothing about their victims' politics. Arguably those most helpless of all, African-Americans, suffered the most.

Fannie Carr, a resident of Alexandria, Louisiana, though born a slave had been free for more than 20 years. The widow stayed in her own home on the outskirts of town with a grown daughter, Catherine. Catherine, also free, worked as a domestic for a neighbor, Mrs. Thomas C. Manning. Thomas Manning, associate justice of the state supreme court, characterized

them as "truthful and industrious people."⁹⁴

Blue-clad troops arrived in Alexandria in mid-March, 1864 and immediately began plundering the town. "On seeing me they asked who I was," said Fanny. When she tried to make them understand that she was free, they called her a liar. When she said that the house belonged to her and to no one else, "they cursed me and called me a liar again, and said n__s could not own property in this state."

"They commenced pillaging the house. I begged them to stop."⁹⁵ It was no use. All of their food supply disappeared, including the poultry and a hog. A supply of lumber she had accumulated was chopped to pieces. The vandals then proceeded to pull down the house itself, even taking bricks from the chimney.

The invaders refused to believe Southern blacks owned property, that some could be free and respected members of their communities. And Northerners were shocked to learn how many were loyal Confederates.

In the spring of 1863 Federals marching up Louisiana's Bayou Teche stopped to plunder the mansion of the late Dubriel Olivier. Olivier, wealthy planter and slave owner, raised and equipped — at his own expense — a Confederate company two years earlier. Now his widow Aimee defiantly met the invading Yankees and ordered them away. "Where is your master?"⁹⁶ laughed a blue-clad soldier. Assuming she was the maid, they insisted she have more respect for white people. It finally dawned on the intruders that she was indeed mistress of the plantation, that Dubriel and Aimee Olivier were *gens de couleur libre*, free people of color."

During the Federal invasions of western Louisiana in 1863 and 1864, thousands of slaves were encouraged to leave their homes and follow the troops. Major General Nathaniel Banks was overheard to say, "We use uneducated horses and mules taken from the enemy. Why not negroes?"⁹⁷ Former slaves might end up in the ranks of his army, laboring on

confiscated plantations, or employed as prostitutes. All too often, women, children, and those too old or sick to work were simply abandoned by their liberators. Children were separated from parents, and it was inevitable that disease and starvation would take a terrible toll. A careful examination of the facts found that between May 21 and June 29, 1863, 2,000 of those who ran away with the Union army had perished. The Federal Red River Campaign the following year made matters even worse. In Rapides Parish alone it was estimated between May 1863 and March 1864, 8,000 slaves left their homes to follow the Union army, and that one-half died.

In the spring of 1863 Sherman wrote, "I won't trust n__s to fight yet, but don't object to the Government taking them from the enemy, & making such use of them as experience may suggest."⁹⁸ In Union-occupied Tennessee the army impressed blacks and put them to work at hard labor or hired them out to private contractors who often literally starved them.

In May 1864 Sherman began his invasion of northern Georgia. A black nurse living on a plantation near Kingston found herself in the path of that army. "They've took everything I had," she sobbed,⁹⁹ complaining her animals had been killed and her savings stolen by the blue-clad soldiers.

In the aftermath of a Union raid, a Jefferson County, Georgia, couple noticed one of their slaves "sitting on her door steps swaying her body back and forth, and making a mournful noise, a kind of moaning, a low sorrowful sound, occasionally wringing her hands and crying out."

"Master," she said, raising her head, "What kind of folks these here Yankees? They won't even let the dead rest in the grave."

"What do you mean?" she was asked.

"You know my child what I bury last week? They take him up and left him on top of the ground for the hog to root. What you think of that, sir?"

Her story was true. We found the

vandals had gone to the graveyard and, seeing a new made grave, had dug down into it and taken up the little coffin containing a dead baby, no doubt supposing treasure had been buried there. When they discovered their mistake, they left it above ground, as the poor mother expressed it, 'for the hog to root.'¹⁰⁰

Mrs. Alfred Proctor Aldrich of "The Oaks" plantation near Barnwell, South Carolina, hid her valuables herself. Assuming the servants knew the whereabouts of the silver, one Union soldier put a rope around the neck of a black man named Frank, suspended him in the air three times, threatening him with death if he did not reveal the hiding place.

"Where is all the white people's gold and silver?" soldiers demanded of slaves at a South Carolina home. "My Ma said she didn't know," remembered Adeline Grey, a young girl at the time. "You do know!" they said, and choked her till she couldn't talk."¹⁰¹ When the soldiers left, they made Adeline's mother come with them, forced to carry a sack of stolen meat, until she was finally able to escape and run home.

Soldiers kidnapped twelve-year-old slave Sam Rawls of Lexington County, South Carolina. "I was in marse's yard. They come up where the boss was standing ... grabbed him and hit him. They burned his house, stole his stock, and one Yankee stuck his sword to my breast and said for me to come with him or he would kill me. O' course I went along. They took me as far as Broad River, on t'other side of Chapin; then turned me loose and told me to run fast or they would shoot me. I went fast and found my way back home by watching the sun."¹⁰²

"What did the Yankees do when they come? They tied me up by my two thumbs," said former slave Andy Marion, "and try to make me tell where I hid the money and gold watch and silver, but I swore I didn't know."¹⁰³

"They'd go through the house an' take everything," said Daphney Wright, a young slave woman of



Library of Congress

Bummers return to camp with their plunder.

Hardeeville, South Carolina. "Take from the white, an' take from the colored, too. Take everything out the house!"¹⁰⁴

"First thing they look for was money," remembered bondsman Lewis Evans. "They put a pistol right in my forehead and say, 'I got to have your money, where is it?'"¹⁰⁵

During Sherman's occupation of Columbia, South Carolina, one black woman, a servant of Episcopal minister Peter Shand, was raped by a gang of soldiers. She then had her face forced down into a shallow ditch, and was held there until she drowned. William Gilmore Simms reported how "Regiments, in successive relays," committed gang rape in Columbia on scores of slave women.¹⁰⁶

"What does this mean, boys?" asked Sherman, coming upon a young African-American man dead on a Columbia street.

"The d__d black rascal gave us his impudence, and we shot him," calmly replied a soldier.

"Well, bury him at once!" ordered Sherman. "Get him out of sight!"

When asked about the matter, Sherman said, "We have no time for courts-martial and things of that sort!"¹⁰⁷

Mary Chesnut recorded in her diary the horrific news that the bodies of 18 black women had been discovered on the Sumter District plantation of her niece Minnie Frierson and husband James. Each had been stabbed in the chest with a bayonet. "The Yankees were done with them!" wrote Mrs. Chesnut. "These are not rumours but tales told me by the people who see it all."¹⁰⁸

"Them Yankees done a lot of mischief," said former slave and North Carolinian Tiney Shaw. "I know because I was there. Besides their 'robbin', plunderin' and burnin' up everything, a whole lot of darkies what ain't never been whipped by the master got a whuppin' from the Yankee soldiers."¹⁰⁹

Another small slave boy, Blount Baker, also in North Carolina, recounted the Yankees "talked mean to us an' one of them said that wen's were the cause of the war. 'Sir, I said, 'folks that are wanting a war can always find a cause.' He kicked me in the seat of the pants for that, so I hushed."¹¹⁰

The Yankees would regret their run-in with eight-year-old Ida Lee Adkins. Ida lived on the plantation of her master Frank Jeffries and his wife Mary Jane, near Louisburg, North Carolina. Mr. Jeffries was too old to serve in the Confederate army, but met the invading Yankees with characteristic defiance, and as a result was tied up on his porch.

"I was scared near bout to death," said Ida, "but I ran to the kitchen an' got a butcher knife, an' when the Yankees wasn't lookin', I tried to cut the rope an' set Marse Frank free. But one of them blue devils seed me an' come running."

"What are you doin', you black brat!" shouted the Federal. "You stinkin' little alligator bait!"

"He snatched the knife from my hand," continued Ida, "an' told me to stick out my tongue, that he was going to cut it off. I let out a yell an' run behind the house."

As the Yankees continued to pilage her master's home, Ida had an idea.

Bout that time I seed the bee gums [hives] in the side yard ... I run an' got me a long stick an' turned over every one of them gums. Then I stirred them bees up with that stick till they was so mad I could smell the poison. An' bees! You ain't never seed the like of bees. They was swarmin' all over the place. They sailed into them Yankees like bullets, each one madder than the other. They lit on them horses till they looked like they was alive with varmints. The horses broke their bridles an' tore down the palings an' lit out down the road. But that running was nothin' to what them Yankees done. They bust out cussin', but what did a bee care about cuss words! ... The Yankees forgot all about the meat an' things they done stole; they took off down the road on a run, passin' the horses. The bees was right after them in a long line.

With the invaders gone, Master Jeffries was quickly freed and most of the plunder recovered. "Ida Lee," said Mrs. Jeffries, "We want to give you something you can keep so you'll always remember this day, and how you run the Yankees away."

"Then Miss Mary Jane took a plain gold ring off her finger an' put it on mine," seventy-eight-year-old Ida Lee Adkins told a newspaper reporter in 1936. "An' I been wearin' it ever since."¹¹¹

Notes

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