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Re: Notes on the Dahlgren raid

Launched because of some pressures brought on Lincoln from the northern populace concern about Union POWs. Several POWs escaped from Libby Prison in Virginia w/ tales of the wretched state of the Union men in Confederate captivity. (Sort of like the hostage issue). Lincoln felt pressured to assure his fellow citizens (and voters) that Union POWs were not forgotten.

So he agreed to a raid on Richmond and an attempt to free Union prisoners outside of Richmond at Belle Isle. The raid was to be led by General Judson Kilpatrick. Kilpatrick was to take his main force to see if he could get into Richmond. At the same time Colonel Ulrich Dahlgren (father was a Union admiral) took 500 men in an independent force to liberate Belle Isle.

The Raid took place in February 1864.

The whole raid was a screw up and met w/ bad luck. Dahlgren's force was ambushed at the James River. Dahlgren was killed. Kilpatrick had no more success in trying to penetrate Richmond's defenses.

On Dahlgren's body the Confederates found a special order that read: "The men must keep together and well in hand, and, once in the city, it must be destroyed and Jeff Davis and his cabinet killed."

Where these orders authentic or forgeries?

*See Richmond  
any more  
authentic?*

Whatever the case, there was a cry from Southerners for revenge, for retribution. To wage a war of no quarter.

The Richmond Sentinel responded to the Dahlgren raid with an editorial: Let Lincoln and Kilpatrick remember that they have bidden their subordinates give no quarter to Confederate chiefs. Perhaps even a Scotch cap and military cloak will not prevent a just and stern vengeance from overtaking them."