

History 225

Re: Notes w/ Evolving War Aims
(Source: Harding, There Is A River)

Use these notes w/ ^{— *Jeff* —} military/black pressure on Lincoln

Black reaction to the guns of war going off at Ft. Sumter was varied.

But the most dramatic impact was the migration of blacks into Union lines. There was little evidence of slaves initiating any insurrectionary movements or resorting to violence to overthrow their oppressors.

Probably a central reason for this was that in early stages of the war there was no encouragement from the Northern leadership that they take such direct action.

For example: When General McClellan brought Union troops into West Virginia to secure her secession from Virginia he delivered a "Proclamation to the People of West Virginia" on May 26, 1861 in which he stated blankly that "Not only will we abstain from all interferences with your slaves, but we will, with an iron hand, crush any attempt at insurrection on their part."

Blacks who made it their business to keep current with developing events were aware that Lincoln quashed General Fremont's emancipation order in Missouri and forced General Hunter to retract his emancipation policies in the South.

Without direct Union encouragement it would have been foolhardy for blacks to attempt uprisings. Freedom not martyrdom was what they were after.

Instead of mass insurrection, blacks resorted to self-liberating movement. They flooded into the camps of Northern armies.

Pattern: At Ft. Monroe--held by Union troops in Virginia a few refugees showed up in May '61. Butler characterized them as "contrabands of war." A few days later more showed. By the end of July there were at least 900 with more coming every day.

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Military(cont.)

Deal here w/ slaves moving into Union lines as the North penetrated into the South. We need to understand that blacks voting w/ their feet against the institution of slavery by moving into Northern lines was to place pressure at the bottom of the chain of command. Blacks were aware of this. Company commanders had to deal with this problem or pass it onto their superiors at regimental command who passed it up the line to the Brigade or the Army corps in the theater. Generals then passed on the dilemma to their superior the General in Chief who had to speak to the Secretary of War who was compelled to talk to his boss, the President.

Some examples(covered in Text):

General David Hunter("Black Dave"). Hunter was a West Pointer and a committed abolitionist. After he took over Sherman's command in South Carolina in March '62 he declared martial law and promptly emancipated all the slaves in Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida. He also called in all fugitive slaves at gunpoint and announced he was recruiting for the Union cause and "expected" volunteers to come forward. Hunter never bothered to communicate these steps to the War Department. Lincoln learned about Hunter actions through the newspapers and Treasury dept. He removed him from command. (The timing was bad. The North was not ready for emancipation in March of '62.

In Kansas former senator James Lane and now Union brigadier general organized a regiment of black troopers without authorization from the War department. This action took place in early 1862. When the War Department notified him twice to desist and drop this idea, Lane ignored superior orders in the best frontier fashion and continued to use black troops until events(EP)made this issue moot.

The text raises the question by dealing w/ "Beast" Butler and New Orleans. He used fugitive slaves for construction of fortifications. When a Louisiana master came to Butler's camp under a flag of truce to reclaim some of his runaways--Butler refused to turn them over arguing that they were "contaband of war."

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Ultimately Butler would accept for service the Louisiana National Guards--all black companies with black officers.

General Fremont's emancipation order in Missouri in Sept. 1861 received the same reception from Lincoln that the president gave to Hunter. It was revoked and Fremont was removed from his command.

B. Congressional Pressure: ✓ [See Text]

Congress passed a series of enactments (1) outlawing slavery in the District of Columbia; (2) outlawing slavery in the territories; (3) two Confiscation Acts. One in August of 1861 (affecting slaves if it could be proven they were used in the South's war efforts and the Confiscation Act of July 17, 1862. This Act was directed at slaves within Union lines belonging to persons in rebellion.

C. Popular Pressure:

Horace Greeley's editorial in the NY Tribune entitled "The Prayer of Twenty Millions."

Lincoln's response on August 22 to Greeley.

D. Black Pressure: