

History 225

Re: Notes w/ Glatthaar

Major point here: Glatthaar's essay stresses Internal reasons for the collapse of the Confederacy in looking at the overall impact of the slave in the Civil War.

Of a total population of about 3.5 million slaves, something like 500,000 to 700,000 slaves escaped bondage and moved into Union ranks. In many cases this represented great risk to the runaways.

He notes that the 100,000 former slaves who wore the Union blue came into service by 1863/4 when the Union needed them most, The volunteers of 1861 enlistment were up in 1864. While more than 50% of these fighters re-enlisted it was essential that black manpower be available to fill in the gaps left by those who stacked arms and were available for the final 1864-5 push to bring the war to a successful conclusion.

He makes point that for free and slave, the blacks tipped the delicate balance of power squarely in favor of the North.

He looks at the Internal factors involving slavery:

(1) The disruptive effects of South losing this manpower or work force. By leaving the work force they were instrumental in adding to the fierce inflation (900%). Labor scarcity meant reduction in production especially of food and this pushed food prices upward. This scarcity of food was exacerbated by the foraging of Union troops.

(2) Mention made of the Virginia Central Railroad that Lee depended upon to provide food for his Army and the city of Richmond. This railroad was undependable due to breakdown of tracks and need for a host of repairs that required workmen that were not available. White workers were in the Army and black laborers had run off to the Union ranks. (Also point out that the superintendent of the VCR was a federal spy). Source is either Fishel or Furgurson.

(3) runaways also undercut the southern sense of social stability. It was all part of the southern myth of the grateful slave; the illusion that the slave was all part of the extended family and was loyal down to his shoelaces. Now that myth was shattered. it was very upsetting.

(4) Those slaves who did not or could not escape created an atmosphere of unrest behind the lines on the home front. They sabotaged farm equipment; they flanked owners by their sudden uncooperative attitudes; and put plantation and small yeoman women teeth on edge with the fear of possible uprising and violence.

(5) The Great Fear

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Glatthaar shifts to the External value of blacks in the Civil War.

Blacks in the navy. About 10% of the Union navy was black. These men were involved in the blockade and took part in many river battles.

But their greatest contribution was in the ground war.

Glatthaar goes over some familiar ground--Post Hudson, Milliken's Bend, and Ft. Wagner. He notes other involvements. Notes, too, that black troops fought well when they had been trained and well led. He has a short paragraph of the special screening of white officers who were to lead black troops. (Does not mention that they were paid higher for this assignment).

Notes, too, the discrimination that black troops faced behind the lines as well as in combat by the Confederates.

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Interesting that during the siege of Petersburg that one out of every Union man was a black man. Mentions The Crater but does not explain what happened.

Concludes w/ General Cleburne and his campaign to enlist black troops for the Confederacy. Emulation is the highest form of flattery! Ultimately, Lee was able to convince Davis and the Con. Congress to begin the adoption of black troops into the Confederate armed forces.