

The South Since the War (1865)

S I D N E Y A N D R E W S

After the Civil War ended in April 1865, Northern reporter Sidney Andrews sought to describe both the war's impact on the South and the attitudes of the defeated Confederates. Given that the majority of South Carolina's population were freed slaves, it is curious that Andrews made little effort to determine their attitudes. Nonetheless, his articles were graphic and accurate, and were reprinted in several newspapers. In 1866, Andrews collected his articles and published them as a book.

Questions to Consider

- What was the attitude of the former Confederates?
- How widespread was the destruction caused by Sherman's army?

Scenes in the Track of Sherman's Army

Columbia, September 12, 1865

The war was a long time in reaching South Carolina, but there was vengeance in its very breath when it did come,—wrath that blasted everything it touched, and set Desolation on high as the genius of the State. "A brave people never before made such a mistake as we did," said a little woman who sat near me in the cars while coming up from Charleston; "it mortifies me now, every day I live, to think how well the Yankees fought. We had no idea they could fight half so well." In such humiliation as hers is half the lesson of the war for South Carolina.

Columbia is in the heart of Destruction. Being outside of it, you can only get in through one of the roads built by Ruin. Being in it, you can only get out over one of the roads walled by Desolation....

The railway section of the route from Charleston lies mostly either in a pine barren or a pine swamp.... The

trim and handsome railway stations of the North, the little towns strung like beads on an iron string, are things unknown here. In the whole seventy-seven miles there are but two towns that make any impression on the mind of a stranger,—Summerville and George's,—and even these are small and unimportant places. Elsewhere we stopped, as it appeared, whenever the train-men pleased,—the "station" sometimes existing only in the consciousness of the engineer and conductor.

Branchville was, however, noticeable because of the place it once occupied in Northern anxiety. There is where Sherman was to meet his fate. Have we forgotten how the Richmond papers of early February spoke? They were not at liberty to mention the preparations, etc., but they might say, etc., and the Yankee nation would have sore cause to remember Branchville, etc. Unfortunately, however, Sherman flanked Branchville, just as he had other places of thrice its importance, and it missed the coveted renown. It is nothing but a railroad junction in a pine barren, with a long, low station-house and cotton warehouse....

The "Shermanizing process," as an ex-Rebel colonel jocosely called it, has been complete everywhere. To simply say that the people hate that officer is to put a

Source: Sidney Andrews, *The South Since the War: As Shown by Fourteen Weeks of Travel and Observation in Georgia and the Carolinas* (Boston, 1866), pp. 28–37.

fact in very mild terms.... They pronounce his spirit "infernal," "atrocious," "cowardly," "devilish," and would unquestionably use stronger terms if they were to be had.... Whatever else the South Carolina mothers forget, they do not seem likely in this generation to forget to teach their children to hate Sherman.

Certain bent rails are the first thing one sees to indicate the advent of his army. They are at Branchville. I looked at them with curious interest. "It passes my comprehension to tell what became of our railroads," said a travelling acquaintance; "one week we had passably good roads, on which we could reach almost any part of the State, and the next week they were all gone,—not simply broken up, but gone...."

At Orangeburg there is ample proof that the army passed that way. About one third of the town was burned.... Thereabouts one finds plenty of railroad iron so bent and twisted that it can never again be used. The genius which our soldiers displayed in destroying railroads seems remarkable.... "We could do something in that line, we thought," said an ex-Confederate captain, "but we were ashamed of ourselves when we saw how your men could do it."

We rode over the road where the army marched. Now and then we found solitary chimneys, but, on the whole, comparatively few houses were burned, and some of those were fired, it is believed, by persons from the Rebel army or from the neighboring locality....

There is a great scarcity of stock of all kinds. What was left by the Rebel conscription officers was freely appropriated by Sherman's army, and the people really find considerable difficulty not less in living than in travelling. Milk, formerly an article much in use, can only be had now in limited quantities.... There are more mules than horses, apparently; and the animals, whether mules or horses, are all in ill condition and give evidence of severe overwork.

Columbia was doubtless once the gem of the State. It is as regularly laid out as a checker-board,—the squares being of uniform length and breadth and the streets of uniform width. What with its broad streets, beautiful shade-trees, handsome lawns, extensive gardens, luxuriant shrubbery, and wealth of flowers, I can easily see that it must have been a delightful place of residence....

It is now a wilderness of ruins. Its heart is but a mass of blackened chimneys and crumbling walls. Two thirds of the buildings in the place were burned, including, without exception, everything in the business portion. Not a store, office, or shop escaped; and for a distance of three fourths of a mile on each of twelve streets there

was not a building left. "They destroyed everything which the most infernal Yankee ingenuity could devise means to destroy," said one gentleman to me; "hands, hearts, fire, gunpowder, and behind everything the spirit of hell, were the agencies which they used."

...Of course there is very little business doing yet.... I judge that twenty thousand dollars would buy the whole stock of dry goods, groceries, clothing, &c. in store. The small change of the place is made in shin-plasters, printed on most miserable paper, and issued by the various business men, "redeemable in United States currency when presented in sums of two dollars and upwards." ...There is none of the Confederate money in circulation; though I judge, from what I hear, that considerable quantities of it are hoarded up in the belief that things will somehow take such a turn as to one day give it value....

In coming up from Charleston I learned a great many things....

Thus, one man insisted with much vehemence that cotton is king and that a resolution on the part of the South not to sell any for a year would bring the North upon its knees....

Another gravely asserted that a state of anarchy prevails in the entire North; that the returned soldiers are plundering and butchering indiscriminately; and that there has recently been a most bloody riot in Boston.

Another, and a man of much apparent intelligence, informed me that the negroes have an organized military force in all sections of the State, and are almost certain to rise and massacre the whites about Christmas time....

The people of the central part of the State are poor, wretchedly poor; for the war not only swept away their stock and the material resources of their plantations, but also all values,—all money, stocks, and bonds,—and generally left nothing that can be sold for money but cotton, and only a small proportion of the landholders have any of that....

They are full of ignorance and prejudices, but they want peace and quiet, and seem not badly disposed toward the general government. Individuals there are who rant and rave and feed on fire as in the old days, but another war is a thing beyond the possibilities of time. So far as any fear of that is concerned we may treat this State as we please,—hold it as a conquered province or restore it at once to full communion in the sisterhood of States. The war spirit is gone, and no fury can re-enliven it....

Regulating the Domestic Relations of Freedmen (1865)

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF SOUTH CAROLINA

In order to return to the Union, the former Confederate states were required to acknowledge the termination of slavery. After outlawing slavery in their constitution, the South Carolina legislature set about establishing the meaning of freedom for their new black citizens. The first act, passed December 19, 1865, confirmed black citizenship within certain unspecified boundaries. Two days later the legislature passed an act to regulate “the Domestic Relations” of the freedmen. Such restrictive legislation convinced Congress of the need for the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

Questions to Consider

- How does the South Carolina legislature justify these limitations of the rights of some citizens?
- Why is it necessary to recognize legally the marriage of black men and women?
- How and why does the state define “persons of color”?

An Act Preliminary to the Legislation Induced by the Emancipation of Slaves

Whereas, The Convention of this State, by the Constitution lately ratified, did recognize the emancipation of slaves... therefore,...

III. All free negroes, mulattoes and mestizoes, all freedmen and freedwomen, and all descendants through either sex of any of these persons, shall be known as *persons of color*, except that every such descendant, who may have of Caucasian blood seven-eighths or more, shall be deemed a white person.

IV. The statutes and regulations concerning slaves are now inapplicable to persons of color; and although

such persons are not entitled to social or political equality with white persons, they shall have the right to acquire, own and dispose of property; to make contracts; to enjoy the fruits of their labor; to sue and be sued; and to receive protection under the law in their persons and property....

An Act to Establish and Regulate the Domestic Relations of Persons of Color...

I. The relation of husband and wife amongst persons of color is established.

II. Those who now live as such, are declared to be husband and wife.

III. In case of one man having two or more reputed wives, or one woman two or more reputed husbands, the man shall, by the first day of April next, select one of

Source: *Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina, Passed at the Annual Session of 1865* (Columbia, SC, 1865), pp. 10, 31–36, 39.

his reputed wives, or the woman one of her reputed husbands; and the ceremony of marriage, between this man or woman, and the person so selected, shall be performed.

IV. Every colored child, heretofore born, is declared to be the legitimate child of his mother, and also of his colored father, if he is acknowledged by such a father.

V. Persons of color, desirous hereafter to become husband and wife, should have the contract of marriage duly solemnized....

VIII. One who is a pauper, or a charge to the public, shall not be competent to contract marriage. Marriage between a white person and a person of color shall be illegal and void....

XV. A child, over the age of two years, born of a colored parent, may be bound by the father...as an apprentice, to any respectable white or colored person, who is competent to make a contract; a male until he shall attain the age of twenty-one years, and a female until she shall attain the age of eighteen years.

XVI. Illegitimate children, within the ages above specified, may be bound by the mother.

XVII. Colored children, between the ages mentioned, who have neither father nor mother living in the District in which they are found, or whose parents are paupers, or unable to afford to them maintenance, or whose parents are not teaching them habits of industry and honesty, or are persons of notoriously bad character, or are vagrants, or have been, either of them, convicted of an infamous offence, may be bound, as apprentices by the District Judge, or one of the Magistrates, for the aforesaid term....

XXIII. The master shall have authority to inflict moderate chastisement and impose reasonable restraint upon his apprentice, and to recapture him if he depart from his service.

XXIV. The master shall receive to his own use the profits of the labor of his apprentice....

XXXV. All persons of color who make contracts for service or labor, shall be known as servants, and those with whom they contract, shall be known as masters....

XLV. On farms or in out-door service, the hours of labor, except on Sunday, shall be from sun-rise to sunset, with a reasonable interval for breakfast and dinner.

Servants shall rise at the dawn in the morning, feed, water and care for the animals on the farm, do the usual and needful work about the premises, prepare their meals for the day, if required by the master, and begin the farm work or other work by sun-rise. The servant shall be careful of all the animals and property of his master, and especially of the animals and implements used by him, shall protect the same from injury by other persons, and shall be answerable for all property lost, destroyed or injured by his negligence, dishonesty, or bad faith.

XLVI. All lost time, not caused by the act of the master, and all losses occasioned by neglect of the duties hereinbefore prescribed, may be deducted from the wages of the servant.... Servants shall be quiet and orderly in their quarters, at their work, and on the premises; shall extinguish their lights and fires, and retire to rest at seasonable hours....

XLVII. The master may give to a servant a task at work about the business of the farm, which shall be reasonable. If the servant complain of the task, the District Judge, or a Magistrate, shall have power to reduce or increase it. Failure to do a task shall be deemed evidence of indolence, but a single failure shall not be conclusive.

XLIX. Servants shall not be absent from the premises without the permission of the master....

L. When the servant shall depart from the service of the master without good cause, he shall forfeit wages due to him....

LI. The master may discharge his servant for wilful disobedience of the lawful order of himself or his agent; habitual negligence or indolence in business; drunkenness, gross moral or legal misconduct; want of respect and civility to himself, his family, guests or agents....

LXXII. No person of color shall pursue or practice the art, trade or business of an artisan, mechanic or shop-keeper, or any other trade, employment or business (besides that of husbandry, or that of a servant under a contract for service or labor) on his own account and for his own benefit, or in partnership with a white person, or as agent or servant of any person, until he shall have obtained a license therefor from the Judge of the District Court; which license shall be good for one year only....

An Appeal to Congress for Impartial Suffrage (1867)

F R E D E R I C K D O U G L A S S

Frederick Douglass had hoped that the end of slavery would bring freedom for his fellow black Americans. But in the aftermath of the Civil War, Southerners resisted extending rights to the freedmen, while far too many Northerners demonstrated little concern for the fate of the former slaves. In January 1867, Douglass published the following “Appeal” in the popular magazine *The Atlantic Monthly*, calling for the extension of franchise to black men. In 1870 the states approved the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution, supposedly securing male black citizens their right to vote.

Questions to Consider

- Why should Northern whites support the extension of suffrage to black men?
- Why did Douglass not extend his logic to include women?

The fundamental and unanswerable argument in favor of the enfranchisement of the negro is found in the undisputed fact of his manhood. He is a man, and by every fact and argument by which any man can sustain his right to vote, the negro can sustain his right equally. It is plain that, if the right belongs to any, it belongs to all. The doctrine that some men have no rights that others are bound to respect, is a doctrine which we must banish, as we have banished slavery, from which it emanated. If black men have no rights in the eyes of white men, of course the whites can have none in the eyes of the blacks. The result is a war of races, and the annihilation of all proper human relations.

But suffrage for the negro, while easily sustained upon abstract principles, demands consideration upon what are recognized as the urgent necessities of the case. It is a measure of relief,—a shield to break the

force of a blow already descending with violence, and render it harmless. The work of destruction has already been set in motion all over the South. Peace to the country has literally meant war to the loyal men of the South, white and black; and negro suffrage is the measure to arrest and put an end to that dreadful strife....

It is true that a strong plea for equal suffrage might be addressed to the national sense of honor. Something, too, might be said of national gratitude.... There is something immeasurably mean, to say nothing of the cruelty, in placing the loyal negroes of the South under the political power of their Rebel masters....

...National interest and national duty, if elsewhere separated, are firmly united here. The American people can, perhaps, afford to brave the censure of surrounding nations for the manifest injustice and meanness of excluding its faithful black soldiers from the ballot-box, but it cannot afford to allow the moral and mental energies of rapidly increasing millions to be consigned to hopeless degradation.

Strong as we are, we need the energy that slumbers in the black man’s arm to make us stronger. We want no longer any heavy-footed, melancholy service from the negro. We want the cheerful activity of the quickened

Source: Frederick Douglass, “An Appeal to Congress for Impartial Suffrage,” *Atlantic Monthly* 19 (1867): pp. 112–114, 116–117.

manhood of these sable millions.... Exclude the negroes as a class from political rights,—teach them that the high and manly privilege of suffrage is to be enjoyed by white citizens only,—that they may bear the burdens of the state, but that they are to have no part in its direction or its honors,—and you at once deprive them of one of the main incentives to manly character and patriotic devotion to the interests of the government; in a word, you stamp them as a degraded *caste*,—you teach them to despise themselves, and all others to despise them.... Give the negro the elective franchise, and you give him at once a powerful motive for all noble exertion, and make him a man among men....

...Disguise it as we may, we are still a divided nation. The Rebel States have still an anti-national policy.... We have crushed the Rebellion, but not its hopes or its ma-

lign purposes. The South fought for perfect and permanent control over the Southern laborer. It was a war of the rich against the poor.... Though the battle is for the present lost, the hope of gaining this object still exists, and pervades the whole South with a feverish excitement.... The hope of gaining by politics what they lost by the sword, is the secret of all this Southern unrest; and that hope must be extinguished before national ideas and objects can take full possession of the Southern mind. There is but one safe and constitutional way to banish that mischievous hope from the South, and that is by lifting the laborer beyond the unfriendly political designs of his former master. Give the negro the elective franchise, and you at once destroy the purely sectional policy, and wheel the Southern States into line with national interests and national objects....

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The Negro Exodus (1879)

J A M E S B . R U N N I O N

As the Ku Klux Klan increased its terrorism campaign, many freed men felt that they could not truly enjoy their freedom unless they left the South. Many of these "Exodusters" settled in Kansas and established African-American communities in this relatively safer clime. The "Bourbons," who had reestablished white domination throughout the South, attempted to halt this exodus. Writing for the popular *Atlantic Monthly*, James Runnion offered a condescending perspective on the migration as well as a series of recommendations for solving the "race troubles" in the South.

Questions to Consider

- Why would the white elite object to the departure of so many of those very people they terrorized?
- What were the economic motivations of the Exodusters?

A recent sojourn in the South for a few weeks, chiefly in Louisiana and Mississippi, gave the writer an opportunity to inquire into what has been so aptly called "the negro exodus." The emigration of blacks to Kansas began early in the spring of this year. For a time there was a stampede from two or three of the river parishes in Louisiana and as many counties opposite in Mississippi. Several thousand negroes (certainly not fewer than five thousand, and variously estimated as high as ten thousand) had left their cabins before the rush could be stayed or the excitement lulled. Early in May most of the negroes who had quit work for the purpose of emigrating, but had not succeeded in getting off, were persuaded to return to the plantations, and from that time on there have been only straggling families and groups that have watched for and seized the first opportunity for transportation to the North. There is no doubt, however, that there is still a consuming desire among the negroes of the cotton districts in these two States to seek new homes, and there are the

best reasons for believing that the exodus will take a new start next spring, after the gathering and conversion of the growing crop....

"We've been working for fourteen long years," said an intelligent negro, in reply to a question as to the cause of the prevailing discontent, "and we ain't no better off than we was when we commenced." This is the negro version of the trouble, which is elaborated on occasion into a harrowing story of oppression and plunder.

"I tell you it's all owing to the radical politicians at the North," explained a representative of the type known as the Bourbons; "they've had their emissaries down here, and deluded the 'niggers' into a very fever of emigration, with the purpose of reducing our basis of representation in Congress and increasing that of the Northern States."

These are the two extremes of opinion at the South. The first is certainly the more reasonable and truthful, though it implies that all the blame rests upon the whites, which is not the case; the second, preposterous as it will appear to Northern readers, is religiously believed by large numbers of the "unreconciled."

Source: *Atlantic Monthly* 44 (1879): pp. 222–230.

...There is a political tinge in almost everything in the extreme Southern States. The fact seems to be that the emigration movement among the blacks was spontaneous to the extent that they were ready and anxious to go.... The timid learned that they could escape what they have come to regard as a second bondage, and they flocked together to gain the moral support which comes from numbers....

The cotton lands at the South are owned now, as they were before the war, in large tracts.... [T]he land has never been distributed among the people who inhabit and cultivate it, and agricultural labor in the Southern States approaches the condition of the factory labor in England and the Eastern States more nearly than it does the farm labor of the North and West.

Nearly every agricultural laborer north of Mason and Dixon's line, if not the actual possessor of the land he plows, looks forward to owning a farm some time; at the South such an ambition is rare, and small ownership still more an exception....

The credit system, which is as universal as the renting system, is even more illogical and oppressive. The utter viciousness of both systems in their mutual dependence is sufficiently illustrated by the single fact that, after fourteen years of freedom and labor on their own account, the great mass of the negroes depend for their living on an advance of supplies (as they need food, clothing, or tools during the year) upon the pledge of their growing crop....

The negro's necessities have developed an offensive race, called merchants by courtesy, who keep supply stores at the cross-roads and steamboat landings, and live upon extortion. These people would be called sharks, harpies, and vampires in any Northwestern agricultural community, and they would not survive more than one season. The country merchant advances the negro tenant such supplies as the negro wants up to a certain amount, previously fixed by contract, and charges the negro at least double the value of every article sold to him. There is no concealment about the extortion; every store-keeper has his cash price and his credit price, and in nearly all cases the latter is one hundred per cent higher than the former....

The land owner's rent and the merchant's advances are both secured by a chattel mortgage on the tenant's personal property, and by a pledge of the growing crop.... The Western farmer considers it hard enough to struggle under one mortgage at a reasonable interest; the negro tenant begins his season with three mortgages, covering all he owns, his labor for the coming year, and all he expects to acquire during that period. He pays one third his product for the use of the land; he pays double the value of all he consumes; he pays an exorbitant fee for recording the contract by which he pledges his pound of flesh; he is charged two or three times as much as he ought to pay for ginning his cotton; and, finally, he turns over his crop to be eaten up in commissions, if anything still be left to him.

It is easy to understand why the negro rarely gets ahead in the world. This mortgaging of future services, which is practically what a pledge of the growing crop amounts to, is in the nature of bondage....

There has been more of the "night-riding," the whippings, the mysterious disappearances, the hangings, and the terrorism comprehended in the term bulldozing than has been reported by those "abstracts and brief chronicles of the time," the Southern newspapers, which are now all of one party, and defer to the ruling sentiment among the whites. The exodus has wrung from two or three of the more candid and independent journals, however, a virtual confession of the fiendish practices...

The negroes have suffered the more because they have not resisted and defended themselves; now they have begun to convince those who have persecuted them that, if they will not strike back, they can and will run away. No one who is at all familiar with the freedman can doubt that the abridgment of his political rights has been one of the main causes of the exodus. Voting is widely regarded at the North as a disagreeable duty, but the negro looks upon it as the highest privilege in life; to be frightened out of the exercise of this privilege, or compelled to exercise it in conflict with his convictions and preferences, is to suffer from a cruel injustice, which the negro will now try to escape, since he has learned that escape is possible....