The Contraband Camp at Grand Junction, Tennessee

Report of Research Findings

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Introduction

Grand Junction is one of the most significant Civil War sites in Tennessee. Fighting occurred on all sides of the town and guerrilla forces often raided the region's farms and railroads. But military action is not what made Grand Junction significant: this was the location of a contraband camp that inaugurated social change in the Mississippi Valley. Starting in the fall of 1862, Federal troops under General Ulysses S. Grant occupied the area and established a "contraband camp" for refugee slaves. This was the first camp in Tennessee that did not exclude women, children, or men unable to perform physical labor. Food, shelter, clothing, medical care, employment, and education were provided to hundreds of refugee African Americans.¹

Grand Junction is a small railroad town in the southwest corner of Hardeman County. It was established in 1854 when the Mississippi Central Railroad built a line that crossed the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. At the junction of these two railroads, a cluster of hotels, saloons, and restaurants developed. These were followed by a newspaper, marble company, dry goods store, church, doctor, and lawyer. Soon there was a town of a few hundred people. The area outside the town consisted of small farms growing cotton and corn, most with enslaved African Americans performing the labor.²

Slavery in Antebellum Grand Junction

By 1860, this town of only about two hundred people, not including slaves, was as politically charged as any of the large cities nearby. The Quid-Nunc, the local newspaper, was bursting with political editorials that demonstrated the strong sentiments for state's rights and loyalty to Tennessee and the South. A "Mr. Haynes" asserted that:

"...if the Black Republican-party... shall invade our institutions and our safety, shall repeal the fugitive slave law and trample upon our constitutional rights, then Tennessee, bound to the South by the eternal law of climate, of nature and of God, I will stand by her, and the South, in the hour of her peril!"\(^3\)

Meanwhile a Mr. Gray asked his readers:

"How are we to remedy our condition? Will we do it by electing men to rule over us who are representatives of parties claiming affiliation with our enemies? No! We must elect to office strong Southern men, men who are to favor the Sovereign right of the States - controlled by an enlightened construction of the Federal Constitution as expounded by the Supreme Judiciary - men who are opposed to the intervention of Congress on the subject of Slavery in the Territories..."\(^4\)

Not only did the region rely on slavery and support its unhindered continuation, it also required that emancipated slaves be sent out of state. The *Quid-Nunc* reprinted an article from the Nashville *Union and American* stating that without this removal policy, "Tennessee would have been overrun with a free negro population, and the white people having been driven out by the nuisance..."\(^5\) The newspaper also reflected the division among political parties that defined the 1850s. An article in the *Bangor [Maine] Daily Whig and Courier* described the division, saying, "The *Quid Nunc*, a paper published at Grand Junction, Tennessee, has three editors who cannot agree upon a Presidential candidate, consequently the journal supports both Breckenridge and Douglas."\(^6\)

Of course, the Confederate Army also demonstrated a reliance on slavery. As soon as the army was formed, it started to use slaves to its advantage. They did most of the hard labor, building fortifications and repairing railroads. They also served as cooks, teamsters, mechanics, nurses, and personal servants. Slaves could only be impressed with their masters' consent, however, and many slaveowners were opposed to giving up their farm hands. In West Tennessee, slaveowners usually owned no more than ten slaves, and they needed every hand

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\(^3\) *The Quid-Nunc*, July 23, 1859.

\(^4\) *The Quid-Nunc*, June 25, 1859.

\(^5\) *The Quid-Nunc*, June 25, 1859.

\(^6\) *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier*, August 8, 1860.
to help run their farms. Slaves who were impressed also often ran away, especially as the Union army approached.  

Many slaveowners took action to prevent their slaves from running away to the Union troops. Women took a role in this by making an increased effort to encourage recreation and enjoyment through religious training, Saturday night dances, and sometimes even slave weddings. In contrast to these methods of kindness, fear was also commonly used. Slaveowners told slaves the Yankees were cruel masters who would send them to the front lines to be killed in cannon fire or forced to pull wagons like mules. Even literature reinforced these fears, trying to prevent disloyalty with stories of slaves who run away only to find themselves mistreated and “eager to return home in order to belong to somebody.”

“I never knew the old plantation
   Was half so dear a place to me,
As when among that Yankee nation
   The robbers told me I was free!
But when I looked around for freedom,
   (We thought it something bright and fair)
Hunger, misery and starvation
   Was all that met us there.”

When kindness or fear failed to keep slaves loyal, slaveowners often resorted to removal. One form of removal was “running the slaves,” which involved moving slaves into the Deep South where they were considered safe from the advance of the Union army. Although some slaveowners did this as soon as the war began, it generally didn’t occur until Union troops

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8 Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War, 45.


11 Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War, 46-47.
began to physically occupy an area. Another form of removal was impressment. Not only did the Confederate Army impress slaves for non-combat labor, primarily building fortifications, but six Southern governors were also authorized to do so.\(^\text{12}\)

Sometimes, these tactics worked and slaves remained loyal. Slave loyalty was also attributed to close relationships with masters, especially among house servants. Loyal slaves often defended their masters on the battlefield or hid valuables from raiders on the home front. However, despite pity or affection for their owners, slaves desired to be free. For that reason, hundreds of enslaved people flooded Union lines. A continuing problem for the Union army was how to handle these refugees.\(^\text{13}\)

During the Civil War, as the Union army spread across the South, many slaves became increasingly assertive toward their masters. This was most commonly demonstrated through various forms of disloyalty; desertion was the most common and severe. Unlike sneaking away before the war, slave men, women, and even families simply stopped working and left the plantations for Union lines. A soldier in the Third Iowa Infantry observed that "Where the army of the Union goes, there slavery ceases forever. It is astonishing how soon the blacks have learned this, and they are flocking in considerable numbers already in our lines."\(^\text{14}\) During the course of the Civil War, approximately 500,000 slave refugees came into Union lines this way.\(^\text{15}\)

Benjamin Quarles, a twentieth-century African American historian, wrote, "Seek ye your freedom where it may be found. Perhaps it could be found where the Union flag fluttered."\(^\text{16}\)

John Eaton, Jr., Chaplain of the Twenty-Seventh Ohio Volunteers and later General

\(^{12}\) Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 46-47.

\(^{13}\) Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 50-51, 64.


\(^{16}\) Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War*, 54-56.
Superintendent of Contrabands for General Grant, described the scene: "Imagine if you will, a slave population... coming garbed in rags or in silks, with feet shod or bleeding, individually or in families and larger groups... The arrival among us of these hordes was like the oncoming of cities."\(^{17}\)

Since most of the white citizens of West Tennessee were strong Confederate sympathizers, they typically fled their plantations for regions deeper south as General Grant's armies moved westward and southward through the state.\(^{18}\) The slaves, finding themselves abandoned, fled to army lines in need of food, shelter, clothing, and medical care. They also hoped to find freedom, although they may not have been sure exactly what shape freedom would take.

While many slaves left their plantations on their own power, others were enticed by Union soldiers. A correspondent for the Chicago Times described slaves lining the road to watch Union armies march by. Many exhausted soldiers, "seeing a stout nigger by the roadside, cannot well resist the temptation of loading their knapsacks and guns upon him and trotting him along as a pack horse."\(^{19}\) Officers also often took these slaves as personal servants. Some slaves actually wanted to be taken by Union forces – a clever plan since they would either find freedom as they hoped or be able to return to their master without fear of punishment since they had been "kidnapped." Sometimes soldiers would even relieve a plantation of its entire food supply to force the slaves to go with the army in order to find food. It appears, however, that this was not done under military order and therefore was uncommon. Grant was especially opposed

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\(^{17}\) Eaton, *Grant, Lincoln, and the Freedmen*, 2.


\(^{19}\) *Chicago Times*, June 3, 1863, quoted in Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), 357.
to enticing the slaves of Union sympathizers to abandon their work on the plantations, and issued orders prohibiting soldiers from luring slaves to their lines.\(^\text{20}\)

**Civil War “Contrabands” and Union Policy**

Official policy for handling incoming refugees was inconsistent at best, especially during the first two years of the war. It was further complicated with Lincoln’s September 1862 announcement of the upcoming Emancipation Proclamation, which further emboldened slaves to leave their homes for Union lines.\(^\text{21}\)

In 1861, General Benjamin Butler at Fortress Monroe became the first to attempt to manage the issue, employing runaway slaves that he termed “contraband of war.” While some Union officers refused to allow refugees into their camps, many not only allowed them into their lines but put them to work in the non-combatant roles of teamsters, cooks, and laborers. By August of that year, the Confiscation Act was passed allowing the military to employ runaway slaves in that manner.\(^\text{22}\) Newspaper editorials also contributed to the debate:

As slaves are esteemed property by the laws and customs of the rebellious States... many thousands of them could be confiscated to great advantage to the national army. They could be made exceedingly useful to the troops as laborers, as in handling baggage, driving wagons, taking care of draft and saddle animals, cooking and preparing food, pitching tents, packing up, digging entrenchments, felling and removing trees, and much other hard and disagreeable labor which soldiers have to perform.\(^\text{23}\)

The following March, orders were issued prohibiting the military from returning fugitive slaves to their owners. In July, the Second Confiscation Act permitted slaves to serve as


\(^\text{22}\) For more on Union policy, see Eaton, *Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen*; McPherson, *The Negro’s Civil War*, Quaries, *The Negro in the Civil War*.

soldiers at the discretion of the President. Lincoln did now allow any African American regiments to form, but by September he had announced his plans for emancipation. Progress was being made, but the harboring and employment of fugitive slaves was still not widespread in the west. General Halleck was still enforcing his General Orders No. 3, which stated no fugitives "be hereafter permitted to enter the lines of any camp or of any forces on the march, and that any now within such lines be immediately excluded therefrom."\textsuperscript{24} This excepted slaves used by the Confederate army to aid the rebellion; those people were not to be returned to their owners under any circumstances.\textsuperscript{25}

The problem continued to mount at Grand Junction as more and more refugees came into the lines. Eaton observed "The whole question of methods of dealing with the Negro had scarcely yet been faced by the National Government."\textsuperscript{26} He described the pitiable condition of the refugees as they came to the camp: "Their condition was appalling. There were men, women, and children in every stage of disease or decrepitude, often nearly naked, with flesh torn by the terrible experiences of their escapes... the women in travail, the helplessness of childhood and old age, the horrors of sickness and frequent death." Even without a solid military policy to follow, Eaton attempted to aid the refugees: "In my capacity of chaplain... I had done what I could do to relieve the most urgent and immediate causes of distress, and to check, in at least a few instances, elements the most dangerous to the welfare of our soldiers. But the individual efforts made by my comrades and myself were futile to cope with the tremendous difficulties of the situation. Some radical step needed to be taken."\textsuperscript{27}


\textsuperscript{25} General Orders No. 14, District of West Tennessee, February 26, 1862, PUSG, 4:290-291; George W. Williams, \textit{A History of the Negro Troops in the War of the Rebellion 1861-1865} (New York: Harper & Brothers, Franklin Square, 188), 75.

\textsuperscript{26} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen}, 11-12.

\textsuperscript{27} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen}, 2-3.
Grant's General Orders No. 72, issued August 11, 1862, attempted to reconcile the disparity between the Confiscation Acts and Halleck's Orders No. 3. The order permitted slaves used directly to aid the rebellion to be employed by the Union army in non-combatant roles, releasing white soldiers from general labor and returning them to the ranks.

Recent Acts of Congress prohibit the Army from returning fugitives from labor to their claimants, and authorize the employment of such persons in the service of the Government. The following orders are therefore, published for the guidance of the Army in this Military District, in this matter.

All fugitives thus employed must be registered, the names of the fugitives and claimants given, and must be borne upon the Morning Reports of the command in which they are kept, showing how they are employed. Fugitive Slaves may be employed as laborers in the Quartermaster's Dept. Subsistence and Engineers Depts. And wherever by such employment a Soldier may be saved to the ranks. They may be employed as Teamsters, as Company Cooks, (not exceeding four to a Company) or as Hospital attendants and nurses. Officers may employ them as private servants, in which latter case the fugitive will not be paid or rationed by the Government. Negroes not thus employed will be deemed unauthorized persons, and must be excluded from the camps.

Officers and Soldiers are positively prohibited from enticing Slaves to leave their masters. When it becomes necessary to employ this kind of labor, Commanding Officers of Posts or troops, must send details, (always under the charge of a suitable Commissioned Officer,) to press into service the slaves of disloyal persons to the number required.

Citizens within reach of any Military Station, known to be disloyal and dangerous, may be ordered away or arrested, and their crops and stock taken, for the benefit of the Government, or the use of the Army. All property taken from rebel owners, must be duly reported and use for the benefit of the Government, and be issued to the troops through the proper Depts, and when practicable the act of taking should be avowed by the written certificate of the Officer taking, to the owner of agent of such property. It is enjoined on all Commanders to see that this order is executed strictly under their own directions. The demoralization of troops consequent upon being left to execute laws in their own way without a proper head, must be avoided. 28

Grant had strong feelings about slavery, believing that holding other human beings in bondage was an evil practice, but believed his duty to the military superseded his own opinions. However, by the fall of 1862 he realized decisive action needed to be taken on behalf of the

28 PUSG, 5:273-274; Eaton, Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen, 47-48; Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War, 69.
refugee slaves coming into his lines despite official Federal or military policy. After spending most of that year marching unhindered across Tennessee and the Lower Mississippi Valley, he was by then headquartered at LaGrange, Tennessee with his base of supplies at Holly Springs, Mississippi. His troops were making preparations to advance on Vicksburg to open the full length of the Mississippi River to Federal control. By November however, he found he was unable to advance on Vicksburg as he planned. Action had to be taken despite unclear Federal policy and Halleck’s General Orders No. 3.\textsuperscript{29} He wrote to his sister, Mary:

> The war is evidently growing oppressive to the Southern people. Their institution are beginning to have ideas of their own and every time an expedition goes out more or less of them follow in the wake of the army and come into camp. I am using them as teamsters, Hospital attendants, company cooks &c. thus saving soldiers to carry the musket. I dont [sic] know what is to become of these poor people in the end but it [sic] weakning [sic] the enemy to take them from them.\textsuperscript{30}

**The Establishment of the Grand Junction Contraband Camp**

Grant’s first attempt to manage the influx of refugees was unsuccessful. He sent many north where people were willing to employ African American men and women. However, it soon became political ammunition; Democrats claimed that emancipation would overrun the North with former slaves who would compete with whites for employment. Needless to say, the Lincoln Administration put a stop to this practice.\textsuperscript{31}

However, Grant’s command was overwhelmed: his resources were taxed, disease was spreading, and discipline was difficult to maintain.\textsuperscript{32} Grant lamented, “Orders of the government prohibited the expulsion of the negroes from the protection of the army when they came in voluntarily. Humanity forbade allowing them to starve. With


\textsuperscript{30} Ulysses S. Grant to Mary Grant, August 19, 1862, PUSG, 5:310-311.


\textsuperscript{32} Simpson, *Triumph Over Adversity*, 162.
such an army of them, of all ages and both sexes, as had congregated about Grand Junction, amounting to many thousands, it was impossible to advance.\footnote{Grant, \textit{Personal Memoirs}, 353.} He decided to establish a refugee camp where they could provide for themselves by living off the land and earning wages.\footnote{Simpson, \textit{Let Us Have Peace}, 30; Joe H. Mays, \textit{Black Americans and Their Contributions Toward Union Victory in the American Civil War, 1861-1865} (Lanham: University Press of America, 1984), 11-12.} Grant sought a leader for this project: “To do this work with contrabands, or to have it done, organization under a compliant chief was necessary. On inquiring for such a man, Chaplain Eaton... was suggested.”\footnote{Grant, \textit{Personal Memoirs}, 353-354.} So Chaplain Eaton of the Twenty-Seventh Ohio Infantry was appointed to oversee the camp.

Headquarters, 13th Army Corps,  
Department of the Tennessee  
La Grange, Tenn., November 11, 1862.

Special Orders,  
No. 15.

Chaplain Eaton, of the Twenty-seventh Ohio Infantry Volunteers, is hereby appointed to take charge of the contrabands that come into the vicinity of the post, organizing them into suitable companies for working, see that they are properly care for, and set them to work picking, ginning and baling all cotton now out and ungathered in field.

Suitable guards will be detailed by commanding officers nearest where the parties are at work, to protect them from molestation.

For further instructions the officer in charge of these labors will call at these headquarters.

By order of Maj.-Gen. U.S. Grant.  
(Signed) Jno. A. Rawlins,  
\textit{Lieut.-Col. And A. A.-Gen'}\footnote{Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen}, 5.}

Eaton’s initial reaction was panic. “No language can describe the effect of this order upon me. Never in the entire army service, through the whole war, during imprisonment or in the midst of battles with the roar of cannon in my ears, amid the horrors of the hospital or in facing my own exposure to assassination, do I recall such a shock of surprise, amounting to
consternation, as I experienced when reading this brief summons to undertake what seemed to me an enterprise beyond the possibility of human achievement." He soon realized "there was nothing to be done but to obey," and set out for Grant's headquarters as the order instructed. Feeling his responsibilities as chaplain could not be spared, he planned to ask for someone to be relieved of this new task. "I shrank from the duty assigned to me as from an impossible undertaking doomed to bring only suffering and failure."\(^{37}\)

Upon arrival to Grant's headquarters, Eaton laid out his reasons for having the order revoked: the importance of the work he was doing as chaplain in his unit, his inability to enforce the orders because of his low rank, and the inevitable conflict from civilians and soldiers. "All that I said had no more effect upon that quiet, attentive face than a similar appeal might have had upon a stone wall. When my arguments were exhausted, the General simply remarked, 'Mr. Eaton, I have ordered you to report to me in person, and I will take care of you.' And so he did."\(^{38}\) Before leaving Grant's headquarters, Eaton received both reassurance and detailed instructions.

Headquarters 13th Army Corps
Department of the Tennessee
La Grange, Tenn., Nov. 14, 1862

Special Field Orders
No. 4

Chaplain J. Eaton jr, of the 27th Regt Ohio Infantry Vols., is hereby appointed to take charge of all the fugitive Slaves that are now or may from time to time come within the military lines of the Advancing army in this vicinity, not employed and registered in accordance with General Orders No. 72, from Headquarters District of West Tennessee, and will open a camp for them at Grant Junction, Tenn, where they will be suitably cared for and organized into companies and set to work picking, ginning and baling all cotton now out standing in the Fields.

Commanding Officers of troops will send all fugitives that come within the lines, together with such teams, cooking utensils and other baggage as they may bring with them to Chaplain Eaton Jr at Grand Junction, Tenn.


One Regiment of Infantry from Brig. General McArthur's Division will be temporarily detailed as Guard in charge of such contrabands, and the Surgeons of said Regiments will be charged with the care of the sick.

Commissaries of Subsistence will issue on the requisitions of Chaplain J Eaton Jr, omitting the coffee rations and substituting rye.

By order of Maj.-Gen. U.S. Grant.
(Signed) Jno. A. Rawlins
Ass't Adj't-Gen'l. 39

The following day, Grant sent a telegram to Halleck: "Citizens south of us are leaving their homes & Negroes coming in by wagon loads. What will I do with them? I am now having all the cotton still standing out picked by them." To which Halleck responded: "The sectry [sic] of war directs that you employ the refugee negroes as teamsters, laborers, &"c, so far as you have use for them in the Quartermasters Dept, in forts rail roads, &"c; also in picking & removing cotton on account of the Government. So far as possibl [sic] subsist them and your army on the rebel inhabitants of Mississippi."40 With Halleck's blessing, the camp was begun.

Response of Union Soldiers

Grant promised to take care of Eaton, so he issued General Orders No. 13 to give Eaton the authority to appoint staff and to outline their duties.

Headquarters 13th Army Corps,
Department of the Tennessee,
Oxford, Miss., 17th Dec., 1862.

General Orders,
No. 13.

Chaplain John Eaton, jr., of the 27th Regiment Ohio Volunteers, is hereby appointed General Superintendent of Contrabands for the Department.

He will designate such Assistant Superintendents as may be necessary for the proper care of these people, who will be detailed for their duty by the Post or District Commander.

39 PUSG, 6:316; OR, ser I, vol 52, part 1, 301-302; Eaton, Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen, 20.

40 Telegram, Ulysses S. Grant to Henry Halleck, November 15, 1862, PUSG, 6:315; OR, Series I, vol. xvii, part 1, 470-471; Eaton, Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen, 12.
All Assistant Superintendents will be subject to the orders of the Superintendent.

It will be the duty of the Superintendent of Contrabands to organize them into working parties in saving cotton, as pioneers on railroads and steamboats, and in any way where their service can be made available.

Where labor is performed for private individuals, they will be charged in accordance with the tariff fixed in previous orders.

When abandoned crops of cotton are saved for the benefit of Government, the officer selling the same will turn over to the Superintendent of Contrabands the same amount charged individuals.

The negroes will be clothed, and in every way provided for, out of their earnings so far as practicable, the account being kept of all earnings and expenditures, and subject to the inspection of the Inspector General of the Department where called for.

Such detail of men as may be necessary for the care and superintendence of the contrabands will be made by Post or Division Commander on application to the Superintendent; as far as practicable such men as are not fit for active field duty will be detailed.

The Superintendent will take charge of all contributions of clothing, etc, for the benefit of negroes and distribute the same.

All application for the service of contrabands will be made on the General Superintendent, who will furnish such labor from negroes who voluntarily come within the lines of the army.

In no case will negroes be forced into the service of the Government, or be enticed away from their homes except when it becomes a military necessity.

By order of Major-Gen. U.S. Grant.
(Signed) Jno. A. Rawlins,
A.A.-G. 41

Eaton described the duties of the assistants, and the difficult situation they were in:

"The service in which my assistants were engaged was a peculiar one; the officers were expected to obey all military regulations, and at the same time to stand as mediators between the townspeople or planters, as the case might be, and also between the contrabands and the army. The usual responsibility of maintaining order - the police duty of the army - was in the hands of the regular officers, - the provost-marshal; but if any special complications arose involving the affairs of the colored people, the matter was at once taken to one of my

41 PUSG, 6:316-317; Eaton, Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen, 26-27.
assistants, and received special consideration and adjudication under military rules.\textsuperscript{42}

Eaton had a difficult time recruiting assistants: "The contempt in which all service on behalf of the blacks as held by the army had made it impossible for me to secure the detail of any but common soldiers, or at the most of sergeants, and I was therefore relieved from an unpleasant situation by the terms of the order [General Orders, No. 13]."\textsuperscript{43} He did find some men willing to serve, however, most were given direct orders to report to him. He appointed Lieutenant Samuel Thomas, also from the Twenty-Seventh Ohio Infantry, as his assistant superintendent and eventually had a staff with one assistant per one thousand refugees.\textsuperscript{44}

The presence of the camp resulted in new responsibilities for the units stationed there, including providing food, clothing, and shelter. Also, protective details were necessary to keep refugees safe while they worked in the fields. Confederate soldiers would often drive them off, kill them, or capture them to put them to work on their own fortifications deeper south. Nathan Bedford Forrest was especially notorious for harassing refugees.\textsuperscript{45}

Many responded negatively to these new orders, "opposed to serving the Negro in any manner."\textsuperscript{46} Some behaved in a passive-aggressive way, simply taking their time about completing tasks. Some regiments ordered to move their camps to Grand Junction to serve as protective details took much longer to do so than was actually needed. The commissary, too, was notorious for taking as long as possible to fulfill Eaton's requests for the camp's rations.\textsuperscript{47} Others responded with direct aggression toward the refugees. Racism was a rampant problem, and even Eaton noted, "Often the slaves met prejudices against their color more bitter than any

\textsuperscript{42} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen}, 33.
\textsuperscript{44} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen}, 33; Catton, \textit{Grant Moves South}, 361.
\textsuperscript{46} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen}, 22.
they had left behind."48 Sometimes their pay was withheld, and officers as well as enlisted men took advantage of the refugees' inexperience.49

Racism was probably not the only cause of this behavior. Refugees entering the Union lines caused chaos, spread disease, and often were in appalling physical condition. Eaton felt it was a "small wonder that men paused in bewilderment and panic, foreseeing the demoralization and infection of the Union soldier and the downfall of the Union cause."50 Certainly the preceding months' uncertain official policies regarding the refugees also contributed to the hesitation from white soldiers. Eaton's rank, as he had predicted, sometimes caused conflict as well. When Eaton attempted to retrieve refugees from Provost marshals, many resisted; even though the Provost marshals did not particularly want to take care of the refugees, they also did not want to accept orders from a lower ranking officer.51

Not all military personnel responded with hostility, however. Eaton praised the work of the chaplains as "an honorable exception to those who were out of sympathy with the Negro work, and many of my most valuable assistants were drawn from their ranks."52 In the spring of 1863, Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas visited all contraband camps in the Mississippi Valley to recruit volunteers for the new United States Colored Infantry.53 Grant was also pleased with the camp, and commented that Eaton "proved efficient" and the refugees "at once... became self-sustaining."54 In fact, Grant was so pleased with the camp that when it was threatened by Confederate military action in the area in December of 1862, he moved it to Memphis for a few

48 Quoted in Eaton, Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen, 2; Also see Lovett, "The Negro in Tennessee," 16; Cimprich, "Slavery Amidst Civil War," 101; David Henson Slay, New Masters on the Mississippi, (Ph.D. Diss., Texas Christian University, 2009), 37.


50 Eaton, Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen, 3.

51 Franklin and Moss, From Slavery to Freedom, 205; Catton, Grant Moves South, 361.

52 Eaton, Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen, 28.

53 Eaton, Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen, 53-54; Slay, New Masters on the Mississippi, 36-37; OR, Ser 3, Vol. 5, 118-124; McPherson, The Negro's Civil War, 170; Franklin and Moss, From Slavery to Freedom, 203; Quarles, The Negro in the Civil War, 194-199.

54 Grant, Personal Memoirs, 354.
months to protect the refugees. He also commended Eaton's efforts in a letter to President Abraham Lincoln, which accompanied Eaton's April 29, 1863, report on the camps in the Mississippi Valley:

Near Vicksburg, Miss.,
June 11, 1863.

Hon. A. Lincoln,
President of the United States,

Sir, - Enclosed herewith I send report of Chaplain J. Eaton, General Superintendent of Contrabands for this Department, embracing a very complete history of what has been done for and with the class of people within my command to the present time.

Finding that negroes were coming into our lines in great numbers and receiving kind or abusive treatment according to peculiar views of the troops they first came in contact with, and not be able to give that personal attention to their care and use the matter demanded, I determined to appoint a General Superintendent over the whole subject and give him such Assistants as the duties assigned him might require. Mr. Eaton was selected for this position. I have given him such aid as was in my power, by the publication from time to time of such orders as seemed to be required, and generally at the suggestion of the Superintendent.

Mr. Eaton's labors in his undertaking have been unremitting and skillful, and I fear in many instances trying. That he has been of very great service to the blacks in having them provided for when otherwise they would have been neglected, and to the Government in finding employment for the negro, whereby he might earn what he was receiving, the accompanying report will show, and many hundreds of visitors and officers and soldiers near the different corps can bear witness to.

I commend the report to your favorable notice, and especially that portion of it which would suggest orders regulating the subject of providing for the government of the contraband subject, which a Department Commander is not competent to issue.

I have the honor to be

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) U.S. Grant

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56 Eaton, Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen, 65.
Response of Civilians

The Union soldiers were not the only – or the worst – cause of conflict with the camp. Confederate civilians in the area were extremely hostile. Stuck between two armies, they were unable to sell their cotton except to the Federal government, unable to purchase necessary goods either because they were too poor or because the goods were contraband of war, and unable to provide for their basic needs because of the desolation caused by the armies. Many were so utterly destitute they faced the threat of starvation. Grant showed compassion for their plight, but felt it was caused by their own wicked actions; he wrote to his wife, “What the people are to do for the next year is hard to surmise but there must be a vast amount of suffering. I pity them and regret their folly which has brought about this unnatural war and their suffering.”

Some targeted Eaton directly, others the refugees; some responded simply with their attitudes, others with guerrilla violence. Eventually, Grant had to take action to protect the camp, and the army, from civilians.

Not all civilians were hostile; in fact, Grant found a surprising core of Unionism in the region. At one point, he ordered troops to leave private property alone as they advanced, reminding them that “the neighborhood where they are going is almost entirely Union.” Many who remained loyal to the Union chose to enlist in the army as it passed, avoiding being drafted by the Confederate army. Grant observed, “There is a strong manifestation of Union feeling in this section. Already some 500 have come in voluntarily and enlisted to prevent being drafted on the other side. Many more have come in to get the protection of the army for the same purpose.”

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58 Ulysses S. Grant to Julia Dent Grant, May 31, 1862, PUSG, 5:134-135.
59 Ulysses S. Grant to Major M. Smith, March 24, 1862, PUSG, 4:416-417; Simpson, Triumph Over Adversity, 161.
60 Ulysses S. Grant to Julia Dent Grant, March 18, 1862, PUSG, 4:389. Also see PUSG, 4:406-407, 386-387.
Some were actually loyal to the South, but found it was in their best interest to support the Union because of their economic situation. With Rebel forces in the region burning cotton at will regardless of the landowners' loyalty, the only way to get the Union army to save it and sell it was to take an oath of allegiance to the Federal government.\textsuperscript{61} Also, some residents discovered that Union men were not of such appalling character as the Southern media portrayed them. Grant wrote to Julia that "citizens are beginning [sic] to return to Corinth and seem to think the Yankees a much less bloody, revengeful and to be dreaded people, than they had been lead to think."\textsuperscript{62} Fear of Confederate defeat also resulted in Unionism, and Grant noted in Memphis that "the masses this day are more disloyal in the South, from fear of what might befall them, in case of defeat to the Union cause than from any dislike to the Government."\textsuperscript{63}

However, most residents of West Tennessee were loyal to the South, and most Confederate civilians had fled upon approach of the Union army. Those who remained were indignantly opposed to Yankee efforts to make freedmen of their slaves. One of the chaplains Eaton attempted to recruit while in Grand Junction, Reverend John N. Waddell of nearby LaGrange, Tennessee, refused him outright, saying "I don't conceive that any Southern man is under the least moral obligation to help the negro [sic] stealers to plan how they shall take care of them."\textsuperscript{64} Sometimes Eaton had difficulty knowing who was loyal to the North and who to the South; but many refused to take an oath of allegiance to the Union, and some unabashedly made clear their true loyalties to the Confederacy. Conflict arose often between civilians and the army at Grand Junction, and when Eaton's assistants were unable to successfully mediate the situation, he was forced to take the issue to Grant himself for resolution. Civilians generally

\textsuperscript{61} PUSG, 4:447-448.
\textsuperscript{62} Ulysses S. Grant to Julia Dent Grant, June 12, 1862, PUSG, 5:142-143.
\textsuperscript{63} Ulysses S. Grant to Hon. E.B. Washburn, June 19, 1862, PUSG, 5:145-146.
\textsuperscript{64} Waddell Diary, November 23, 1862, quoted in Cimprich, "Slavery Amidst War," 102-103.
expected the contraband camp to fail, and, to try to ensure that result, they often stole horses and tools used by the refugees to work in the fields.\textsuperscript{65}

Contempt was not reserved for the concept of the camp; Eaton personally was very unpopular because of his work among the African Americans. Not long after the camp's establishment, he became the target of an assassination attempt.

"We were in the habit of sending out foraging parties to aid in supplying the contraband camps, and I remember that, on one occasion, the sergeant in charge was mounted upon my own horse. This horse had become well known in the neighborhood, and was conspicuously marked with a white spot on the forehead. On the morning of which I write, while I was in quarters, a shot was fired which killed my horse. The sergeant who was riding him escaped unharmed, but the soldiers understood that the man who fired intended to have killed me."\textsuperscript{66}

Although the culprit was never discovered and it is unclear if it was a soldier or civilian, Eaton seemed to believe it was a civilian.

"...Negroes who fled from the plantations put themselves under the protection of our armies, thus forcing the planters either to give up their agricultural operations or secure the labor of the Negroes under conditions devised and as far as possible maintained by the Union forces. A good deal of friction resulted... it was hardly reasonable to hope for a settlement that should not antagonize someone."\textsuperscript{67}

Despite their actions against the Union army, Grant initially felt sympathy for civilians caught in a war-torn region and did what he could to protect and assist them. He ordered his subordinate officers to see that troops did not plunder as they marched, and took action against those who did. He issued Special Field Orders No. 1 on November 7, 1862:

\begin{center}
\textbf{Headquarters, 13\textsuperscript{th} Army Corps}
\textbf{Department of the Tennessee}
In Field, LaGrange, Tenn, Nov 7\textsuperscript{th}
\end{center}

1862

\textbf{Special Field Orders No 1}


\textsuperscript{66} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen}, 24-25.

\textsuperscript{67} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen}, 24-25.
It is with extreme regret that the General Commanding has had his attention called to the gross acts of vandalism committed by some of the men composing the two wings of the Army on the march from Corinth to Bolivar to this place.

Houses have been plunder'd and burned down, fencing destroyed and citizens frightened without an enquiry as to their status in this Rebellion, cattle and hogs shot and Stock driven off without any observance of the rules prescribed in General Orders for taking such property for public use.

Such acts are punishable with death by the Articles of War and existing orders. They are carculated [sic] to destroy the efficiency of an army and to make open enemies of those who before if not friends were at least non combatants.

Officers are more to blame for these acts of violence than the men who commit them and in the future will be held to a strict accountability. If they will perform their duty obedience can be enforced in the ranks.

In future marches all men will be kept in the ranks and Regimental Commanders held accountable for their good conduct. It is the duty of Regimental Commanders and within their power, if they are worthy of the position they hold, to enforce attention to duty on the part of Company Commanders.

All deriliction [sic] of duty within any Regiment in future will be reported by Brigade Commanders, through the proper channels, to Headquarters of the Wing to which they belong to the end that the officers may be brought to trial or immediate dismissal from the service and public disgrace.

All men who straggle from their Companies and are captured by the enemy will be reported to General Headqua[rters] so that they may dishonorably discharged, whereby they will forfeit all back and future pay allowances, and Government will be protected from exchanging a [man] captured in actual conflict for one who by his worthlessness and disregard for the good of the service has become a captive.

This order will be read on parade before each Regiment and Detachment for three (3) successive evenings.

By order of Maj. Genl. US. Grant.
Jno A Rawlins
Asst. Adjt. General

He also attempted to relieve the local people's suffering, especially with regard to the threat of starvation that faced many helpless civilians:

Hd. Qrs 13th Army Corps
Dept. of the Tennessee
In Field, Oxford, Miss, Dec 12th 1862

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68 PUSG, 6:266-267. See also Simpson, Let Us Have Peace.
Special Field Orders No 21

1. Distress and all most famine having been brought on many of the inhabitants of the Mississippi by the march of the two Armies through the land, and humanity dictating that in a land of plenty no one should suffer the pangs of hunger, the General Commanding directs that the following provision shall be made at all Military Posts within this State.

1st. At each Post one or more loyal persons will be authorized to keep for Sale, provisions and absolute necessities for family use, nothing will be sold except on permits granted for a greater amount of any one Article than the Commander may believe is necessary for the family of the purchaser.

2d. A fund may be created at each post to supply the necessaries of destitute families, gratis, either by levying contributions upon those disloyal persons who are able to pay, taxing Cotton brought to their posts for sale or in any other equitable way.

3d. All contributions so collected will be expended by the Post Commissary on the order of the Commanding Officer and the accounts will be kept separate from all other accounts.

4th. The Commanding Officer of Posts will require all accounts of these disbursements to be presented for their Examination, weekly, and they will be held responsible that these accounts are properly kept.

5th. All such accounts will be open for inspection to the Inspector General of the Department at any time he may call for them.

By order of
Major General U S Grant
Jno A Rawlins
Asst. Adjt. Genl.69

Despite Grant's efforts, the Confederate civilian population remained hostile to the Union army. The surgeon for the 45th Illinois Infantry, stationed at Jackson, LaGrange, and finally Memphis in the latter half of 1862, noted, "We curr'y favour of these secessionists, and real Union men do not fare as well as they: we are obsequious to them, we feed them, we guard their property, we humble ourselves to gain their favour, and in return we receive insult and injury."70 Civilians also received contraband goods from clever traders, which, as Grant noted,

69 PUSG, 7:18-19.
"relieve their sufferings and strengthens them for resistance to our authority; while we are sure that the benefits thus conferred tend in no degree to abate their rancorous hostility to our flag and Government."\(^{71}\)

Newspapers also printed articles complaining about the Union presence. The Memphis Avalanche published "Mischief Makers" on June 30, 1862, which stated "We have nearly all spoken, and written, and labored against the United States Government. Most of us have given our money, and or influence - ay, and our property too, with our own sons and brothers to aid the Confederate cause. We did it because we chose to do it... The wheel of fortune may turn over - and what then will be the fruits of this system of crimination and recrimination, and cowardly vengeance, inaugurated by the false and traitorous informer?" The next day, Grant shut down the paper.\(^{72}\)

**Civilian Guerrilla Activity**

Sometimes civilian hostility toward the Union presence went beyond indignant attitudes and trading contraband goods. Some civilians responded violently, and guerrilla activity became common in West Tennessee. Falling somewhere between a nuisance and a genuine threat to military operations, guerrillas made Grant’s attempts to placate the rest of the Confederate population nearly useless. General William Tecumseh Sherman commented that "all the people are now guerillas,"\(^{73}\) and included in his memoirs a statement about the violence in Tennessee in the summer of 1862:

Most unfortunately, the war in which we are now engaged has been complicated with the belief on the one hand that all on the other side are not enemies. It would have been better if, at the outset, this mistake had not been made, and it is wrong longer to be misled by it. The Government of the United States may now safely proceed on the proper rule that all in the South are enemies of all in the

\(^{71}\) Ulysses S. Grant to Hon. S. P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, July 31, 1862, PUSG, 5:255-256.

\(^{72}\) Memphis Avalanche, June 30, 1862, PUSG, 5:181-182; PUSG, 5:181-182; Simpson, Let Us Have Peace, 25.

\(^{73}\) Simpson, Let Us Have Peace, 26-27; Simpson, Triumph Over Adversity, 161.
North, and not only are they unfriendly, but all who can procure arms now bear them as organized regiments or as guerillas. There is not a garrison in Tennessee where a man can go beyond the sight of the flag-staff without being shot or captured.\textsuperscript{74}

Violence toward refugees further cemented the African Americans’ support for the Union cause. When refugees entered Union military camps, they were more than willing to offer information about where their masters hid food or valuables. They also offered intelligence about Confederate military strength, location, and movement, although the information was not always accurate. Union commanders often rewarded refugees for giving information, regardless of its accuracy, to keep African Americans loyal to the North rather than the South. Confederate guerrillas knew about and attempted to control this practice, executing at least one slave suspected of providing information to the Federals.\textsuperscript{75}

Guerrilla activity was strong near the camp at Grand Junction, despite many Confederate civilians having fled the region. The \textit{Daily Cleveland [Ohio] Herald} reported in August 1862 that “a detachment of the 11th Illinois Cavalry, sent from Bolivar, Tennessee, yesterday, attacked guerrillas at Salisbury, 5 miles east of Grand Junction, taking the rebel captain and twenty-seven horses and mules, dispersing the enemy.”\textsuperscript{76} Although the assassination attempt on Eaton failed, guerrillas did kill one of Eaton’s assistants, and the refugees working in abandoned fields were also a common target for guerrilla violence.\textsuperscript{77} Eaton detailed units of white soldiers to protect the refugees, but they also protected themselves. Surgeon Thomas Hawley described a scene in which a band of guerrilla raiders attempted to attack a group of refugees working an abandoned field. Their leader was shot in the chest and


\textsuperscript{75} Cimprich, “Slavery Amidst Civil War,” 341.

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{The Daily Cleveland Herald}, Cleveland, Ohio, August 13, 1862.

killed by one of the refugees, and the rest "thought discredishon [sic] the better part of valor and took hasty flight, doubtless supressing [sic] a whole brigade."\(^{78}\)

Grant also struggled with the violence from civilians. He wrote to his wife that "all the hardships come upon the weak, I cannot say inoffensive [sic], women and children. I believe these latter are worse [sic] rebels than the soldiers who fight against us."\(^{79}\) He spent much of his time trying to prevent guerrilla activity: "I keep the little Cavalry at my command constantly engaged [against guerrillas] but they are not sufficient for the task."\(^{80}\) As a result, his policy toward civilians changed drastically away from pity and protection.

Head Quarters, Dist of West. Tenn.
Memphis, July 3rd, 1862.

General Orders No 60.

The system of Guerilla warfare now being prosecuted by some troops organized under authority of the so called Southern Confederacy, and others without such authority, being so pernicious to the welfare of the community where it is carried on, and it being within the power of communities to suppress this system, it is ordered that wherever loss is sustained by the Government collection shall be made, of personal property, from persons in the immediate neighborhood, sympathizing with the rebellion, sufficient to remunerate the Government all loss and expense of collection.

Persons acting as Guerillas without organization, and without uniform to distinguish them from private citizens, are not entitled to the treatment of prisoners of War, when caught, and will not receive such treatment.

By order of Maj Gen U.S. Grant
Jno. A. Rawlins
a. a. Genl.\(^{81}\)

Just a week later, Grant telegraphed Halleck that "There are a great many families of Officers in the rebel army here who are very violent. Will you approve of sending them all south


\(^{79}\) Ulysses S. Grant to Julia Dent Grant, June 3, 1862, PUSG, 5:137-138.

\(^{80}\) Ulysses S. Grant to Henry W. Halleck, June 30, 1862, PUSG, 5:174-175.

\(^{81}\) PUSG, 5:190-191.
of our lines?" Halleck responded, "Yes if you deem it expedient."\textsuperscript{82} This action by Grant only caused increased hostility from the civilians it was intended to subdue. George R. Merritt, a resident of Senatobia, Mississippi, wrote his response in a letter to Grant:

We have seen your infamous and fiendish proclamation... We have twenty-three men of yours, and as soon as you carry out your threat against the citizens of the vicinity of Morning Sun, you Hessians shall pay for it... If you intend to make this a war of extermination, you will please inform us of it at the earliest convenience. We are ready, and more than willing, to raise the 'black flag.' There are two thousand partisans who have sworn to retaliate. If you do not retract your proclamation, you may expect to have scenes of the most bloody character... Henceforth our motto shall be, Blood for blood, and blood for property. We intend, by the help of God, to hang on the outskirts of your rabble, like lightening around the edge of a cloud. We don't intend this as a threat, but simply as a warning of what we intend to do, in case you pursue your disgraceful and nefarious policy toward our citizens, as marked out in your threat of recent date.\textsuperscript{83}

Grant soon decided that not only the openly violent citizens should be turned out, but all who were disloyal and unhappy with the Union presence. He wrote to Halleck, "There is an evident disposition on the part of many of the citizens to join the Guerillas on their approach. I am decidedly in favor of turning all discontented citizens within our lines out South."\textsuperscript{84} Halleck agreed that decisive action was necessary to gain control over the hostile civilians in the region:

"Your letter of July 28th is just received. It is very desirable that you should clean out West Tennessee and North Mississippi of all organized enemies. If necessary, take up all active sympathizers and either hold them as prisoners or put them beyond our lines. Handle that class without gloves and take their property for public use. As soon as the corn gets fit for forage, you get all the supplies you can from the rebels in Miss. It is time they should begin to feel the pressure of war on our side.\textsuperscript{85}

Finally, the situation started to improve for the Federals. In August, Grant wrote to his wife that "since you left there has been several little skirmishes within my District resulting in the killing and capturing of quite a number of Guerillas with but a small loss on our side,"\textsuperscript{86} and to

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\textsuperscript{82} Ulysses S. Grant to Henry W. Halleck, July 10, 1862, PUSG, 5:192; Henry W. Halleck to Ulysses S. Grant, July 10, 1862, PUSG, 5:192
\textsuperscript{83} George R. Merritt to Ulysses S. Grant, July 16, 1862, PUSG, 5:190-191.
\textsuperscript{84} Ulysses S. Grant to Henry W. Halleck, July 28, 1862, PUSG, 5:243.
\textsuperscript{85} Henry W. Halleck to Ulysses S. Grant, August 2, 1862, PUSG, 5:244; OR, Series I, vol. xvii, part 2, 150.
\textsuperscript{86} Ulysses S. Grant to Julia Dent Grant, August 18, 1862, PUSG, 5:308-309.
\end{flushleft}
his sister that "guerrillas are hovering around in every direction getting [sic] whipped every day in some place by some of my command..." but that they were "keeping us busy." 87 He telegraphed Halleck that "the Guerillas are becoming so active in West Tennessee that a large mounted force is required to suppress them." Halleck agreed, promising "I will send you more cavalry as soon as we can get it." 88

Another issue with guerrilla activity was that it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between raiding Confederate soldiers and civilian irregulars — an important distinction because the rules of war offered enlisted soldiers protection from execution and the opportunity for exchange as prisoners of war. Late in 1862, Confederate General John C. Pemberton wrote to Grant inquiring why twenty Confederate soldiers were denied exchange as prisoners of war. 89

Grant sent the following response:

"Your communication of the 13th inst in relation to the detention of Capt. Faulkner and other Guerrillas is just received.

These roving bands have been a pest to communities through which they passed but no detriment to the cause of the Union. They have not observed the rules of civilized warfare and I did not suppose were authorized or under any control except such as they agreed upon themselves.

As you acknowledge them, however and as most of their belligerence is directed against sympathizers and abettors of this rebellion I will send them to Vicksburg for exchange or turn them loose...

On my part I shall carry on this war humanely and do what I conceive to be my duty..." 90

He then promptly wrote to the commanding officer at the Alton, Illinois, military prison instructing the group of Confederates be treated as prisoners of war rather than guerrillas. 91

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87 Ulysses S. Grant to Mary Grant, August 19, 1862, PUSG, 5:310-311.
88 Ulysses S. Grant to Henry W. Halleck, August 20, 1862, PUSG, 5:312-313; Henry W. Halleck to Ulysses S. Grant, August 21, PUSG, 5:313; OR, Series I, vol. xvii, part 2, 182.
89 John C. Pemberton to Ulysses S. Grant, December 13, 1863, PUSG, 7:40; OR, Series II, vol. v, 77.
91 Ulysses S. Grant to Commanding Officer at Alton, Illinois, December 15, 1863, PUSG, 7:42-43.
The Move to Memphis

Eventually, guerrilla violence, Confederate cavalry raids, and civilian disturbances forced Grant to withdraw his army to Memphis from the surrounding countryside and to move the contraband camp there from Grand Junction to protect the refugees. Confederate cavalry General Nathan Bedford Forrest caused severe damage in West Tennessee. On December 18, 1862, he crossed the Tennessee River, and for the rest of the year, his cavalrmen destroyed 500 miles of railroads and telegraph lines, captured or destroyed Union supplies, and caused 2,000 Union casualties between Jackson, Tennessee, and Columbus, Kentucky.92 One soldier in the Twenty-Ninth Iowa Infantry, stationed at Columbus, wrote to his parents, "We [sic] are expecting an attack from the rebel General Forrest of Braggs [sic] division. they [sic] have been close up to our pickets. they [sic] captured about eight hundred prisoners on the railroad between here and Jackson, Tennessee, and tore up the track for several miles, and carryed [sic] off all they could find."93

The final blow that forced Grant to withdraw to Memphis was dealt by Confederate cavalry General Earl Van Dorn.94 Grant suspected Van Dorn might try to destroy the Union supplies stockpiled at Holly Springs, Mississippi, and notified Colonel Robert C. Murphy in command there. However, according to Grant, Murphy "made no preparations to meet him. He did not even notify his command."95 On December 20, 1862, Van Dorn's 3,500 cavalrmen captured 1,500 Federal soldiers, destroyed the supplies, and tore up the railroad at Holly Springs. As a result, Grant ordered Murphy dismissed from the army:

General Orders,
Hdqrs. Department of the Tennessee,

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93 Charles O. Musser to his parents, December 28, 1862, in Musser, Soldier Boy, 13.
95 Grant, Memoirs, 381. Also see Eaton, Grant, Lincoln and the freedmen, 25-26.
Holly Springs, Miss., January 8, 1863.

II. Colonel R. C. Murphy, of the Eighth Regiment Wisconsin Infantry Volunteers, having, while in command of the post of Holly Springs, Miss., neglected and failed to exercise the usual and ordinary precautions to guard and protect the same; having, after repeated and timely warning of the approach of the enemy, failed to make any preparations for resistance or defense or show any disposition to do so; and having, with a force amply sufficient to have repulsed the enemy and protect[ed] the public stores, disgracefully permitted him to capture the post and destroy the stores—and the movement of troops in the face of an enemy rendering it impracticable to convene a court-martial for his trial—is therefore dismissed [from] the service of the United States, to take effect from the 20th day of December, 1862, the date of his cowardly and disgraceful conduct.

By order of Major General U. S. Grant:
Jno. A. Rawlins,
Assistant Adjutant-General.  

On January 10, 1863, Murphy was ordered “hereby dismissed the service of the United States, for allowing his command to be surprised at Holly Springs, Miss., without having taken proper steps to protect his post or repulse the enemy, and his troops having been found in bed at the time of attack.”

Frustrated by the setback, and forced to change his plans both to advance on Vicksburg and to aid the African American refugees in the region, Grant described the raiding and his plans to withdraw to Memphis in his memoirs:

"On the 20th [of December] General Van Dorn appeared at Holly Springs, my secondary base of supplies, captured the garrison of fifteen hundred men, commanded by Colonel Murphy, of the Eighth Wisconsin Regiment, and destroyed all our munitions of war, food, and forage. The capture was a disgraceful one to the officer commanding, but not the troops under him. At the same time Forrest got on our line of railroad between Jackson, Tennessee, and Columbus, Kentucky, doing much damage to it. This cut me off from all communication with the North for more than a week, and it was more than two weeks before rations or forage could be issued from stores obtained in the regular way. This demonstrated the impossibility of maintaining so long a line of road over which to draw supplies for an army moving in an enemy's country. I determined, therefore, to abandon my campaign into the interior with Columbus as a base, and returned to LaGrange and Grand Junction, destroying the road to

96 OR, Series I, vol. XVII, part 1, 516.
97 OR, Series I, vol. XVII, part 1, 516.
my front and repairing the road to Memph, making the Mississippi River the line over which to draw supplies."^{99}

The civilians remaining in the area took great enjoyment from Grant's defeat and withdrawal. But Grant's reaction further indicates his frustration with the behavior of Confederate civilians toward his army and refugees:

They came with broad smiles on their faces, indicating intense joy, to ask what I was going to do now without anything for my soldiers to eat. I told them that I was not disturbed; that I had already sent troops and wagons to collect all the food and forage they could find for fifteen miles on each side of the road. Countenances soon changed, and so did the injury. The next was, 'What are we to do?' My response was that we had endeavored to feed ourselves from our own Northern resources while visiting them; but their friends in gray had been uncivil enough to destroy what we had brought along, and it could not be expected that men with arms in their hands would starve in the midst of plenty. I advised them to emigrate east or west fifteen miles, and assist in eating up what we left."^{99}

After the "Holly Springs disaster," Grant's army began to withdraw to Memphis. "The troops were drawn back gradually, but without haste or confusion, finding supplies abundant and no enemy following."^{100} He also ordered units to break up any guerrilla activity that might threaten the retreat. By December 23, 1862, Grant reoccupied Holly Springs, and on January 8, 1863, he ordered the retreat from Holly Springs to Grand Junction, Tennessee: "As soon as all public Stores Sick &c are removed from Holly Springs fall back with the troops now occupying the place to the vicinity of La Grange Grand Junction or Davis' Mills."^{101} The next day, he informed Halleck "I will start for Memphis immediately and will do everything possible for the capture of Vicksburg."^{102} On January 10, 1863, Grant finally arrived in Memphis.^{103}

While Grant was slowing drawing in his army, Eaton was busily transporting the contraband camp from Grand Junction to Memphis. One of his assistants, Chaplain A.S. Fiske

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^{98}Grant, Personal Memoirs, 360-361.

^{99} Grant, Personal Memoirs, 363.

^{100}Grant, Personal Memoirs, 365.

^{101}Ulysses S. Grant to James B. McPherson, January 8, 1863, PUSG, 7:200.

^{102}Ulysses S. Grant to Henry W. Halleck, January 9, 1863, PUSG, 7:204.

^{103}PUSG, 7:152-153, 157-158, 206; Grant, Personal Memoirs, 365.
of the Fourth Minnesota Infantry, had already begun construction on a new contraband camp south of Memphis. The process of transporting the refugees from Grand Junction to Camp Fiske became quite chaotic. One concern was the camp was being moved from a relatively isolated location into an extremely anti-Union city.\textsuperscript{104} But that was not the only problem:

The main avenue for the retreat of the army from Grand Junction to Memphis was over the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, though wagon transportation was also made available. I at once secured free transportation by rail for the contrabands. The troops were moved as far as possible in company or regimental groups and in accordance with their rank, but in addition to this each train carried crowds of contrabands whom it was impossible to organize or control. Their terror at being left behind made them swarm over the passenger and freight cars, clinging to every available space and even crouching on the roofs.\textsuperscript{105}

Upon arrival, Eaton found Camp Fiske unfinished, so "as many of the contrabands as we had been able to provide for were taken to homes where shelter and employment were given them." Unfortunately, however, the haste of their retreat prevented proper arrangements ahead of time, making it "simply impossible to make provision for this army of destitute and unfortunate people." To make matters worse that first night, "the night came on cold, there was a light fall of snow, and at every street corner little bonfires had been kindled, around which groups of shivering Negroes were huddled." Despite these conditions, most survived the first few nights, and as soon as possible the refugees were moved to Camp Fiske. James Yeatman, president of the Western Sanitary Commission, described Camp Fiske in his 1864 report to the Western Sanitary Commission: "The location is a most excellent one, dry and airy and easily drained. The encampment consists of four row of good log huts, two rows on either side of a parallelogram, which small plots for gardens in front. The streets and alleys were all clean and well swept, having good drainage and excellent police arrangements. The inmates were generally well clothed, and were cheerful and contented."\textsuperscript{106}


\textsuperscript{105} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen}, 30.

\textsuperscript{106} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen}, 30-32.
Eaton's work continued much as it had at Grand Junction, and he set to work finding employment: "All were vigorously encouraged to work, and the number of those dependent upon the bounty of the Government was reduced as far as possible. As many as could, retained their places in families and shops and in every form of industry which had previously engaged them."\(^{107}\) He also had many of the same difficulties as at Grand Junction, especially in finding adequate assistants. He complained that "the feeling against serving the Negro in any capacity still prevailed among the officers of our troops, and even armed as I was with the order issued by General Grant at Oxford [General Orders No. 13], it was exceedingly difficult to find men adapted to the task. To get a man who could be kind to the Negro and just to the Negro's master was all but impossible."\(^{108}\)

Civilian disturbances and guerrilla activity also continued to be a problem for Grant after the withdrawal to Memphis, and it remained dangerous for soldiers to leave their camps in small numbers.\(^{109}\) Grant wasted no time in taking action against disloyal citizens in Memphis:

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Head Quarters Dept of the Tennessee
Holly Springs Miss Jan 3 1863

Maj Genl S. A Hurlbut.
Comd.g District of Memphis

Some citizens of Memphis were overheard to say that there was determination that we should not run the M & C.R.R. That it will be easier to interrupt that and force us to move the Army to Memphis for supplies than to come here to fight the main army.

It is my determination to run the road as long as we require it and if necessary I will remove every family and every species of personal property between the Hatchie and Cold Water rivers. I will also move south every family in Memphis of doubtful loyalty whether they have the oath of allegiance or not if it is necessary for our security and you can so notify them

For every raid or attempted raid by Guerillas upon the road I want ten families of the most noted secessionists sent south if the enemy with his regularly organized force attacks us I do not propose to furnish non Combatant citizens for it but
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\(^{107}\) Eaton, *Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen*, 34.


\(^{109}\) Roots Committee, *Grand Junction, Tennessee*. 
these Guerillas received suport [sic] and countenance from this class of citizens and by their acts will bring punishment upon them

In this matter I wish you to give this letter all the force of an order

U.S. Grant
Maj. Genl.\textsuperscript{110}

Despite these problems, Grant soon regained control of the Mississippi Valley and continued his advance on Vicksburg. By March of 1863, the camp at Grand Junction had reopened, and was listed by Eaton as one of his principal camps.\textsuperscript{111}

**Life in Camp**

The transition from slave to refugee was certainly a difficult one. In addition to racism among individual Union soldiers, the disdain of Confederate citizens, and the violence of guerillas and Confederate cavalry, refugees faced severe overcrowding and confusion in Federal policy. Despite these difficulties, Eaton and his assistants provided assistance to the African American refugees, facilitated in part by the camp's strategic location. Most Confederates in the villages and the farms near Grand Junction had fled when the Union army advanced, reducing conflict with civilians. Their deserted homes provided shelter. Their deserted fields provided employment, and many refugees worked as military laborers or camp workers. The deserted crops provided sustenance; since in 1862-1863 only those employed by the army could be given army rations, it was necessary to harvest the crops abandoned in the field to provide food for everyone.\textsuperscript{112} Providing shelter, food, clothing, and medical care were critical – and difficult – first steps.

Some shelter was available in the abandoned homes of Confederate supporters who had fled further south. So “thither to the deserted houses we conducted as many as we could

\textsuperscript{110} PUSG, 7:167-170.

\textsuperscript{111} Eaton, *Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen*, 34.

accommodate of the ragged and suffering Negroes. Old tents were used to shelter those whom the houses could not receive."113 Sometimes the tents were too old and tattered to provide adequate shelter, although the refugees may have started to build their own simple buildings later.114

Initially, only those employed by the army received army rations. Eaton negotiated these rations with the commissary departments, who often procrastinated as long as possible before meeting his requests. The refugee laborers received less food than enlisted soldiers, and Eaton described it as "a slightly reduced version of the soldier's ration, approximated the amount of food that slaves received."115 To provide for the non-laborers, Grant ordered Eaton to send the refugees to abandoned farms to harvest the fields.116 Eaton readily complied, agreeing with Grant that "the surrounding country possessed ample means of subsisting the fugitives until such time as they could care for themselves."117 Refugees contributed to their own food supply later by maintaining their own gardens planted with seeds donated by various freedmen's aid societies.118 On January 25, 1864, the war department issued orders establishing rations for those who were not employed by the military:

The following is hereby established as the ration for issue by the Subsistence Department to adult refugees and to adult colored persons, commonly called "contrabands," when they are not employed at labor by the Government, and who may have no means of subsisting themselves, viz: Ten ounces of pork or bacon, or one pound of fresh beef; one pound of corn-meal five times a week; and one pound of flour or soft bread, or twelve ounces of hard bread, twice a week; and to every 100 rations ten pounds of beans, pease [sic], or hominy; eight pounds of sugar; two quarts of vinegar; eight ounces of adamantine or star candles; two pounds of soap; two pounds of salt; and fifteen pounds of potatoes, when practicable. To children under fourteen years of age, half rations will be

113 Eaton, Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen, 18.
114 Cimprich, "Slavery Amidst Civil War," 115; Mays, Black Americans, 77; Musser, Soldier Boy, 14.
117 Eaton, Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen, 13.
issued; and to women and children, roasted rye coffee at the rate of ten pounds, or tea at the rate of fifteen ounces, to every 100 rations.\textsuperscript{119}

Upon establishment of the camp, Grant realized that many refugees desperately needed adequate clothing. He issued Special Orders No. 21 on November 17, 1862: “Lieut.-Col. Charles A. Reynolds, Chief Quartermaster of the Department, will furnish Chaplain J. Eaton, jr., in charge of Contrabands at Grand Junction, Tenn., on his requisition... clothing for contraband men, women, and children. Unsalable soldiers' clothing will also be issued to him.”\textsuperscript{120} Military clothing was intended for men, so women and children were not as well provided for until freedmen's aid societies started bringing donated clothing for them later.\textsuperscript{121}

The refugees also needed medical care, and Eaton recalled that “one of the first and most important duties was to search out the sick and have them properly provided for.” Immediately, eight refugees were with smallpox were quarantined in an abandoned house while the remainder of the sick were taken to the railroad depot, which was converted to a crude hospital. Here Major William R. Thrall, surgeon of the Twenty-Seventh Ohio Infantry, cared for them, and although Thrall’s staff and supplies often ran short, Eaton commented, “The care of the sick had been especially troubling me, and the specific regulation placing them in charge of the army surgeons was a relief to my mind.”\textsuperscript{122} Hospital troubles worsened during the short time the refugees were removed to Memphis, as the hospitals there were worn-out tents with dirt floors. Many of the sick died from exposure in Memphis, with the winter conditions contributing to more than one thousand casualties. Later, freedmen’s aid societies donated medical supplies, but their contributions did not meet the needs of the camp. By 1864, military funding for refugee hospitals had run out, so refugee’s wages were taxed to help purchase supplies.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{119} General Orders No. 30, War Department, OR, Series 3, vol. 4, part 1, 44-45.
\textsuperscript{120} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen}, 21.
\textsuperscript{121} Cimprich, “Slavery Amidst Civil War,” 113-114.
\textsuperscript{122} Eaton, \textit{Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen}, 18, 22.
\textsuperscript{123} Cimprich, “Slavery Amidst Civil War,” 117-119.
Medical care was probably the most difficult service to provide for the duration of the camp's existence; trained staff, ample supplies, adequate buildings, and funding were nearly impossible to obtain.

Significantly, the camp administrators provided an education for the refugees. Eaton attempted to recruit teachers with some difficulty late in 1862; one of the benefits of moving the camp to Memphis that winter was that willing teachers provided by northern missionary aid societies were available in the city. In 1863, the army established a Board of Education for Freedmen, and General Lorenzo Thomas appointed Eaton as supervisor for these schools.\textsuperscript{124} With the help of the missionary aid societies, Eaton recruited teachers from the North and provided textbooks – usually the Bible – for the schools.\textsuperscript{125} In his 1864 report, Eaton noted that “these privileges have been enjoyed and appreciated. They [African Americans] crowd the school rooms. Soldiers and laborers carry about them their speller or reader, and are frequently overheard reciting to each other.”\textsuperscript{126} By 1865, Eaton reported 102 teachers educating 6,267 pupils in 74 schools in the Department of the Tennessee.\textsuperscript{127}

Teachers' use of the Bible as a primary reading textbook also facilitated teaching morality, especially the sanctity of marriage. Slaves had not been permitted to marry legally, and although they often formed family units there was no protection from being sold away from one's partner or children. Even before the Civil War, some religious groups spoke out against separating these families, as did the Episcopal Convention of South Carolina: “That Convention declared that the relation of husband and wife is of Divine institution, and equally binding on


\textsuperscript{125} Blassingame, "The Union Army," 158-159; The Hardeman County Black History Committee, A Chronicle of Black History in Hardeman County, Tennessee (Bolivar, Tennessee: The Hardeman County Black History Committee, 1989).

\textsuperscript{126} Eaton, Report of the General Superintendent of Freedmen, Department of the Tennessee and State of Arkansas for 1864, (Memphis, TN, 1865), 68.

\textsuperscript{127} Blassingame, "The Union Army," 153; Mays, Black Americans, 82.
master and slave; and that the injunction of the Saviour, forbidding (sic) the separation of husband and wife, is obligatory on the master."[128] Eaton found his efforts to create and maintain family units well-received by the refugees, noting that "there was no promiscuous intermingling. Families were established by themselves. Every man took care of his own wife and children."[129] He elaborated on this point in his memoirs:

One of the most touching features of our work was the eagerness with which colored men and women availed themselves of the opportunities offered them to legalize unions already formed, some of which had been in existence for a long time. Chaplain Fiske on one occasion married in about one hour one hundred and nineteen couples at one service, - chiefly those who had lived long together. Later, most of the marriages were new contracts. This comprehensive wedding greatly impressed the freedmen, who, after celebrating with a sumptuous wedding-breakfast, dispersed in couples to their newly prepared cabins. All the more permanent camps reported that the enforcement of strict marriage regulations produced excellent results in the morale and general conduct of the people.[130]

Most refugees readily and enthusiastically accepted these doctrines because permitting them to marry was a symbol of their anticipated legal and social equality. But there were a few exceptions, including a refugee chaplain in Memphis who chose to live with a woman who was not his wife. He refused to accept the moral codes of the camp, and was forced to leave. Eaton described his departure, and its effect on the rest of the refugees:

Finding that neither offers to secure transportation for the man's own wife, whose whereabouts were known to Mr. Fiske, nor appeals to the standards of conventional morality had any effect upon the transgressor, the Chaplain finally told him that since he would not live in accordance with the code which was binding upon the rest of the community he must leave the settlement and not imperil others by this example. He and the woman departed most unwillingly, and soon afterwards both fell victims to the smallpox and died. Their fate was looked upon by the Negroes as a direct and swift application of retributive justice, and so salutary was the effect that no other apostles of the doctrine of free love disturbed the settlement's morality.[131]

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[129] Eaton, Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen, 34.
[130] Eaton, Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen, 35.
[131] Eaton, Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen, 36.
Eaton also made sure the refugees were given employment as part of Grant’s goal to transform “the army of blacks... from a menace into a positive assistance to the Union forces.” Under the authority of his General Orders No. 72 and Halleck’s approval of the camp’s establishment, the refugees took on a multitude of camp duties. Men served “as fatigue men in the departments of the surgeon-general, the quartermaster, and the commissary, as well as rendering assistance in various engineering operations, such as building bridges, roads, earthworks, and so on. The women could serve in the camp kitchens and as nurses in the hospitals.”

Refugees also harvested the abandoned cotton, which was sold to the quartermaster, "he shipping the cotton North to be sold for the benefit of the government. Citizens remaining on their plantations were allowed the privilege of having their crops saved by freedmen on the same terms." Unlike most army labor, this task provided work for women and children. Later, the refugees chopped wood to sell to steamers on the Mississippi River. “A good price was paid for chopping wood used for the supply of government steamers... Those supplying their own fuel paid a much higher price. In this way a fund was created not only sufficient to feed and clothe all, old and young, male and female, but to build them comfortable cabins, hospitals for the sick, and to supply them with many comforts they had never known before.”

When President Lincoln decided to arm the slaves by permitted the formation of African American regiments in 1863, contraband camps became key recruitment sites. General Lorenzo Thomas reported that in Tennessee he recruited 27,000 infantry, 300 light artillery, and 5,040 heavy artillery, which contributed to a total of 77,720 African Americans enlisted in the Mississippi Valley, including Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Missouri, and Kentucky. Apparently, no regiments formed at Grand Junction, but two were

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132 Eaton, Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen, 14-15.
133 Grant, Personal Memoirs, 354-355.
mustered in at LaGrange, which is just four miles to the west. Several regiments mustered in at Memphis and Jackson, Tennessee, suggesting that the camp at Grand Junction sent potential recruits either to LaGrange or along the railroad to Memphis and Jackson to muster in.\footnote{Civil War Centennial Commission, 	extit{Tennesseans in the Civil War: A Military History of Confederate and Union Units with Available Rosters of Personnel, Part I} (Nashville: Civil War Centennial Commission, 1964).}
Appendix 1: Images

Image 1: The Grand Junction Railroad Depot, built c.1859

Note the size of the depot which indicates the importance of the railroad to the town.

Photograph, c.1900
Courtesy of National Bird Dog Museum, Grand Junction, Tennessee
Image 2: "Grand Junction (Tennessee) of the Memphis and Charleston and Mississippi and Ohio Railroads"

The following remarks appear on page 807:

"THE ARMY OF THE SOUTHWEST.

OUR artist, Mr. Simplot, has sent us several sketches, which we reproduce on page 804. Grand Junction, Tennessee, has long been one of the most important stations in the Southwest, and has been held by our army ever since the rebel evacuation of Corinth. It is from thence that Grant moved forward to compel the retreat of the insurgents from Holly Springs. Davis Mills is a position on the left wing of our army under Grant, and was lately occupied by General Hamilton's Division. It is a well-known spot to the army of the Southwest."

Sketch by Mr. A. Simplot
Harper's Weekly, December 20, 1862, page 804
Courtesy of Son of the South, "The Civil War" (sonofthesouth.net)
Image 3: "Mean of Transit"

Note the importance of railroads as a means of transportation in West Tennessee and the Mississippi Valley.

Map, March 4, 1861
Ohio State University, eHistory, Maps and Images
http://ehistory.osu.edu/osu/maps/imageviewz.cfm?id=3285
Image 4: "Map of La Grange and Vicinity, Tenn."

Note the labels "cotton fields" and "corn fields," the cluster of buildings close to the railroad junction, and the star-shaped fort labeled "Ft. McDowell."

Map, November 1862
"Map of La Grange and Vicinity, Tenn., surveyed under the direction of 1st Lieut. J.H. Wilson, Chief Top'. Eng', Nov. 1862,"
National Archives, Washington, D.C.
Courtesy of Ames Plantation, Grand Junction, Tennessee
Image 5: "Topographical Map of La Grange, Grand Junction and Vicinity"

Note the labels "pasture" and "cotton field."

Map, April 1863

"Topographical Map of La Grange, Grand Junction and Vicinity
Surveyed & drawn by Ch. Spangenberg Ass. Top. Eng., April 1863"
National Archives, Washington, D.C.
Courtesy of Ames Plantation, Grand Junction, Tennessee
Image 6: "Map of the Country Between LaFayette and Colliersville, Tenn."

Note this map describes land near Grand Junction. Note labels for "field," indicating a rural region, and the size of each parcel indicates smaller farms rather than large plantations.

Map, c.1861-1865
"Map of the Country Between LaFayette and Colliersville, Tenn.,
Surveyed under the direction of Lieut. J.H. Wilson, Chief Top. Eng. Dept. of the Tenn."
National Archives, Washington, D.C.
Courtesy of Ames Plantation, Grand Junction, Tennessee
Image 7: Aerial Photograph of Grand Junction, Tennessee

Note the star-shaped fort, a reminder of Union occupation on today's landscape.

Photograph, c.1956

Courtesy of the National Bird Dog Museum, Grand Junction, Tennessee
Image 8: "A Rebel Captain Forcing Negroes to Load Cannon Under the Fire of Berdan's Sharpshooters"

The Confederate Army used slaves as a military advantage early in the war.

The following editor's comments appear on page 299:

"On page 289 we reproduce one of Mr. Mead's sketches. It illustrates the way in which the cowardly rebels force their negro [sic] slaves to do dangerous work. It represents a struggle between two negroes [sic] and a rebel captain, who insisted upon their loading a cannon within range of Berdan's Sharp-shooters. The affair was witnessed by our officers through a glass. The rebel captain succeeded in forcing the negroes [sic] to expose themselves, and they were shot, one after the other."

Sketch by Mr. Mead

_Harper's Weekly_, May 10, 1862, page 289

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, “Northern Visions of Race, Region, and Reform” (online exhibition at http://mac110.assumption.edu/aas/intros/contrabands.html)

Note: Several images in this appendix depict African Americans with exaggerated features. Popular images from the nineteenth century often developed, or at least reflected, derogatory stereotypes of African Americans. They were often depicted with exaggerated lips, very dark skin, wide-eyed expressions, and awkward or uncontrolled body postures. Also, they were often placed on the periphery of images that included white subjects, performing menial tasks or exhibiting inferior behaviors, like playing music for whites to dance. This served to reinforce their supposed inferiority and the perception that they were capable of little else but serving whites. [Michael D. Harris, _Colored Pictures: Race & Visual Representation_ (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 40-51.]
General Benjamin Butler at Fortress Monroe, Virginia was the first to attempt to manage the refugee slaves coming into Union lines in 1861 and is credited with terming them "contrabands."

Sketch by "Our Special Artist at Fortress Monroe"
*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, November 2, 1861, page 375
Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, "Northern Visions of Race, Region, and Reform" (online exhibition at [http://mac110.assumption.edu/aas/intros/contrabands.html](http://mac110.assumption.edu/aas/intros/contrabands.html))
Image 10: "Negroes Building Stockades under the Recent Act of Congress"

The Confiscation Acts permitted the Union army to confiscate slaves used directly in the rebellion and employ them in non-combat duties.

Sketch

*Harper's Weekly*, August 30, 1862, page 549

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, "Northern Visions of Race, Region, and Reform" (online exhibition at http://mac110.assumption.edu/aas/intros/contrabands.html)
Grant telegraphed Halleck in the fall of 1862 that refugees were coming in by wagon loads.

The artist described the scene:
"I saw a quaint family come into camp one summer day in '63 at Culpepper Court House. I was at a picket post southeast of the town, when I noticed a vehicle approaching that was a mystery. I knew that no single baggage-wagon would come from that direction, and on waiting for a nearer approach found it to be a party of refugees. The team was composed of an old white horse, a white ox, and a mule. The horse was led by a man, who carried an old banjo under his arm, and a boy mounted on the mule was driver.

The wagon was an old-timer, and had evidently seen long service on the plantation... The occupants were an old "mammy and her better half, - his gray locks surmounted by an old white hat, - a young woman and two children."

Sketch, c.1862-1864

A variation of this sketch was published in Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, August 1864
Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-USZ62-88806
Grant telegraphed Halleck in the fall of 1862 that refugees were coming in by wagon loads.

Drawing, Chinese white on brown paper
*Harper's Weekly*, January 31, 1863
Courtesy of The Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, African American Odyssey
Image 13: "Contrabands Coming into Camp on the Federal Lines"

Note this group includes women and children, and may be a family.

Sketch by "Our Special Artist"
New York Illustrated News, May 10, 1862, page 5
Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, "Northern Visions of Race, Region, and Reform" (online exhibition at http://mac110.assumption.edu/aas/intros/contrabands.html)
Image 14: "Negroes Escaping Out of Slavery"

Note the large group, which includes women and children.

Sketch by A.R. Waud

*Harper's Weekly*, May 7, 1864, page 292

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, "Northern Visions of Race, Region, and Reform"
(online exhibition at http://mac110.assumption.edu/aas/intros/contrabands.html)
Image 15: “Negroes Leaving Their Homes”

Note the large group of slaves leaving simultaneously, probably from several farms, to seek the Union lines.

Sketch
Harper's Weekly, April 9, 1864, page 237
Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, “Northern Visions of Race, Region, and Reform”
(online exhibition at http://mac110.assumption.edu/aas/intros/contrabands.html)
As the Union army advanced, refugees often joined their marching columns.

The artists described the scene:

"Sometimes the number of slaves that sought refuge with the Union columns was more than could possibly be managed. During Sherman's march to the sea, they flocked in thousands from the surrounding country. It was not possible to care for the great hosts, and many were reluctantly left behind."

Sketch, c.1862-1864
Image 17: "Lookin' for the Yankees"

Note that although many refugees came in large groups, sometimes individual refugees came into the Union camps as well.

The artist described the scene:

"The colored fugitive who made their way to our lines were always welcomed and their grotesqueness was a source of amusement to the cavalry outposts."

Sketch, c.1862-1864
Image 18: “Contraband of War”

The artist described the scene:

"The negroes [sic] were of invaluable assistance in the East in the construction of works of defence [sic] - rifle-pits, earthworks, forts, camps, etc., and they were gradually taken into the forces and utilized as non-combatants in many ways - as body servants, cooks, drivers, grooms, laborers, and whenever they could save work or time for the soldiers."

Sketch, c.1862-1864
Image 19: "Union Troops Removing the 'Hobble' from an Escaped Slave – A Scene on Otter Island, S.C."

Note the escaped slave is a woman with a child, and that she is being cared for by the soldiers in camp.

The following remarks by the artist appear on page 26:

"Contrabands are almost daily arriving at this point. The "Scene on Otter Island" represents a newly arrived contraband being relieved from the "hobble" placed upon her by her cruel master, to prevent her escaping. Scenes of this kind are by no means rare, and seldom fail in awakening the sympathetic feelings of the brave men who witness them. In addition to the fetters upon her limbs, a yoke was fastened around her neck, and attached by a chain to her foot."

Sketch by Henry Stulen, Regimental Band of the 45th Pennsylvania Volunteers

*New York Illustrated News*, May 17, 1862, page 32

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, “Northern Visions of Race, Region, and Reform” (online exhibition at http://mac110.assumption.edu/aas/intros/contrabands.html)
Image 20: "A Negro Family Coming into Union Lines"

Note the number of women and children accompanying the men.

Stenograph, c.1861-1865
New York Historical Society, Civil War Stereograph File
Box 71, PR-065-772-3
Image 21: "The effects of the Proclamation – freed Negroes coming into our lines at Newbern, North Carolina"

Note the families of refugees walking alongside the military ranks.

The following comments are from the artist:

"I inclose [sic] a sketch of a very interesting procession which came to Newbern from "up country" a few days ago. It is the first-fruits of the glorious emancipation proclamation in this vicinity, and as such you may deem it worthy of engraving in your illustrated Weekly.

On our late expedition into Greene and Onslow Counties our company (Company C, Fifty-first Massachusetts Regiment) was out on picket duty the night before our return to Newbern, when an old slave came in to us in a drenching rain; and on being informed that he and his friends could come to Newbern with us, he left, and soon the contrabands began to come in, with mule teams, oxen, and in every imaginable style. When morning came we had 120 slaves ready to start with their little all, happy in the thought that their days of bondage were over. They said that it was known far and wide that the President has declared the slaves free."

Sketch by "amateur"

*Harper’s Weekly*, February 21, 1863, page 116

Courtesy of Son of the South, “The Civil War” (sonofthesouth.net)
Image 22: "Coming into the Sanctuary"

The artist described the scene:

"Meager possessions were packed quickly when news came to a plantation that the Yankees were holding a near-by town, and although the country was picketed with Southern cavalry close up to the Union lines, the slave family stole from the old cabin at nightfall, and avoiding highways to escape capture, tramped through wood and thicket, and came, weary and footsore, in sight of the Union lines at daybreak.

I saw one group that I never shall forget, it impressed me so deeply with what Federal success meant to these dusky millions. The old mother dropped on her knees and with upraised hands cried 'Bress de Lord!' while the father, too much affected to speak, stood reverently with uncovered head, and the wondering, bare-legged boy, with the faithful dog, waited patiently beside them. As the bugle notes of the reville echoed across the fields, and the star-spangled banner waved out from the flag-staff on the breastworks in the bright morning sun, I murmured, "A Sanctuary, truly!"

Sketch, c.1862-1864
Image 23: Chaplain John Eaton, Jr.

General Ulysses S. Grant appointed Chaplain John Eaton, Jr.
General Superintendent of Contrabands

Photograph, c.1863
General Ulysses S. Grant noted in July of 1862 that "there is an evident disposition on the part of many of the citizens to join the Guerillas on their approach."
(Grant to Halleck, July 28, 1862, PUSG, 5:243.)

Sketch, c.1861-1865
New York Historical Society, Confederate War Etchings Collection
PR-010-01, no. 16
Image 25: "Attacked by Bushwhackers"

This African American wagon driver and his supply train is being attacked by a Confederate guerrilla party.

The artist described the scene:

"Mosby's men were the particular scourge of the wagon-trains, and exhausted the life-blood of the quartermaster and commissary trains in Virginia. Many desperate struggles took place among the wagons on the lonely Virginia roads, and the men in charge of the teams never felt safe from the reckless bushwhackers."

Sketch, c.1862-1864

Image 26: "A Group of Contrabands"

Note this group of refugees includes men, women, and children.

Stereograph, c.1861-1865
New York Historical Society, Civil War Stereograph File
Box 71, PR-065-772-2
Image 27: "The Camp of the Contrabands on the Banks of the Mississippi, Fort Pickering, Memphis, Tenn."

Note the many types of shelter being used by the refugees, the white soldiers guarding the refugee camp, and the presence of women and children.

The following remarks by the artist appear on page 141:

"Among other disadvantages under which we labor is that of the negroes [sic]. The rebels, of course, have no scruples on this head, but, in accordance with their system of considering them as property, put them to their full use as animals. The National Government, on the other hand, treat them as human beings, and are, consequently, put to considerable expense, trouble, danger and inconvenience... Close to Fort Pickering, Memphis, and on the banks of the Mississippi, the National Government has formed a Camp for the contrabands, which our Artist, Mr. Lovie, sketched lately. He says that they are employed in labor about the fort, which they perform willingly enough...."

Sketch by Mr. Henri Lovie

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, November 22, 1862, page 140
Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, "Northern Visions of Race, Region, and Reform" (online exhibition at http://mac110.assumption.edu/aas/intros/contrabands.html)
Image 28: "Contraband Camp Near Manchester, Virginia"

Note the many types of shelter provided, including old army tents and an abandoned building.

Photograph, c.1861-1865
Benson J. Lossing, Mathew Brady’s Illustrated History of the Civil War
Image 29: "Nigger Quarters Within the Federal Lines at Hilton Head, S.C."

Note the army tents for shelter and the presence of refugee men, women, and children guarded by white soldiers.

The following remarks by the artist appear on page 234:

"Great numbers of negroes come into our lines daily, all of whom are examined by the Provost Marshal, and their names and ages taken down, and the names of their former masters. They all want to be free, and none speak in good terms of their Southern masters."

Sketch by "Our Artist With the Expedition"

*New York Illustrated News, February 16, 1862*

Courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society, "Northern Visions of Race, Region, and Reform"

(online exhibition at http://mac110.assumption.edu/aas/intros/contrabands.html)
Image 30: "Intelligent Contrabands at Leisure"

Note the worn tent these refugees have an old army tent for shelter and are wearing parts of old army uniforms.

Stereograph, c.1861-1865
New York Historical Society, Civil War Stereograph File
Box 71, PR-065-772-1
Image 31: "Group of Contrabands"

Note these refugees are wearing a variety of old army uniform pieces.

Stereograph, c.1861-1865
New York Historical Society, Civil War Stereograph File
Box 74, PR-065-800-71
A hospital was set up for the refugees at the train depot in Grand Junction, and Maj. W. R. Thrall of the 27th Ohio Infantry (front, left) was the surgeon in charge there.

Photograph, c.1861-1865
Refugees were employed by the Union army in a variety of non-combat roles, note the African American man assisting the blacksmith in this sketch.

Sketch, c.1862-1864
Refugees were employed by the Union army in a variety of non-combat roles, note the African American cook in these sketches.

The artist described these scenes:

"The mantle of daily industry - "domestic work," as we may call it - fell upon the shoulders of the colored men or boys, for the drudgery of camp-life came to them alone, and the most laborious duties were performed by them with a never-failing cheerfulness that is seldom found in positions of servitude...I often watched them closely under the most toilsome and exasperating circumstances, and was convinced that in most cases the willingness came of conscientious scruples to do the best they knew how for those engaged in what they regarded as the fight for their freedom."

Sketch, c.1862-1864
Refugees were employed by the Union army in a variety of non-combat roles, note the African American man leading the mule in this supply train.

The artist described the scene:

"I once sketched an odd group at the rear of a column. A tall colored boy, in an old gray uniform, was leading a forlorn mule, laden with the most varied assortment of war material I ever saw gathered together. Hanging over the back was a canvas tent rather the worse for wear; around the neck three belts and cartridge boxes were hung, and on the sides were fastened a miscellaneous collection of muskets, cartridge boxes, bayonets, tin cups, kettles and canteens. He made a ludicrous appearance as he tramped along, for nothing could be seen of the mule but legs and ears."

Sketch, c.1862-1864
Refugees were employed by the Union army in a variety of non-combat roles, note the African American men leading this supply train.

The artist described the scene:

"The wagons at first were drawn by six-horse teams, but later, when the superiority of mules became appreciated they were substituted. They were harnessed in most substantial fashion, as the wear and tear upon the gear was terrible, and guided by negro drivers, who bestrode the saddle of the near wheel-mule, and managed the team with a single line fastened to the near the leader's bit. None but the colored drivers were really successful with the mule teams, there seeming to be an occult understanding between them."

Sketch, c.1862-1864
Refugees were employed by the Union army in a variety of non-combat roles, note the African American man is one of the wagoners.

The artist described the scene:

"Music and dancing were often part of the entertainment. The negro drivers were fond of this jollity, and would group themselves round the fire in front of their huts and watch in great glee the improvised break-down danced to the strains of an old violin."

Sketch, c.1862-1864
Image 38: "Feeding the Mules"

Refugees were employed by the Union army in a variety of non-combat roles, note the African
American man feeding the animals in this sketch.

The artist described the scene:

"The task of feeding the animals was an arduous one, and a never-ending source of anxiety to
the officers and men of the quartermaster's department."

Sketch, c.1862-1864

Edwin Forbes, Thirty Years After: An Artist's Memoir of the Civil War
Additional Images

1. "Freedman's Barracks, Alexandria, Va."
   Shows a group of freedmen in front of barracks.
   Film Negative, c.1861-1865
   Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division
   Photographs of African Americans During the Civil War, LC-B8184-B-350

2. "Freedman's Village, Arlington, Va."
   Shows about 100 blacks lined up in front of barracks with books. Evidently a school group learning to read.
   Film Negative, c.1861-1865
   Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division
   Photographs of African Americans During the Civil War, LC-B8184-B1163

3. "Sanitary Commission Wagons and Tents"
   Shows supply wagons pulled by horses and a mounted soldier.
   Photograph, c.1861-1865
   New York Historical Society, Civil War Photograph File
   Series 775-001, Box 71

4. "Issuing Stores to Contrabands in South Carolina"
   Shows several African Americans in line outside a small building.
   Stereograph, c.1861-1865
   New York Historical Society, Civil War Stereograph File
   Box 73, PR-065-795-25

5. "Officer and African American Men Outside Camouflage Tent"
   Shows an army tent with several men, white and black, outside.
   Stereograph, c.1861-1865
   New York Historical Society, Civil War Stereograph File
   Box 71, PR-065-773-5
Appendix 2: Biographical Sketch of Chaplain John Eaton, Jr. (1829-1906)

John Eaton, Jr. believed in "the large obligations of the child to the parent, and of the pupil to the teacher," values surely introduced to him by his parents. He was born in Sutton, New Hampshire, on December 5, 1829, the oldest of nine children. His father instilled hard work and obedience in him, allowing him to attend school for only two years before requiring his labor at home at the age of five. The family farmed two thousand acres and provided foodstuffs to many neighboring towns, and there was little time for play or education. Eaton's mother, however, encouraged him to continue learning, allowing him to buy books on Sundays when labor was not permitted. She also encouraged his religious growth; she was certainly the influence for Eaton's future professions.  

At sixteen years old, he had taught himself well enough to teach in a neighboring school district. After one term, his father agreed to send him to Thetford Academy in Vermont. Thetford Academy was a secondary school established in 1819 to teach classical languages, mathematics, natural philosophy, and the arts to prepare students to study law, medicine, teaching, and the ministry at colleges and universities. His teacher there, Dr. Hiram Orcutt, convinced him to go on to college, and Eaton graduated from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire in 1854.

After graduation, Eaton moved to Ohio where he served as principal of the Artemus Ward School in Cleveland and then superintendent of Toledo City Schools. In 1859, he left

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Toledo to attend the Andover Theological Seminary in Andover, Massachusetts,\textsuperscript{141} which was founded in 1807 by orthodox Calvinists separating from Harvard College.\textsuperscript{142} He entered as a licentiate, having earned a degree at Dartmouth, and was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1861.\textsuperscript{143}

Eaton’s ordination coincided with the outbreak of the Civil War, and he enlisted as Chaplain of the 27\textsuperscript{th} Ohio Volunteer Infantry.\textsuperscript{144} The unit was organized in August 1861 by Colonel John W. Fuller, and served in Missouri until 1862 then moved to the Mississippi Valley, where it took part in the battles for New Madrid, Island No. 10, Iuka, and Corinth. The unit later went on Sherman’s March to the Sea, then north through the Carolinas to end the war at the Battle of Bentonville. Following General Joseph E. Johnston’s surrender, the unit participated in the Grand Review in Washington, D.C. and was mustered out in Louisville in July 1865.\textsuperscript{145}

Eaton remained with the 27\textsuperscript{th} Ohio until just before Corinth, when his military career took a surprising path. On November 11, 1862, he orders from General Ulysses S. Grant to organize the African American refugees that had been flooding the Union lines, see to their basic needs, and set them to work harvesting abandoned fields of food and cotton. Under these orders, Eaton provided shelter, rations, work, and health care for runaway slaves in the Mississippi Valley. They were considered contraband of war under the Confiscation Act passed August 6, 1861, which allowed the seizure of property, including slaves, if used in support of the Rebellion. The Act Prohibiting the Return of Slaves, passed March 13, 1862, resulted in increasing numbers of slaves fleeing to Union lines; they were safe from being returned to their masters. This caused the need for General Grant to appoint an officer to see to their care; “the dictates of

\textsuperscript{141} Mason, "John Eaton," ix-xxxiv.
\textsuperscript{143} Mason, "John Eaton," ix-xxxiv.
\textsuperscript{144} Mason, "John Eaton," ix-xxxiv.
mere humanity demanded that these helpless people be themselves protected, so far as possible, and spared all possible suffering. On November 16, 1862, General Halleck approved Grant’s decision to start a contraband camp at Grand Junction and organize work details among the escaped slaves, and on December 17th, General Grant officially appointed Eaton the General Superintendent of Contrabands. After the Emancipation Proclamation in January 1863, recruitment of African American soldiers began in the Union army, many enlisting from contraband camps.

On October 10, 1863, Eaton was promoted to Colonel of the 63rd United Stated Colored Troops Infantry, which participated in several small engagements in Louisiana and Mississippi between March of 1864 and the end of the war. This unit also fought in the last battle of the Civil War, which was Palmetto Ranch, Texas on May 15, 1865, and it was mustered out January 9, 1866. Eaton’s work with the contraband camps in the Mississippi Valley kept him occupied there, and he was brevetted Brigadier General March 13, 1865. Under General Grant’s recommendation, General Oliver Howard, the Freedmen’s Bureau’s first commissioner, appointed Eaton Assistant Commissioner for the District of Columbia, which included Alexandria, Fairfax, and Loudon counties in Virginia as well as general oversight over Maryland.

On December 4, 1865, Eaton resigned from the Freedmen’s Bureau, and on December 18th he was discharged from the army. He moved to Memphis where he edited the Post until

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146 Eaton, Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen, 13.
147 Eaton, Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen, 20-21, 26-27.
1867. He then became Tennessee's first superintendent of schools and worked diligently to establish a free, though segregated, public school system open to all children. In 1870, he was appointed the first commissioner of the newly created national Bureau of Education, and he strongly advocated the importance of libraries. Ill-health forced him to resign from this position in 1886.  

His health did not keep him idle for long, however, and he served as president of Marietta College in Marietta, Ohio from 1886 until 1891 and president of Sheldon Jackson College in Salt Lake City from 1895 to 1899. In January 1899, he was appointed the first American superintendent of schools for Puerto Rico, but was forced to resign that May due to his failing health. Writing kept him occupied during his later years, and he authored *The Presbyterian Churches and Education* in 1898, followed by his memoir, *Grant, Lincoln, and the freedmen*, published posthumously in 1907. He passed away February 9, 1906, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C.  

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151 Mason, "John Eaton," ix-xxxiv; Eicher, *Civil War High Commands*, 222.  
152 Mason, "John Eaton," ix-xxxiv; Eicher, *Civil War High Commands*, 222.
Image 1: Thetford Academy

Eaton attended this secondary school, which was established in 1819.

Photograph, c.1819
Courtesy of www.thetfordacademy.org
Image 2: The Theological Seminary, at Andover, Massachusetts

Eaton entered the Seminary in 1859 and was ordained in 1861.

Film negative, c. 1904
Courtesy of Library of Congress, Detroit Publishing Company Photography Collection
Appendix 3: Overview of the Civil War in West Tennessee, 1862

The Western theater saw some of the most bloody and significant battles of the Civil War, and shaped the military career of Ulysses S. Grant, who would eventually win the war for the Union. Tennessee saw the most fighting after Virginia, and was a key state strategically because of its railroads, rivers, industry, and farming. The region sided strongly with the Confederacy, having economies based in cotton and dependent upon slave labor. The Union River Campaign began in late 1861 when Grant began forming a plan to invade Tennessee, and continued until Vicksburg fell in 1863. The Tennessee, Cumberland, and Mississippi Rivers opened for Union troops and supplies; Nashville, Memphis, and Vicksburg came under Union occupation; and the Confederacy was effectively divided in two. Many scholars argue the Confederacy lost the war when it lost the West.¹⁵³

General Albert Sydney Johnston commanded all Confederate forces in the West, which included all territory from the Appalachians to the Ozarks. The Confederacy understood the importance of their western territory but had only 70,000 men to defend it. The Mississippi was heavily fortified, with Columbus, Kentucky, protected by 140 guns looking down on the river from 200-foot bluffs. Downriver there were also fortifications at Island No. 10, Fort Pillow, and Memphis. Additional protection came at Vicksburg and Natchez in Mississippi as well as Baton Rouge and New Orleans in Louisiana.¹⁵⁴

The Mississippi was the most protected river, but the Confederacy also looked after its resources in the central region of the state. Fort Henry's 17 guns on the Tennessee River and Fort Donelson's 40 guns on the Cumberland River protected Middle Tennessee, which was a primary producer of grain, mules, horses, and iron for the South. Clarksville Iron Works was


second in the Confederacy to Tredegar in Richmond, while Nashville was a major producer of
gunpowder and a critical supply depot for Confederate forces in the West. By the end of 1861,
however, these fortifications were unfinished, and the Confederacy would soon learn they were
also badly placed.\textsuperscript{155}

On the Union side, Major General George B. McClellan was appointed General-in-Chief
of the army in November 1861. He appointed two generals to command the 100,000 Union
soldiers in the West. Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell commanded the Department of the
Ohio including Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky east of the Cumberland River, and
Tennessee. Major General Henry W. Halleck commanded the Department of the Missouri
including Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Arkansas, and Kentucky west of the
Cumberland River. While Buell made his headquarters at Cincinnati, Halleck set up a base for
army and navy operations at Cairo, Illinois, the Union’s southernmost city on the Mississippi
River. Here, Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant, an officer generally indifferent to slavery,
commanded the army, and Flag-Officer Andrew Foote, an anti-slavery man from Connecticut,
commanded the navy.\textsuperscript{156}

Illinois boat-builder James B. Eads designed nine ironclads for Union river operations,
constructed in the latter half of 1861. The Union navy also had nine Ellet rams. Designed by
civilian engineer Charles Ellet, Jr., they were fast steamboats with iron rams attached to the
prow. Fast, maneuverable, and destructive, Ellet rams were ideal for narrow river engagements.
Navy ships were commanded by Foote’s naval officers, but their operations fell under the
control of the army. Fortunately, Grant and Foote cooperated well, and their good relationship
would lead to victories on the rivers in the coming years.\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{155} Lea, \textit{Civil War in Tennessee}, 5-7; McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 393-394.
\textsuperscript{156} Lea, \textit{Civil War in Tennessee}, 4-5; McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 392-394.
\textsuperscript{157} McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 392-393, 417.
Grant and Foote determined early in 1862 that Fort Henry was the weakest spot in Johnston’s defensive line across the South. Although Grant requested several times that Halleck allow him and Foote to advance on the fort, Halleck was an overcautious leader with reservations about Grant’s questionable reputation for drinking. Finally, on January 30, 1862, Halleck approved Grant’s request, and on February 2, the fleet departed Cairo with three wooden gunboats, four ironclads, and 15,000 infantry soldiers. When they arrived, they found the fort partially flooded by the high waters of the Tennessee River, leaving only nine of the seventeen guns functional, and occupied by only 2800 Confederates under Brigadier General Lloyd Tilghman. Grant’s Field Orders No. 1 described his plan for the ironclads to bombard the fort from the river while his infantry cut off escape. On February 6th, the ironclads opened fire on the fort while Grant’s men attempted to navigate the muddied roads to their position in the rear. After only an hour and a half, Tilghman realized his position was hopeless and sent 2500 men to safety at Fort Donelson, twelve miles to the east. He stayed behind with a company of artillery to delay the Union forces and allow the escape, but was soon forced to surrender to Foote. Grant’s infantry was so bogged down in the mud, they never arrived to join the fight.\footnote{158}

Following the battle, Grant’s infantry occupied the fort in preparation to advance on Fort Donelson while Foote’s fleet wreaked havoc along the river. \textit{Essex} suffered damage from a Confederate shot at Fort Henry that hit the boiler, so she returned upriver for repairs. Foote’s gunboats destroyed the railroad bridge connecting Confederates at Columbus to those at Bowling Green, then traveled 150 miles to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, destroying bridges and nine Confederate ships along the way. The result of the fall of Fort Henry and the subsequent work of the gunboats was the abandonment of Bowling Green, the division of Johnston’s army, and the possibility of Union attacks on Fort Donelson and Nashville, threatening a complete loss of the resources of Middle Tennessee.\footnote{159}

\footnote{158 Lepa, \textit{Civil War in Tennessee}, 14-16; McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 396-397.}

\footnote{159 Lepa, \textit{Civil War in Tennessee}, 16-19; McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 397-398.}
Johnston, realizing his army's precarious position, sent 12,000 men to reinforce Fort Donelson while he retreated with the rest of his army to Nashville. Fort Donelson was an open fortification, a fifteen-acre stockade with huts and equipment for soldiers. It was protected from a river attack by two batteries of twelve guns each, dug into a 100-foot bluff, and was protected from a land attack by three semi-circles of trenches. Brigadier General John Floyd was in command there, having been removed from command in the Shenandoah Valley after failing to defend it from the Confederate army. Floyd was supported by cavalry under General Nathan Bedford Forrest.\(^{160}\)

On February 12, Grant's 15,000 men arrived at Fort Donelson followed by Foote's fleet. Carondelet was ahead of the fleet and opened fire on February 13. Fort Donelson's guns were more powerful than Fort Henry's had been, and Carondelet was repulsed, as were probing attacks by Grant's infantry. The following day, infantry reinforcements arrived. Foote's ironclads again bombarded the fort, but were repulsed with significant damage, and Grant realized the fort would not be taken as easily as Fort Henry had been. He decided a siege would be more effective than any direct attacks and sent Brigadier General John McClernand's men to the rear to prevent escape.\(^{161}\)

Floyd realized that he was surrounded and outnumbered, but being under federal investigation before the war for using his position as Secretary of War to transfer arms from northern arsenals to southern ones, he did not want to risk capture. On February 15, he ordered an attack on McClernand's troops in an attempt to fight their way out and escape to Nashville on the Clarksville Road. Although the Confederate force, led by Brigadier General Gideon Pillow, initially pushed back the Federals, the tide turned later in the day and McClernand's men held their line. Floyd was determined to escape, and abandoned his men, escaping downriver that night on a gunboat along with about 1500 men. Pillow, next in command, was equally


uninterested in capture and escaped that night as well, taking a skiff with his staff across the river. Command fell next to Brigadier General Simon Bolivar Buckner, who knew surrender was the only option. Forrest, disgusted with the whole scene, took his 700 cavalrymen and escaped through swamps too deep for infantry.\textsuperscript{162}

The following day, Buckner requested surrender terms from Grant, who replied, "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works." Of course, Buckner was forced to accept these terms, although he found them "ungenerous and unchivalrous." Although no official report was made after the fall of Fort Donelson, it is estimated that Grant captured 12,000-15,000 men, 48 pieces of artillery, 17 heavy guns, 2000-4000 horses, and all stores of food and supplies in the fort.\textsuperscript{163}

The consequences of the fall of Fort Donelson were quite severe for the Confederacy. With the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers unprotected, Middle Tennessee was open to Union invasion. Johnston lost a third of his army at Forts Henry and Donelson, and the remainder was divided between Columbus and Nashville with 200 miles and Grant's army in between. In addition, since Brigadier General John Pope's Army of the Mississippi was advancing on Columbus while Buell was on his way to Nashville with his Army of the Ohio, Johnston ordered Nashville evacuated on February 23 with Columbus following a few days later. The Confederates retreated to Corinth, Mississippi, leaving Kentucky and nearly all of Tennessee in Union control.\textsuperscript{164}

Despite Grant's success at Forts Henry and Donelson, he and Halleck had a serious argument in which Halleck accused Grant of abandoning his command without authorization. The argument escalated until Grant requested a transfer and President Abraham Lincoln was


informed of the dispute. Lincoln forced Halleck to decide whether he would make formal charges against Grant. He did not do so, perhaps because he had been appointed commander of the entire west, including Buell, who he had struggled to outshine for months.\textsuperscript{165}

Meanwhile, Confederate Brigadier General Earl Van Dorn, commanding 16,000 men west of the Mississippi River, planned to advance on Missouri from his position in Arkansas, capture St. Louis, then advance on Grant at Fort Donelson. However, Brigadier General Samuel Curtis's 11,000 Federals at Pea Ridge were between Van Dorn and his objective. Van Dorn circled around Curtis's force to attack from the rear, but Curtis's scouts learned of the movement, allowing him to reverse his position. When Van Dorn sent troops under Brigadier General Ben McCullough to lead the attack on March 7, they found themselves facing a prepared Union front rather than an unsuspecting rear. The battle quickly turned against the Confederates, with McCullough killed, as well as his second in command, and his third in command captured. The next day, Van Dorn found his forces low on ammunition, but because he had attempted a rear attack, the Union force lay between his men and their supplies. A charge by the Union line that day scattered the Confederates, and it took nearly two weeks to regather them for the retreat to Corinth with the rest of Johnston's army.\textsuperscript{166}

Grant returned to his troops in mid-March and set up headquarters on the Tennessee River near Savannah, Tennessee, where Halleck ordered Grant and Buell to meet. Halleck intended to assume command of the combined 75,000 men near Pittsburg Landing and then advance on Johnston in Corinth. Meanwhile Johnston had gathered about 42,000 men in Corinth, including his own 27,000 men and 15,000 reinforcements which Confederate President Jefferson Davis sent from the Gulf Coast. Brigadier General Pierre Gustave Toutant

\textsuperscript{165} Lepa, \textit{Civil War in Tennessee}, 34-41.

\textsuperscript{166} McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 404-406.
Beauregard, Johnston's second in command, convinced him it would be wise to attack Grant at Pittsburg Landing while he was there with only 40,000 men, and then advance on Buell's force of 35,000. They set out for Pittsburg Landing on April 3.\(^{167}\)

By April 5, Buell had reached Savannah, and Grant had five divisions at Pittsburg Landing with a sixth under Brigadier General Lew Wallace five miles north guarding supplies. The Union position at Pittsburg was strong, protected by dense woods, thick underbrush, streams, and ravines, with Snake Creek and Owl Creek on the right and the Tennessee River and Lick Creek on the left offering protection from flanking movements. However, the Union forces were offensive-minded. The Confederates had been easily defeated at Fort Henry, Fort Donelson, and Nashville, so the Federals did not expect them to advance from Corinth. They built only simple earthworks on their front and their pickets were only slightly advanced from the position.\(^{168}\)

When the Confederate forces attacked on April 6, Brigadier General William Tecumseh Sherman and Brigadier General Benjamin Prentiss were caught completely off-guard. Intense fighting lasted all day, and by day's end Grant's five divisions at the landing had been pushed back to the river, and Prentiss and his 2200 survivors had been captured. The Confederacy also suffered a heavy loss that day — Johnston had been killed.\(^{169}\)

That night, Union reinforcements under Wallace and Buell arrived. With these fresh troops, Grant renewed the attack the following morning. The Confederates, who were unaware of the reinforcements and believed they had defeated Grant soundly, were surprised by the attack and were pushed back to their original line at the Shiloh Church. Beauregard knew his men could not hold the position, so they retreated to Corinth. The next day, Sherman attempted to pursue them. They came upon a camp of Forrest's cavalry, and although Sherman greatly


outnumbered Forrest, Forrest ordered a charge. After a brief battle, Sherman returned to Pittsburg Landing; the Battle of Fallen Timbers ended the engagement at Shiloh.\footnote{Lepa, \textit{Civil War in Tennessee}, 64-76; McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 410-413.}

Like Fort Donelson, Shiloh had severe consequences. This was the first battle with serious casualties; 20,000 men were killed or wounded, more than all previous engagements of the River Campaign combined. The North began to see the war would not be a short conflict, an easily subdued rebellion, but rather a war in which only “complete conquest” would save the Union. Northerners were so shocked by the casualties that they again attacked Grant, despite his victory, accusing him of drunkenness. Lincoln came to his defense, however, saying, "I can't spare this man; he fights." Southerners were also horrified by the results of the battle, and condemned Beauregard for not fighting in the evening of April 6, when he refused to authorize another attack due to his men's exhaustion and the South's apparent victory. Shiloh was certainly a turning point of the war for the West.\footnote{Ulysses S. Grant, \textit{Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant} (New York: The Century Co., 1885), 368; McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 413-414.}

Meanwhile, Pope's Army of the Mississippi was advancing on the Confederate forces retreating from Columbus. He and Foote advanced downriver to Island No. 10, so named for being tenth in a line of islands reaching into the Mississippi from the mouth of the Ohio River. It was protected by 7000 Confederates and at least fifty guns. It was part of fortifications intended to hold the river between there and Vicksburg, Mississippi, including the important railroads and industries at Memphis. Pope determined an ironclad must run the guns to cut off the supply lines from downriver. Commander Henry Walke volunteered for this task, and on April 4, \textit{Carondelet} successfully made it to the other side with the help of cover from a thunderstorm. On April 6, two more ironclads followed, and Pope began to ferry his infantry across the river. They surrounded the fort and the Confederates surrendered on April 7. With Island No. 10 under
Union control, Foote and a few regiments continued downriver to Memphis while Pope marched to Pittsburg Landing.\textsuperscript{172}

Halleck intended to advance on Corinth with Pope, Grant, and Buell. They departed Pittsburg Landing May 1, but fearing another surprise attack, Halleck advanced slowly, marching only short distances before entrenching. Beauregard knew that over 100,000 federals were advancing on his position, and that his sick and exhausted army could withstand neither attack nor siege. On May 25, he evacuated to Tupelo, and when Halleck arrived a few days later, he found Beauregard's army had gone.\textsuperscript{173}

Davis was furious with Beauregard for retreating again. While Beauregard was on sick leave that June, Davis replaced him with Major General Braxton Bragg, who took the Army of Tennessee to invade Kentucky. The Union army also saw a change in command that summer; after McClellan's Peninsula Campaign failed, Lincoln replaced him with Halleck as Commander-in-Chief. Halleck then reorganized the western forces, sending Pope's Army of the Mississippi to garrison Corinth, Buell's Army of the Ohio to protect Nashville and Kentucky, and Grant to Memphis to prevent any Confederate attempts to retake West Tennessee or the Mississippi River.\textsuperscript{174}

After the fall of Island No. 10, the next Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi was Fort Pillow, fifty miles north of Memphis. It was protected by 40 guns and the Confederacy's navy of eight "cottonclads," steamships fitted with iron rams and protected with bales of cotton the decks. On May 10, the cottonclads advanced north of Fort Pillow toward Plum Run Bend, surprising the Union fleet and putting two ironclads temporarily out of service. A few days later Ellet arrived with his Ellet rams, but found Fort Pillow had been abandoned; with Corinth


\textsuperscript{173} McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 415-417.

\textsuperscript{174} McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 417.
abandoned, the Confederates at Fort Pillow were vulnerable to land attack and had retreated to Memphis.\textsuperscript{175}

Davis’s fleet, five ironclads and four Ellet rams, advanced downriver to Memphis, arriving on June 6. The only defense for the city was James Montgomery’s fleet of eight cottonclads, now that the fortifications upriver had fallen and Corinth had been abandoned. Civilians from the city lined the riverbanks to watch the clash between the fleets. In less than two hours, to the dismay of the audience, the Confederate fleet was destroyed, with only one ship escaping downriver. Union forces occupied Memphis, making it a base of operations, and Davis’s ships continued south toward Vicksburg.\textsuperscript{176}

The Union attacked the Mississippi not only from the north, but from the south as well. Since Davis sent all defenses from the Gulf Coast to Corinth before Johnston’s advance on Pittsburg Landing, New Orleans was not well defended; there were only 3000 short-term militia, a few small river batteries south of the city, twelve small gunboats, and two unfinished ironclads. The city’s defenses relied on the 126 guns of Fort Jackson and Fort St. Philip. Union Flag-Officer David Glasgow Farragut advanced on New Orleans in early April with eight steam sloops, one sailing sloop, fourteen gunboats, nineteen mortar boats, and 15,000 men under Benjamin Butler. They arrived in early April, and the mortar boats opened fire on Forts Jackson and Philip. Despite bombarding the fort with 3000 shells a day, the mortar boats had little effect. On April 24, Farragut prepared to run the guns with seventeen of his ships. All but four made it through relatively undamaged. The Union ships destroyed the Confederate fleet, the crews of the Rebel ironclads destroyed them to prevent their capture, the fort garrisons surrendered, and the militia in New Orleans scattered. The civilians of the town, however, refused surrender, and angry mobs gathered to keep the Union forces at bay. Despite their efforts, on April 29, Farragut

\textsuperscript{175} McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 417-418.

\textsuperscript{176} McPherson, \textit{Battle Cry of Freedom}, 417-418.
sent the marines to raise the United States flag over public buildings, and on May 1, Butler’s troops entered the city. Farragut’s fleet then continued upriver and received the surrender of Baton Rouge and Natchez, Mississippi, both of which were without fortification and surrendered to avoid destruction.  

Farragut’s fleet arrived in Vicksburg on May 18 and sent a message requesting the city’s surrender, but the garrison and citizens of Vicksburg were determined not to give in. Colonel James Autry, military governor of the city, replied to the Union fleet’s request, “Mississippians don’t know, and refuse to learn, how to surrender... if Commodore Farragut... can teach them, let [him] come and try.”

Foote’s fleet joined Farragut the last week of June, and with their combined 200 guns and 23 mortars, they bombarded the garrison. However, the city stood on 200-foot bluffs, and the bombardment did little damage. Farragut determined it could not be taken that way, but an infantry attack up the bluffs was also impossible, as Van Dorn’s infantry held the city. The only way to attack the city would be with a large land force attacking from the rear while the fleet blockaded the river. Therefore, Butler’s men, with the help of contraband slaves, began work on a new canal to allow the fleet to surround the fort. They intended to start the cut and then allow the river to flow through to create a wide channel. However, the summer was too dry and the river levels were too low for their plan to be effective.

Then the Confederates surprised the Union fleet. In mid-July, the only surviving southern ironclad, Arkansas, advanced downriver and attacked Farragut’s ships. It managed to disable Carondelet and one of the Ellet rams before reaching the safety of Vicksburg’s guns. With his wooden ships vulnerable to this Confederate ironclad, many of his men falling ill with typhoid, dysentery, or malaria, the canal project not working, and river levels still dropping, Farragut

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177 McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 418-420.
178 McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 420.
179 McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom, 420-421.
decided to abandon Vicksburg for the summer. On July 26, 1862, Farragut's fleet returned south.  

After Halleck was promoted Commander-in-Chief following McClellan's failed Peninsula Campaign in Virginia, Grant became commander of the forces in the West and moved his headquarters to Corinth. The western troops had been scattered across Tennessee and Kentucky, so Grant spent a great deal of time entrenching Corinth and protecting the western railroads.  

Van Dorn had a large force south of Grant's position, and a number of skirmishes took place in the late summer months. By September 4, Sherman was commanding Grant's right at Memphis, with Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans on the left at Corinth. On September 7, Grant discovered forces under Van Dorn as well as another force under Major General Sterling Price were planning to move on Corinth. On September 13, Price approached Iuka. The Union troops were too few to make a stand against Price's 15,000 men, and the next day the Federals evacuated.  

Grant decided to attack Price at Iuka before he either advanced on Corinth or was reinforced by Van Dorn. He planned for 9000 men under Rosecrans to advance on Iuka from the south, while 8000 men under Major General Edward Ord attacked from the north. Price discovered the plan, however. On September 18, he attacked Ord outside Iuka but was driven back. Rosecrans, meanwhile, was slowed by bad road conditions and unable to come to Ord's aid. The next day, Rosecrans found his own fight, and suffered heavy losses although he did  

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not give up his position. Rosecrans renewed the attack in the morning, and advanced into luka
to find Price had evacuated overnight to join Van Dorn.\footnote{183}

Grant learned that Van Dorn was planning to strike Grant's forces again, and called for
Major General James B. McPherson and Major General Stephen Hurlbut to reinforce Rosecrans
at Corinth. Van Dorn decided to attack Rosecrans before the reinforcements arrived, putting
himself in a position to simply defend Corinth from McPherson and Hurlbut. On October 3, Van
Dorn's 22,000 men attacked, but Rosecrans's 21,000 men were able to hold the position until
McPherson's men arrived the next day. Van Dorn retreated but met with the combined forces of
Ord and Hurlbut at the Hatchie Bridge. The Federals were able to hold the bridge, forcing the
Confederates to seek another escape route. Rosecrans failed to pursue until the next day, and
then he took a path different from that taken by Van Dorn, allowing the Confederates to
escape.\footnote{184}

On October 25, 1862, Grant was given command of the Army of the Tennessee, and by
early November had enough men, about 48,500, to go on the offensive. November 4 he took
control of Grand Junction, Tennessee. Here he gave Chaplain John Eaton the task of
organizing the slaves fleeing to the Union lines. The army issued an order prohibiting soldiers
returning runaway slaves to their masters, so they flooded Union camps, which prevented the
army from advancing. Aside from the military need to act, Grant felt "humanity forbade allowing
them to starve," and appointed Eaton to see to their organization and care. Eaton soon had
them harvesting crops and cotton, as well as cutting wood for steamships on the Mississippi
River. Once they were self-sufficient, military operations could continue, and Grant turned his
attention to Vicksburg, the last Confederate fortification on the Mississippi and the only
connection between southern states divided by the river.\footnote{185}

\footnote{185} Grant, \textit{Personal Memoirs}, 349-351.
Union victories at Fort Donelson and Shiloh opened the Western theater to Federal control and changed perceptions of the war. The River Campaign of 1862 also shaped the military career of Ulysses S. Grant, who laid the foundations for the Freedmen's Bureau at contraband camps in West Tennessee and went on to capture the last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi in 1863, earning him the rank of Lieutenant General and Commander-in-Chief of the Union army. Many scholars agree the Confederacy lost the war when they lost the West, and the argument is easy to see: the Union gained control of the Mississippi, dividing the Confederacy in two; the Confederacy's most promising general, Albert Sidney Johnston, was killed in battle at Shiloh; and the man who would eventually win the war for the North learned many valuable lessons while fighting – and winning – in the Western theater.
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