

## Blacks Who Fought For the South

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Most historical accounts portray Southern blacks as anxiously awaiting President Abraham Lincoln's "liberty-dispensing troops" marching south in the War Between the States. But there's more to the story; let's look at it.

Black Confederate military units, both as freemen and slaves, fought federal troops. Louisiana free blacks gave their reason for fighting in a letter written to New Orleans' Daily Delta: "The free colored population love their home, their property, their own slaves and recognize no other country than Louisiana, and are ready to shed their blood for her defense. They have no sympathy for Abolitionism; no love for the North, but they have plenty for Louisiana. They will fight for her in 1861 as they fought in 1814-15." As to bravery, one black scolded the commanding general of the state militia, saying, "Pardon me, general, but the only cowardly blood we have got in our veins is the white blood."

Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest had slaves and freemen serving in units under his command. After the war, Forrest said of the black men who served under him, "These boys stayed with me.. - and better Confederates did not live." Articles in "Black Southerners in Gray," edited by Richard Rollins, gives numerous accounts of blacks serving as fighting men or servants in every battle from Gettysburg to Vicksburg.

Professor Ed Smith, director of American Studies at American University, says Stonewall Jackson had 3,000 fully equipped black troops scattered throughout his corps at Antietam - the war's bloodiest battle. Mr. Smith calculates that between 60,000 and 93,000 blacks served the Confederacy in some capacity. They fought for the same reason they fought in previous wars and wars afterward: "to position themselves. They had to prove they were patriots in the hope the future would be better ... they hoped to be rewarded."

Many knew Lincoln had little love for enslaved blacks and didn't wage war against the South for their benefit. Lincoln made that plain, saying, "I will say, then, that I am not, nor have ever been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races ... I am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race." The very words of his 1863 Emancipation Proclamation revealed his deceit and cunning; it freed those slaves held "within any State or designated part of a State the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States." It didn't apply to slaves in West Virginia and areas and states not in rebellion. Like Gen. Ulysses Grant's slaves, they had to wait for the 13th Amendment, Grant explained why he didn't free his slaves earlier, saying, "Good help is so hard to come by these days."

Lincoln waged war to "preserve the Union". The 1783 peace agreement with England (Treaty of Paris] left 13 sovereign nations. They came together in 1787, as

principals, to create a federal government, as their agent, giving it specific delegated authority -specified in our Constitution. Principals always retain the right to fire their agent. The South acted on that right when it seceded. Its firing on Fort Sumter, federal property, gave Lincoln the pretext needed for the war.

The War Between the States, through force of arms, settled the question of secession, enabling the federal government to run roughshod over states' rights specified by the Constitution's 10th Amendment.

Sons of Confederate Veterans is a group dedicated to giving a truer account of the War Between the States. I'd like to see it erect on Richmond's Monument Avenue a statue of one of the thousands of black Confederate soldiers.

Source: This article appeared in the Washington Times some years back. It was written by Walter Williams, an economics professor at George Mason University, a nationally syndicated columnist, an African-American, and one of the most effective speakers I have ever heard!

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