

## **The Matchless Devotion of Black Confederates**

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### The Battle against Politically Correct Chains - Part 2 of 2 of a Series

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As I wrote last week in part 1 of this series, perhaps the best estimate of the number of both free and bonded blacks serving in the Confederate Army during the Civil War is about 65,000. This estimate came from Scott K. Williams' comprehensive article, *Black Confederates Heritage*, written in 1998 and still available on the internet. Of an estimated 1.0 million men that served in the Confederate Army and Navy, this is about 6.5 percent. However, Williams' estimate may not have sufficiently accounted for the large number of black teamsters vitally important to supporting Confederate supply lines.

Supply wagons of both sides were a favorite target for destruction or capture by cavalry of both sides, and the success in these interdiction was eagerly reported by cavalry leaders on both sides. Teamsters were the Army truck drivers of their time and should certainly be counted as military personnel. This is probably why several estimates of the number of Black Confederates run over 100,000. The vast majority of the 193,000 blacks serving in the Union Army served in the 175 almost exclusively black regiments of the United States Colored Troops, amounting to nearly 9 percent of 2.2 million men who served in the Union armed forces

Contrary to fashionable academic and media opinion, Confederate blacks were generally more enthusiastic and dependable supporters of the Southern cause than were their Federal counterparts to the Union cause. In the vast majority of cases there remained a strong bond of affection between master and slave, and Southern blacks identified more with the South, their homes, and familiar and friendly relationships than with Yankee promises. Late in the war, according to a letter to General Richard S. Ewell from F. W. Hancock, a group of slaves working at a Confederate hospital were asked if they would be willing to take up arms against an impending attack by Federal forces. Sixty out of 72 responded that they "would go to the trenches and fight the enemy to the bitter end."

This is probably related to the account of Confederate Lt. Col. Shipp of the Jackson Battalion that included two companies of black soldiers in the defense of Petersburg, who praised their loyalty and performance:

**"My men acted with utmost promptness and goodwill...Allow me to state sir that they behaved in an extraordinary acceptable manner."**

It is true that over 500,000 of 3.5 million black slaves crossed over to the Union lines as Federal armies arrived in their area, but many of these had nowhere else to go. Sherman and Sheridan's total war tactics were devastating farms, homes, food, and all means of survival. According to several reports, most of these preferred to return to their masters within weeks. Elizabeth Keckley, seamstress and friend to Mary Todd Lincoln in the White House, in her autobiography, commented on the disappointment and despair of newly emancipated slaves arriving in the North during the war:

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On visiting them, they would crowd around me with pitiful stories of distress. Often I heard them declare that they would rather go back to slavery in the South and be with their old masters than to enjoy the freedom of the North. I believe they were sincere in their declarations.

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Union records indicate that forcing Southern blacks into the Federal Army at bayonet point was common place. About 135,000 of 193,000 blacks in the Union Army were from Southern states. Many were enthusiastic for their new cause and new masters, but many were not. Many were very conflicted by the ordeal. The March 21, 1864, issue of the Fayetteville Observer carried a story of a black Union soldier that refused to fire into a Confederate regiment, saying:

**“My young master is thar; and I played with him all my life and he has saved me from getting a many whipping I would have got, and I can’t shoot thar, for I loves my young master still.”**

This sort of behavior perplexed Union troops, who had come to believe they were liberating blacks from terrible oppression. It fully exasperated Northern abolitionists. One Northern journal, shocked by Union losses inflicted by black Confederates at Manassas in 1861, editorialized:

**“The war has dispelled one delusion of the abolitionists. The Negroes regard them as enemies instead of friends. No insurrection has occurred in the South—no important stampede of slaves has evinced their desire for freedom. On the contrary, they have jeered at and insulted our troops, have readily enlisted in the rebel army and on Sunday at Manassas, shot down our men with as much alacrity as if abolitionism had never existed.”**

These remarks may refer in part to the "Richmond Howitzers," which was partially manned by black militiamen. They saw action at First Manassas (Bull Run) where they operated battery number 2. **“Many colored people were killed in the action”**, recorded John Parker, a former slave.

This is the very same reaction black slaves showed during the American Revolution, where they fought for and loyally supported American Colonial regiments, even though the British offered them freedom if they fought for them. Williams estimates that about 13,000 black Confederates engaged in direct combat with Union troops.

The famous black abolitionist and scholar Frederick Douglas reported,

**“There are at the present moment many Colored men in the Confederate Army doing duty not only as cooks, servants and laborers, but real soldiers, having musket on their shoulders, and bullets in their pockets, ready to shoot down any loyal troops and do all that soldiers may do to destroy the Federal government and build up that of the...rebels.”**

Confederate blacks mostly served in scattered integrated units, but near the end of the war, the Confederate Government finally called for raising 300,000 black troops for special Confederate

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The reward was to be freedom. Before the fall of Richmond, 83% of Richmond's male slave population volunteered for Confederate duty.  
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Scott K. Williams' 1998 article is still posted on the Sterling Price 145 (Missouri) Sons of Confederate Veterans website. It contains many details of pension and roster records and accounts of events and accounts of the courageous loyalty and contributions of Black Confederates. Please read it at <http://www.pricecamp.org/media.php?id=98> while you can. It absolutely refutes the political correct Neo-Marxist dogma that Black Confederate soldiers are a Confederate myth. It is also a good source of books and other reference material on the subject.

This is a great scholarly contribution by Missouri Sons of Confederate Veterans. Missouri is one of the 13 Southern States represented on the Confederate Battle Flag. About 80 percent of Missouri's population were first or second generation immigrants from the South in 1860. Over 90,000 Missouri men served the Confederate cause, and there were more than 1,200 combat actions in Missouri during the war. Please read "The Un-Civil War in Missouri," a chapter of my own book, *The Un-Civil War: Shattering the Historical Myths*.

In addition to Williams' references in *Black Confederates Heritage*, I would add *Black Confederates*, edited by C.K. Barrows, H.H. Segars, and R.B. Rosenberg, published in 2004.

I must sadly report that the most recent and prominently placed additions to the internet on the subject of Black Confederates deny the reality of widespread black loyalty in the Confederacy and support the usual false narratives of the war. These are generally tied to the politics and agendas of the Left. Powerfully endowed Leftist manipulators now dominate the internet, and that dominance is increasing in scope and coercive use and capabilities. Crushing the truth is always the beginning of political slavery and tyranny. Lies and cover-ups do not promote social harmony, freedom, or prosperity for long.

Post war and modern propaganda has buried an important part of American history, the matchless devotion of most Southern blacks to their masters and to the Southern cause of independence. White Southerners have great reason to appreciate the steadfast loyalty that black slaves and freemen showed them during the terrible ordeal of the Civil War. Blacks faithfully watched after their farms and families during the war. They fought side by side with them and supported them with the last drop of sweat and blood on many fields of honor. Black Southerners have as much reason to take pride in their Southern and Confederate heritage as their white compatriots. Why not do so together? There is nothing sinful about mutual affection and respect. Indeed, the Bible says that Christians will be known for their love for each other. Slavery is gone now, and no one outside of a madhouse regrets it. But what have we gained if freedom and mutual affection are lost? Let the Southern Cross be a symbol of liberty and brotherhood.

If you would like more information or a speaker on Black Confederates, I recommend H.K. Edgerton, whose website is [www.southernheritage411.com](http://www.southernheritage411.com) and can be contacted at [hk.edgerton@gmail.com](mailto:hk.edgerton@gmail.com).