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SLAVERY'S END IN EAST TENNESSEE

By John Cimprich

Say the words "southern slavery," and most people imagine blacks picking cotton on a large Deep South plantation. One does not ordinarily think of slavery on the small, diversified farms of upland East Tennessee. Yet 9% of the region's population in 1860 consisted of slaves. The subsequent war years changed their lives as much as it changed the lives of those in the Cotton Belt. Slavery in East Tennessee ended in a manner very similar to that in other Federally occupied areas, unravelling from within. Its normal operation was disrupted by war, and by 1863 Union forces actively encouraged the institution's deterioration.¹

Two factors had a distinctive effect on this process in East Tennessee. First, slaves were mostly owned in units of nine or fewer, contrary to the lower South's general pattern in which most slaves belonged to masters with ten or more bondsmen. A mere 3% of all East Tennessee masters held twenty or more slaves; only one owned more than two hundred. The dominant pattern of small slaveholdings made personal master and slave relationships likely, something that was not necessarily to a slave's benefit. While it might lead to an intimately warm relationship, it could also result in suffocatingly constrictive and cruel treatment. Slave disloyalty during the war aroused much white hostility partly because masters felt re-

¹U. S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Population* (Washington, 1861), 466-67. General studies of slavery's end are Bell I. Wiley, *Southern Negroes, 1861-1865* (New Haven, 1938) and Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York, 1979). Works which deal with the process in Tennessee are David W. Bowen, "Andrew Johnson and the Negro" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1976); Charles F. Bryan, Jr., "The Civil War in East Tennessee: A Social, Political, and Economic Study" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Tennessee, 1978); John Cimprich, "Slavery Amidst Civil War in Tennessee: The Death of an Institution" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1977); Bobby L. Lovett, "The Negro in Tennessee: A Socio-Military History of the Civil War Era" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Arkansas, 1978); Bobby L. Lovett, "The Negro's Civil War in Tennessee, 1861-1865," *Journal of Negro History*, LXI (1976), 36-50.

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jected in a personal way. Yet, at the same time, the small slave population limited the black dissidents' economic and political power. The other distinguishing factor in the death of East Tennessee slavery was the region's reluctance to support the Confederacy. Unionists originally wanted to preserve both slavery and the Union, but the Federal government's gradual shift to an emancipation policy forced most of its southern allies to follow suit. So, slavery's end in East Tennessee involved both a very personalized struggle within the institution and the reluctant conversion of most voters to emancipation.²

Shortly after the war began, East Tennessee's obvious Unionism led to a two year period of Confederate military occupation. The small number of slaves in the region did not motivate the Rebel regime to make extraordinary efforts to keep them under control. Chattanooga's municipal government, for example, simply set a stricter evening curfew for blacks, and a Confederate commander in Washington County ordered rigid compliance with the existing pass system for slaves. The army decided to open a central depot in Knoxville for the return of recaptured fugitive slaves, but probably never implemented the plan. In 1863, retreating troops moved such a depot from Middle Tennessee to Chattanooga for a short time before withdrawing into Georgia.³

Although no unusual problems in maintaining slave discipline occurred before Federal occupation, the situation did frighten some civilians. In 1861, fears of an insurrection in Hawkins County caused more intense patrolling than usual, and two blacks were sentenced to hang. No uprising occurred; East Tennessee slaves in all probability understood the foolhardiness of violent resistance in a society dominated by whites. Insurrection was also impractical, for, even though masters fleeing the Federal advance brought more slaves into the region, the slave population remained small and scattered. A few individuals murdered their masters in isolated acts of personal

²1860 U.S. Census: Population, 238-39; James W. Patton, *Unionism and Reconstruction in Tennessee, 1860-1869* (Chapel Hill, 1934), 67-68; Knoxville *Whig*, June 8, 1861; LeRoy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins, eds., *The Papers of Andrew Johnson* (6 vols. to date, Knoxville, 1967-), IV, 160-62. The situation in East Tennessee closely resembled that in West Virginia and northwest Arkansas.

³Gilbert E. Govan and James W. Livingood, *The Chattanooga Country, 1540-1962: From Tomahawks to T.V.A.* (2nd ed., Chapel Hill, 1963), 183-84; Jonesborough *Union*, May 24, 1861; U. S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (131 vols., Washington, 1880-1901), Series 2, Vol. 5, pp. 844, 959.

revenge, but the bold ones generally preferred to escape to Federal lines.⁴

During the fall of 1863, as Federal invaders took all of East Tennessee except its northeasternmost corner, slavery began to break down. Some fleeing secessionists abandoned their bondsmen. Many slaves ran away from both secessionist and Unionist masters in search of freedom. A master's inhumanity pushed Richard into flight from Jonesboro during the depths of winter. The effort ended tragically with severe frostbite, surrender, and eventual amputation of his feet. Martha, of Loudon County, asked her owner to start paying her the relatively low sum of \$50 a year. When he refused, she left to work for someone else who would provide compensation. Jourdon, a runaway from Big Spring, renounced servitude not only because he had received nothing in return for his labor, but also because his masters had forced his daughters into sexual intercourse with them.⁵ Thus, desires to escape cruel treatment, to gain new opportunities, or to accomplish both goals motivated fugitive slaves to flee.

In efforts to retain control over slaves, masters resorted to several tactics. Ebenezer Johnson of Loudon County called in his slave Henry for a very emotional meeting in which both men reaffirmed their obligations to each other under the institution's paternalistic ideals: Johnson promised to provide subsistence and protection while Henry vowed to serve faithfully in return. This personalized approach succeeded with Henry but not with his wife, who deserted both her master and husband after several bitter arguments. Some slaveholders used force, although not always with success. One of Johnson's neighbors recaptured several runaway women and children, only to find himself confronted by angry male fugitives who released them and severely beat him. The only sure method for keeping blacks in bondage was to move them behind Confederate lines. One slave, taken deep into Rebel territory in the state's mountainous northeast

⁴Bryan, "Civil War in East Tennessee," 304-5, 318-19; Catherine Watterson to W. H. Watterson, May 20, 1861, Watterson Family Papers, McClung Collection, Knox County Library, Knoxville, Tenn.; Charles W. Cansler, *Three Generations: The Story of a Colored Family of East Tennessee* (n. p., 1939), 888-67; *Athens Post*, March 7, 1862; *Knoxville Register*, March 21, 1863. Together the *Knoxville Register* and *Chattanooga Rebel* ran an average of four new fugitive slave advertisements per month from April, 1862-September, 1863.

⁵*New York Tribune*, October 21, 1863; S. E. Griffith to Clinton B. Fisk, September 18, 1865, Registered Letters Received by the Assistant Commissioner for Ky. and Tenn., Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (BRFAL): RG 105 National Archives; Mary Reynolds to Simeon Reynolds, February 10, May 1, 1864, Mary Reynolds Papers, Special Collections, University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville, Tenn.; L. Maria Child, *The Freedmen's Book* (Boston, 1865), 265-67.

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corner, was completely removed from the war until its end.⁶

Successful runaways, called contrabands by the Federals, concentrated in Knoxville, Chattanooga, and other occupied towns. A white resident of Chattanooga wrote: "The town is so crowded with them we have but a slim showing . . . It is so diffrant [*sic*] from what it used to be." Military officials allowed some contrabands into quarters established for white Unionist refugees, but most had to live in tents, abandoned buildings, or shanties of their own construction. In late 1864 the army built a large camp for refugees of both colors, but a few months later authorities segregated blacks into a camp across the Tennessee River from Chattanooga. A lumber shortage forced many of the blacks to build and live in sod huts. Federal authorities began construction of a similar camp across the river from Knoxville but abandoned the project. Most black refugees there remained in a shantytown on the west side of the city, although they cultivated a large communal garden at the site of the unfinished camp. In both Knoxville and Chattanooga, the wartime influx of fugitive slaves significantly increased black urban populations.⁷

Town life created new religious, educational, and economic opportunities for runaways. A Chattanooga contraband told a northern reformer that what he wanted most and had obtained from town life had been the ability to attend black religious meetings without white regulation or supervision. Northern freedmen's aid societies and several Knoxville blacks opened schools. Alfred Anderson, a free black preacher, compensated for his inadequate education with hard work: "I fealt that this pepel must be traind for I knew tha wair humans. I sacrafised my bisness [to teach]." Besides a chance for personal development, towns offered job opportunities with both private employers and the Federal government.⁸

⁶Mary Reynolds to Simeon Reynolds, February 16, May 1, 1864, Reynolds Papers; George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (41 vols., Westport, Conn., 1972-79), XI, "Tennessee Narratives," 9.

⁷E. P. Tiner to J. S. Tiner, August 1, 1864, Andrew Johnson Papers, Library of Congress; Chattanooga *Gazette*, November 25, 26, December 4, 11, 1864; Lyman W. Ayer to M. E. Strieby, February 18, 1864, American Missionary Association Archives, Armistad Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans, La.; Cincinnati *Gazette*, February 17, 1864; R. D. Mussey to T. J. Morgan, April 26, 1864, Letters Sent by the Commissioner for the Organization of U. S. Colored Troops, Vol. 220/227, DC, 81, Records of the U. S. Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920 (USACC); RG 393 National Archives; Howard Rabinowitz, *Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890* (New York, 1978), 128-29, contends that the contraband programs of the Federal army and of northern philanthropists began southern segregation.

⁸Elvira J. Powers, *Hospital Pencilings* (Boston, 1866), 112; R. W. McGranahan, ed., *Historical Sketch of the Freedmen's Missions of the United Presbyterian Church, 1862-1904* (Knoxville, 1904), 22; Alfred Anderson to W. E. Whiting, April 25, 1865, American Missionary Association Archives.

From the perspective of their changing status, the most important contraband occupation was soldiering. Motivated by military expediency and antislavery feelings, Federal officials opened recruiting stations at Pikeville and Chattanooga in December, 1863. Almost as soon as a runaway arrived in those towns a recruiter tried to talk him into enlistment. A Knoxville station opened a month later with a different strategy, conscription of both slaves and contrabands. The practice later spread throughout Federally occupied East Tennessee.⁹ Slaveholders stiffly opposed either voluntary or involuntary enlistment of their chattel. The pro-Confederate Ebenezer Johnson promised to do everything possible to keep his slave Henry out of the army, while another secessionist unsuccessfully tried to bribe an enlisted runaway into deserting. East Tennessee Unionists, many of whom were opposed to emancipation and black soldiering, used their political power to limit the amount of recruiting in the Knoxville area. Both Unionist and secessionist masters knew that arming former slaves marked a big step from bondage to freedom and raised the possibility of a higher social status for blacks.¹⁰

Enlistment made a difference in a contraband's life. He could now bear arms without obtaining the permit required by the slave code. The Federal army built up the recruit's pride in his military appearance and performance. As a member of occupation forces, he held a certain amount of power, unlike a slave. A black sergeant from Jefferson County chose to prevent his men from sacking his former owner's plantation. Another soldier took his former mistress to bid her sister farewell at the Knoxville train station, a place civilians could enter only with a military escort. Blacks benefited from the service in other ways as well. Many had an opportunity to build up small savings in company banks or to acquire some education in schools taught by chaplains and officers.¹¹

Despite some improvement in status, black troops had great difficulty winning respect. White soldiers frequently insulted or attacked

⁹Nashville *Union*, December 5, 1863; Knoxville *Whig and Rebel Ventilator*, January 16, 1864; Nashville *Press*, April 21, 1864; Chattanooga *Gazette*, November 23, 1864.

¹⁰Mary Reynolds to Simeon Reynolds, February 16, 1864, Reynolds Papers; John A. Shannon to H. H. Deane, May 27, 1864, 1st U. S. Colored Artillery Letterbook, 26-27, Records of the Adjutant General's Office (AGO): RG 94 National Archives; J. R. Putnam to R. D. Mussey, July 18, 1864, 42nd U. S. Colored Infantry Letterbook (unpaged), AGO.

¹¹Chattanooga *Gazette*, March 14, 1864; Thomas J. Morgan, *Reminiscences of Service With Colored Troops in the Army of the Cumberland, 1863-1865* (Providence, R. I., 1885), 20-24; Rawick, *American Slave*, Supplementary Series 1, Vol. 5, p. 315; Martha L. Mitchell Memoir, Tennessee State Library and Archives (TSLA), Nashville, Tenn.

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them. One white officer removed two of his men from a post jail because black sentries guarded it. Until June, 1864, the army paid blacks less than whites. During the first half of the year, a black brigade at Chattanooga protested by refusing to accept any pay. Nevertheless, the unit built fortifications and hauled supplies because Major General George H. Thomas, commander of the Department of the Cumberland, believed that blacks lacked the courage necessary to fight in battle. Col. Thomas J. Morgan, the brigade's commander, filed an official complaint about the denial of field service, but Thomas refused to budge and even threatened Morgan with dismissal if he continued to protest. Thomas Cole, a private in the unit, perceived the matter in personalized terms: "when dey went to battle I was always left in camp ter helps take care of de supplies. General Thomas calls me a coward."¹²

Events during the second half of 1864 brought black troops into field service, although they rarely clashed with Confederate troops. The 14th U.S. Colored Infantry from Morgan's brigade fruitlessly pursued Major General Joseph Wheeler's Confederate raiders through East Tennessee. The rest of the brigade fought in northern Georgia or Middle Tennessee against Major General John B. Hood's Confederate offensive. Fearing that Hood would attack Chattanooga, Federal officials mustered all able bodied men from both races into active militia duty. Since the southerners bypassed the town, the militia did nothing more than hold drills.

The amount of damage done to slavery in the region by Federal recruitment, employment, and protection of runaways cannot be precisely determined, but by the end of the war, the institution probably suffered some damage everywhere. Only after slavery had deteriorated did some Unionist politicians seriously begin to consider emancipation. The matter lay in their hands because they had convinced President Abraham Lincoln to exempt Tennessee from his famous Emancipation Proclamation. During 1863 continuing pressure from Lincoln moved the state's two leading Unionists, Military Governor Andrew Johnson and Knoxville *Whig and Rebel Ventilator* editor William G. Brownlow to call for the institution's

¹²Henry Romeyn, *With Colored Troops in the Army of the Cumberland* (n. p., 1904), 12-14; Austin O. Lym to a superior, August 14, 1865, Register of Letters Received by the District of East Tennessee, Vol. 2, DET, 244, USACC; Morgan, *Reminiscences*, 22-24; T. J. Morgan to Lorenzo Thomas, July 20, 1864, Letters Received by the Colored Troops Division, AGO; W. D. Whipple to T. J. Morgan, August 9, 1864, Letters Sent by the Department of the Cumberland, Vol. 9, DC, 442-43, USACC; Rawick, *American Slave*, Supplementary Series, 2, Vol. 3, p. 818.

¹³Romeyn, *With Colored Troops*, 14-16; Chattanooga *Gazette*, December 17, 20, 1864.

end. Reverend William B. Carter of Elizabethton led the unequivocally proslavery portion of East Tennessee Unionists. Hamilton County's Col. Daniel C. Trewhitt briefly spearheaded a compromise movement, advocating gradual and compensated emancipation for the slaves of Unionists and pardoned secessionists, but he soon switched to Johnson's side. During 1864, Trewhitt, Johnson, and Brownlow became leaders in the state's Union (later Republican) party, while Carter figured prominently in the Conservative (later Democratic) party.¹⁴

In April, 1864, a convention of Unionist leaders, who had met twice in 1861, reconvened in Knoxville. Proslavery men tried to pack the meeting, and Carter succeeded in getting a majority of the business committee to propose resolutions against emancipation. A bitter debate over the subject deadlocked the convention until it decided to adjourn without passing any resolutions. To save face, Johnson and Brownlow two days later engineered a mass meeting in Knoxville that endorsed their position.¹⁵

Emancipation also received support from the only Unionist newspapers in East Tennessee, Brownlow's Knoxville *Whig and Rebel Ventilator* and James Hood's Chattanooga *Gazette*. Both held that slavery had broken down beyond repair, that slaveholders had caused secession, and that slave owners had maliciously lorded it over poor whites. Proslavery Unionists replied that the institution benefited both races; its abolition would "turn loose millions of ignorant negroes to riot over their freedom and to devour the land."¹⁶

The issue deeply divided Unionists, but support for emancipation slowly grew. An observer at one of Johnson's antislavery speeches reported that "the citizens concurred most enthusiastically with him." A Bradley County resident recorded that many of his neighbors believed "slavery has played out and they would rather have the American Republic than all the negroes in Africa." In a state constitutional referendum on February 22, 1865, East Tennesseans cast almost half the ballots and voted 12,962 to 31 for emancipation,

¹⁴John Cimprich, "Military Governor Johnson and Tennessee Blacks," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, XXXIX (1980), 462-67; Knoxville *Whig and Rebel Ventilator*, February 6, 1864; Cincinnati *Gazette*, April 17, 1863, April 22, 1864.

¹⁵Bryan, "Civil War in East Tennessee," 312-13; Nashville *Times and True Union*, April 23, 1864; John Baxter to William B. Campbell, September 28, 1864, David Campbell Papers, Duke University Library, Durham, N. C.; Oliver P. Temple, *Notable Men of Tennessee* (New York, 1912), 407-8; Knoxville *Whig and Rebel Ventilator*, April 23, 1864.

¹⁶Knoxville *Whig and Rebel Ventilator*, November 23, 1864; Chattanooga *Gazette*, April 22, 1864; John Baxter to William B. Campbell, September 28, 1864, Campbell Papers.

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a wider margin than in the rest of the state. Restriction of the franchise to Unionists, who swore support for all of Lincoln's war policies, predetermined the outcome.¹⁷

The referendum resulted in slavery's legal end in Tennessee, although compliance followed very slowly in remote areas. The institution survived past the war's end and at least through the summer in some eastern counties. The Unionist majority had not turned antislavery because of egalitarianism, and now anti-black sentiment swelled in East Tennessee. Slave disloyalty, viewed in deeply personal terms as impudent and ungrateful, had greatly offended masters. Also, since blacks did not make up a major part of East Tennessee's labor force, class antagonism worked more fiercely against them. As one critic observed, "If Mr. A had no negroes to hire at half price he would let us have some of his good land to work, then we could soon begin to thrive." For these reasons some East Tennesseans demanded the forced colonization of freedmen abroad. One of the region's delegates tried to commit the legislature to the idea but failed because parts of Middle and West Tennessee suffered from a labor shortage.¹⁸

To deal with several postwar problems, including the transition from slavery, a new Federal agency, the Freedmen's Bureau, opened a district office in Knoxville during the summer of 1865. By the fall, subordinate agents had started work in Hamilton and Washington counties.¹⁹ The freedmen's economic problems required immediate attention, for job opportunities with the Federal army sharply declined as it demobilized. Night riders terrorized blacks, who rented land appropriated by the Federal government from Confederate owners. In addition, Knoxville and Chattanooga enforced prewar laws prohibiting blacks from selling groceries or dry goods. Increasingly

¹⁷Paul E. Rieger, ed., *Through One Man's Eyes: The Civil War Experiences of a Belmont County Volunteer* (Mt. Vernon, Ohio, 1974), 93; John Hambright to J. Hambright, June 17, 1864, Johnson Papers; Tally Sheets of Elections, TSLA.

¹⁸Nashville *Times and True Union*, February 27, 1865; C. R. Hall, *Three Score Years and Ten* (Cincinnati, 1884), 227; Mary Reynolds to Simeon Reynolds, January 6, June 20, 1864, Reynolds Papers; Cleveland *Banner*, October 21, 1865; Clinton B. Fisk to O. O. Howard, December 19, 1865, Letters Sent to the Commissioner, Vol. 15, p. 128, BRFAL; *Tennessee House Journal*, 1865 General Assembly, Adjourned Sess., 67-68; George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (New York, 1971), 130-33, argues that racial prejudices were harsher in populations with small proportions of blacks.

¹⁹Clinton B. Fisk to F. M. Lester, August 26, 1865, Telegrams Sent by the Assistant Commissioner for Ky. and Tenn., Vol. 18, p. 442, BRFAL; S. E. Griffith to Clinton B. Fisk, September 18, 1865, Registered Letters Received by the Assistant Commissioner for Ky. and Tenn., BRFAL; N. B. Lucas Order, October 18, 1865, Unregistered Letters Received by the Chattanooga Superintendent, BRFAL.

freedmen had only one economic option: private employment with whites. The unwillingness of some former masters to treat black laborers fairly caused many headaches for the Freedmen's Bureau. Capt. David Boyd, Bureau agent at Knoxville, repeatedly offered to settle labor disputes by creating arbitration boards. He tried to stop farmers from driving off laborers without pay by threatening to confiscate their farms. Actually he had no such power, and, since few of his efforts succeeded, Boyd soon viewed his task as impossible.²⁰

Freedmen also had much trouble with the legal system. With the blessing of the local Bureau agent, Chattanooga municipal officials enforced a prewar law against the sale of liquor to blacks. When, however, Knoxville began to enforce an old ordinance against black possession of firearms, the Bureau and the army halted the town's action. The most serious problem throughout the region, according to a Madisonville lawyer, was that "free persons of color cannot get what I call a fair and impartial trial." The Bureau had authorized its agents to assume judicial jurisdiction over cases involving East Tennessee blacks, but during 1865, for unknown reasons, they did so only in the black village across the river from Chattanooga.²¹

The Bureau generally sought to aid the black community's development. Although it could offer neither funding nor protection at first, it did encourage the establishment of more schools for freedmen. In 1865 new ones appeared in Chattanooga, Cleveland, Athens, Clinton, Knoxville, Greeneville, and Jonesboro, and at other towns, although local whites closed a school in each of the last three places through threats or arson.²² Freedmen organized several schools and

²⁰William G. Rutlage to John A. Henry, September 1, 1865, Unregistered Letters Received by the Knoxville Subassistant Commissioner, BRFAL; Knoxville Board of Mayor and Aldermen, Minute Book D, 297-98, Knoxville City Archives; Law Court of Chattanooga, Civil Record A, pt. 2, p. 460, TSLA; John A. Henry to William Brown, December 13, 1865, Letters Sent by the Knoxville Subassistant Commissioner, BRFAL; David Boyd to Ransom Badgett, September 18, 1865, Drafts of Letters Sent by the Knoxville Subassistant Commissioner, BRFAL; David Boyd to W. T. Clarke, October 5, 1865, Registered Letters Received by the Assistant Commissioner for Ky. and Tenn., BRFAL.

²¹N. B. Lucas Order, October 18, 1865, Unregistered Letters Received by the Chattanooga Superintendent, BRFAL; George Stoneman to the mayor of Knoxville, November 22, 1865, Unregistered Letters Received by the Knoxville Subassistant Commissioner, BRFAL; George Brown to William G. Brownlow, November 13, 1865, Brownlow Gubernatorial Papers, TSLA; *House Executive Document, No. 70*, 39 Cong., 1 Sess., 46, 180-81; J. T. Trowbridge, *The South: A Tour of Its Battlefields and Ruined Cities* (Hartford, 1866), 252. Pressure from President Johnson may have limited Bureau activities in East Tennessee. See J. S. Fullerton to Clinton B. Fisk, August 19, 1865, Registered Letters Received by the Assistant Commissioner for Ky. and Tenn., BRFAL.

²²Henry L. Swint, ed., "Reports from Educational Agents of the Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee, 1865-1870," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly*, I (1942), 55; David Boyd to W. T. Clarke, October 5, 1865, Registered Letters Received by the Assistant Commissioner for Ky. and Tenn., BRFAL; John Tate to John Ogden, December 1, 1865, American Missionary Association Archives; Trowbridge, *The South*, 239.

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churches completely through their own efforts. They sought to reunify families separated during slavery or the war by sending messages throughout the network of Bureau offices in the South.²³

The freedmen's major effort to extend and defend their freedom took the form of political action. In April, 1865, East Tennessee black men sent the state legislature a petition for full civil and political rights, especially stressing that "without our political rights, our condition is very little better than it was before." Explaining that they sought legal—not social—equality, the document also urged the legislature to make unrepeatable the existing law against interracial marriage. The Knoxville black community, which probably originated the petition, sent Alfred Anderson and William Scott to Nashville to work for their rights. Anderson served as a lobbyist at the capitol, while Scott edited the state's first black newspaper, the *Colored Tennessean*. In August, 1865, Scott helped organize the state's first black convention, which included East Tennessee delegates from Hamilton, Bradley, McMinn, Meigs, Knox, Blount, Washington, and Hawkins counties. Like the East Tennessee petition, the convention called for full civil and political equality. However, 1865 ended without the passage of any significant legislation to clarify or expand the freedmen's rights.

Whenever freedmen demanded better status, friction resulted. Brownlow wrote a fulsome editorial after being bumped into a gutter by blacks who refused to follow traditional racial etiquette and get off the sidewalk in the presence of whites. In a Knoxville restaurant a customer hailed a black waiter with "Here, boy!" to which the waiter replied "My name is Dick," much to the patron's ire.²⁵

The worst conflicts occurred between black and white soldiers. One Confederate parolee, on seeing his first black troops at Greeneville, commented that they "looked exceedingly black, tall, and war-like." Another reported that they "taunted us with our loss of 'Southern rights, etc.," and several bloody collisions were narrowly averted." At the same time, Captain Boyd of the Freedmen's

²³Anthony Carter to Clinton B. Fisk, October 12, 1865, Registered Letters Received by the Assistant Commissioner for Ky. and Tenn., BRFAL; *Freedmen's Bulletin*, II (1865), 35; Records of the Second Presbyterian Church of Knoxville, I, 153, 191, McClung Collection, Knox County Library; Chattanooga Superintendent's Log, December 21, 1865, BRFAL; Peter Barrett to his wife, December 3, 1865, and David Boyd to Samuel Thomas, October 5, 1865, Unregistered Letters Received by the Knoxville Subassistant Commissioner, BRFAL.

²⁴Nashville *Dispatch*, April 15, 1865; Robert Hamilton to S. S. Jocelyn, April 2, 1865, American Missionary Association Archives; Nashville *Colored Tennessean*, August 12, 1865.

²⁵Knoxville *Whig and Rebel Ventilator*, September 27, 1865; Trowbridge, *The South*, 239.

Bureau observed that discharged white Federals were "armed to the teeth and in a state of intoxication, breathing violence alike against rebel and negroe [*sic*]." When a black soldier at Athens urged freedmen to stop the deferential practice of raising their hats to whites, a white Federal veteran killed him for it. Just as in the rest of the state, rising racial antagonism led to murders of black soldiers by whites and vice versa.²⁶

Post-emancipation tensions came to a highpoint throughout the South with the Christmastime insurrection scare of 1865. The Federal commander at Chattanooga reported: "There is a bad disposition exhibited toward the negroes at this place, the whites affect to believe that an insurrection is intended [;] there is no truth in it." The town's civil officials petitioned for the removal of all black troops, but the army agreed only to disarm and confine unemployed civilian freedmen until jobs could be found for them. The holidays ended quietly, and East Tennessee entered 1866 with much still left to settle about the freedmen's future.²⁷

The Civil War had made it possible for many slaves to throw off their servitude, but without help they could do little else to change their status. White Unionists, the dominant group in East Tennessee, had turned against slavery mostly for political reasons, and they made little effort to assist freedmen in their struggle for postwar change. Despite slavery's limited significance in East Tennessee, its legacy of racial, class and personal conflict did not die easily or quietly.

²⁶R. M. Collins, *Chapters from the Unwritten History of the War Between the States* (St. Louis, 1893), 305; Hampton J. Cheney file, Civil War Questionnaires, TSLA; David Boyd to W. T. Clarke, October 5, 1865, and David Boyd to F. M. Lister, October 8, 1865, Registered Letters Received by the Assistant Commissioner for Ky. and Tenn., BRFAL; *Nashville Dispatch*, September 17, 1865; *Knoxville Whig and Rebel Ventilator*, August 30, 1865.

²⁷Dan T. Carter, "The Anatomy of Fear: The Christmas Day Insurrection Scare of 1865," *Journal of Southern History*, XLII (1976), 345-46; Alvan C. Gillem to Joseph Fowler, December 19, 1865, Joseph Fowler Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, N.C.; *Nashville Press and Times*, December 30, 1865; William H. Gaw, General Order 36, December 29, 1865, Chattanooga Post Records, Vol. 377/10, DMT, USACC.

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