

SEPTEMBER 1865

September 4, 1865 - President Andrew Johnson queries General Thomas about the "Negro Whore House" in his Greeneville, Tennessee, home

September 4, 1865, EXECUTIVE OFFICE, Washington, D. C., Pres. Johnson to Maj. Gen. G. H. THOMAS, in Nashville, Tenn.:

I have information of the most reliable character that the negro troops stationed at Greeneville, Tenn., are under little or no restraint, and are committing depredations throughout the country, domineering over, and in fact running the white people out of the neighborhood. Much of this is said to be attributable to the officers, who countenance and rather encourage the negroes in their insolence and in their disorderly conduct. The negro soldiery take possession of and occupy property in the town at discretion, and have even gone so far as to have taken my own house and inverted it into a rendezvous for male and female negroes, who have been congregated there, in fact making it a common negro brothel. It was bad enough to be taken by traitors and converted into a rebel hospital, but a negro whore house is infinitely worse. As to the value of the property, I care nothing for that, but the reflection that it has been converted into a sink of pollution, and that by our own forces, is, I confess, humiliating in the extreme. The people of East Tennessee above all others are the last who should be afflicted with the outrages of the negro soldiery. It is a poor reward for their long and continued devotion to the country through all its perils. It would be far better to remove every negro soldier from East Tennessee, and leave the people to protect themselves as best they may. I hope you will at once give instructions to every officer in command of negro troops to put them under strict discipline and reduce them to order. I also hope, as suggested in a former dispatch, that you will relieve that part of the State from negro troops as soon as practicable. If they are not needed for the public service in your department, let them be sent where they are, or, if not needed at all, it would be better that they be taken to the proper points and mustered out of service, and thereby reduce the enormous expense of the Government. Cannot instructions be given

Gen. Gillem to attend to and see that proper discipline and order are without delay restored and enforced?

ANDREW JOHNSON.

OR, Ser. I. Vol. 49. pt. II, p. 1109.

September 6, 1865 - Court Martial of Frank B. Curley

GEN. COURT MARTIAL ORDERS, No. 505.

WAR DEPARTMENT, ADJUTANT-GEN. 'S OFFICE,

Washington, September 6, 1865.

I. Before a military commission which convened at Nashville, Tenn., December 2, 1863, pursuant to Special Orders, No. 321, dated headquarters Department of the Cumberland, Nashville, Tenn., November 30, 1863, and of which Col. John F. Miller, Twenty-ninth Indiana Volunteers, is president, was arraigned and tried-

Frank B. Gurley, citizen.

CHARGE: Murder.

Specification.-In this, that the said Frank B. Gurley, not being lawfully in the service of the so-called Confederate States, but being banded together with certain other citizens for the purpose of killing, robbing, and plundering Federal soldiers and loyal citizens of the United States, did feloniously shoot with a revolving pistol and kill Brig. Gen. Robert L. McCook, an officer in the service of the United States, without any provocation whatever, and while the said Brig. Gen. Robert L. McCook was lying sick and helpless in an ambulance. All this in the vicinity of the town of New Market, Madison County, Ala., and on or about the 5th day of August, A. D. 1862. All this in time of war.

To which charge and specification the accused, Frank B. Gurley, pleaded not guilty.

FINDING.

The commission, having maturely considered the evidence adduced, finds the accused, Frank B. Gurley, citizen, as follows:

Of the specification, guilty.

Of the charge, guilty.

SENTENCE.

And the commission does therefore sentence him, Frank B. Gurley, citizen, to be hanged by the neck until he is dead, at such time and place as the general commanding may order, two-thirds of the members of the commission concurring in said sentence.

II. The proceedings, finding, and sentence of the military commission in the foregoing case of Frank B. Gurley have been approved by the general commanding the Department of the Cumberland and forwarded for the action of the President of the United States, who directs that the sentence be carried into execution.

By order of the Secretary of War:

E. D. TOWNSEND, Assistant Adjutant-Gen.

[Indorsement.]

WAR DEPARTMENT, BUREAU OF MILITARY JUSTICE, September 8, 1865.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War, with recommendation that the proper military authorities at Nashville be ordered to cause the arrest and execution of this murderer, who is now at large, it is believed, somewhere in the State of Tennessee. Under a misapprehension, he is understood to have been, within a short time, exchanged as a prisoner of war, and has thus regained his liberty. This, however, does not at all exempt him from the operation of the death sentence then and still hanging over him. The murder of Gen. McCook by this man was one of cowardly and cold-blooded atrocity, and no pains should be spared to enforce the forfeiture of life which the sentence has declared.

J. HOLT, Judge-Advocate-Gen.

OR, Ser. II, Vol. 8, pp. 741-742.

September 6, 1865 - 12, Reestablishment of Civil Government in Warren County

McMinnville Tenn Warren County Sept 6, 1865

We the undersigned Loyal Citizens of Warren County would respectfully represent that peace and harmony now prevail throughout this section of the country.

County offices have been qualified and courts established throughout the district, and the civil machinery of government put in operation. It is our belief that civil authority is amply sufficient without the assistance of the military to enforce the laws and preserve the good order in this community.

Therefore we respectfully request that troops be withdrawn from this place.

[A total of 52 signatures appear on the document.]

Murfreesboro, Sept 22, 1865

Reply returned. The troops were removed from McMinnville to Carthage about 10 days since.

R. W. Johnson, Bvt Maj Genl

Blood and Fire, p. 164.

September 7, 1865 - September 8, 1865 - Correspondence between President Andrew Johnson and Major-General George H. Thomas relative to alleged difficulties with U. S. C. T. in East Tennessee

NASHVILLE, September 7, 1865.

(Received 5 p. m.)

His Excellency President JOHNSON:

Your telegram of the 4th instant just received directing the withdrawal of the negro troops from East Tennessee. I have given the necessary orders, but have to report that I have no white troops to send to East Tennessee to preserve the peace. Complaints reach me almost daily of difficulty between the returned rebels and loyal citizens, either in defiance of the civil authorities, or that the civil authorities are inefficient and do not act. The negro troops in Tennessee can be reduced still more by sending them to Georgia and Alabama to replace a like number of white troops, who are clamorous to be mustered out of service.

GEO. H. THOMAS, Maj.-Gen.

NASHVILLE, September 7, 1865.

Maj.-Gen. STONEMAN, Knoxville:

Order the regiments stationed at Greeneville to rendezvous at Chattanooga to await orders; also the regiment stationed at Knoxville, unless it is in a good state of discipline. Complaints have been made to the President that the colored troops in East Tennessee are perfectly lawless. In executing this order of the President I want the people of East Tennessee to remember that I have no troops to send into that section of the State.

GEO. H. THOMAS, Maj.-Gen., U. S. Army, Cmdg.

KNOXVILLE, September 8, 1865.

Gen. THOMAS:

Your telegram received and will be observed. You can assure the President that the reports that have been made to him about the colored troops at Greeneville and Knoxville are untrue. This I know from personal observation. The one here is as well behaved a regiment as there is in the service.

GEO. STONEMAN, Maj.-Gen., U. S. Volunteers.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE, Washington, September 8, 1865.

Maj. Gen. GEORGE H. THOMAS, Nashville, Tenn.:

Your dispatch has been received. In withdrawing the colored troops from East Tennessee, I would send them where they are needed and nowhere else. If there

are too many of them in the service, it would be better to have them mustered out. In the event of an insurrection it is feared that the colored troops, so great in numbers, could not be controlled. It is believed that there are mischievous persons acting as emissaries inciting the negro population to acts of violence, revenge, and insurrection. This should be carefully looked to, and all conflicts between the whites and blacks should be avoided as far as practicable. There would be no danger of this kind if this description of persons could be expelled from the country whose business it is to excite and originate discontent between the races. If there were a sufficient number of white troops instead of colored to protect the country it would exert a much better influence upon the people. I think I shall have Mississippi added to your department. If the Southern States can be encouraged, I have no doubt in my own mind that they will proceed and restore their government within the next six or seven months, and renew their former relations with the Federal Government. You can do much in the consummation of this great end. The whole South has confidence in you, and any move you make in that direction will inspire confidence and encourage them in the work they have undertaken.

ANDREW JOHNSON.

OR, Ser. I, Vol. 49, pt. II, pp. 1110-1111.

September 26, 1865 - Defining the conditions of work at the Freedmen's Bureau in Clarksville

Colonel Davis, in charge of the Freedmen's Bureau, at Clarksville, Tennessee, has adopted the following rules:

1. One half of the wages of the employee will be retained by the employer, until the end of the contract for its faithful performance.
2. The employees will be required to rise at daybreak, each one to feed and take care of the stock allotted to him, or perform any other business that may be assigned to him; to eat their breakfast and be ready for work at the signal, which will be given when the sun is half hour high. All time lost after the signal is given will be deducted.
3. No general conversation will be allowed during working hours.
4. Bad work will be assessed at its proper value.
5. For disobedience one dollar will be deducted.
6. Neglect of duty and leaving without permission will be considered disobedience.
7. No live stock will be permitted to be raised by the employee, will be charged for.
8. Apples, peaches, and melons, or any other product of the farm taken by the employee, will be charged for.

9. The employee shall receive no visitors during work hours.
10. Three quarters of an hour will be allowed during the winter months for dinner, and one hour and a half during the months of June, July, and August.
11. Impudence, swearing, or indecent and unseemly language to, or in the presence of the employer or his family, or agent, or quarrelling or fighting, so as to disturb the peace of the farm, will be fined one dollar for the first offence, and if repeated, will be followed by dismissal and loss of such pay as shall be adjudged against him by the proper authority.
12. All difficulties that may arise between the employees shall be adjusted by the employer, and, if not satisfactory, an appeal may be taken to an agent of the U. S. Government or a magistrate.
13. All abuse of stock, or willful breaking of tools, or throwing away gear, &c., will be charged against the employee.
14. Good and sufficient rations will be furnished by the employer, not, however, to exceed six pounds of bacon and one peck of meal per week for each adult.
15. House rent and fuel will be furnished, free, by the employer.
16. No night work will be required of the employee but such as the necessities of the farm absolutely demand—such as tying up fodder, firing tobacco, setting plant beds afire securing a crop from frost, &c.
17. A cheerful and willing performance of duty will be required of the employee.
18. Stock must be fed and attended to on Sunday.
19. The woman will be required to do the cooking in rotation on Sunday.
20. The employee will be expected to look after and study the interest of his employer; to inform him of anything that is going amiss; to be peaceable, orderly and pleasant; to discourage theft, and endeavor by his conduct to establish a character for honesty, industry and thrift.
21. In case of any controversy in regard to the contract or its regulations, between the employer and the employee, the agent of the Bureau for the county shall be the common arbiter to whom the difficulty shall be referred.

Staunton *Spectator*, September 26, 1865^{NOTE 1}.

NOTE 1: As cited in: <http://valley.vcdh.virginia.edu>