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13 April 1873, p. 4

Grant and Colfax were discussed throughout the nation in 1868, when both were elected by the people to the highest office within their gift. The parish of Grant and the town of Colfax have furnished the great topic of conversation during the last week, but in both quiet now reigns and law is supreme.

Wed. 16 April 1873, p. 1

FROM GRANT PARISH - HORRIBLE MASSACRE - MANY COLORED MEN KILLED - A FEW WHITE MEN WOUNDED

Boats which arrived from the Red river yesterday afternoon brought the intelligence that the recent turmoil in Grant parish had resulted in a deadly combat and the sacrifice of many lives.

Reports that obtained currency were highly colored, and doubtless some time will elapse before the truth is really known. It is beyond question, however, that the courthouse at Colfax had been burned, and a large number of colored men massacred by a party under the leadership of Mr. Hadnot, who was himself severely wounded in the abdomen.

As soon as the news of the terrible affair reach General Emory's headquarters, the commanding officer at Baton Rouge was telegraphed to send a company of troops immediately to the scene of the conflict, which order was promptly obeyed, and the troops left last evening on a passing steamer.

Mr. R. G. Hill, of Marshal, Texas, a passenger on the Southwestern, furnished the *Times* with a written account of the affair, from which we make brief extracts:

Sunday night, shortly after dark, the boat landed at a wooded pile about a mile above Colfax, Grant parish, and a young fellow, armed to the teeth and very much excited, came aboard and requested the captain to land at Colfax and take some wounded white men to Alexandria, about twenty-five miles futher down the river.

On arriving at Colfax we found about a hundred armed men on the bank, and most of the passengers, myself among the number, went ashore to view the "battleground," for our young friend who came aboard at the wood pile informed us "that if we wanted to see dead niggers, here was a chance, for there were a hundred or so scattered over the village and the adjacent fields," and he kindly offered to guide us to the scene of action.

Almost as soon as we got to the top of the landing, sure enough, we began to stumble on them, most of them lying on their faces, and, as I could see, by the dim light of the lanterns, riddled with bullets.

* * *

When we came back near the landing the boat's crew was carrying aboard the two wounded white men, a Mr. Hadnot and another whose name I did not learn.

In a storehouse near the landing were some twenty or thirty negro prisoners, all huddled together in a corner, with a strong guard over them. I asked one of the guards if I could have some talk with the negroes, but was rather roughly refused.

Mr. Hadnot was wounded in the abdomen, not seriously, however, for I was informed by one of the surgeons who had him in charge that he extracted the ball, and that he did not think his intestines were cut. The other white man had a flesh wound in the shoulder.

Several other white men had slight flesh wounds in different parts of their bodies.

The two wounded men, the surgeon and a son of Mr. Hadnot came down as far as Alexandria, where we landed early Monday morning.

Since the meeting on Sunday the week party under Mr. Hadnot, it is stated, had been reinforced from adjoining parishes, and Sunday morning they moved on Colfax in a body and demanded a surrender of the courthouse, which was refused. The attacking party opened a vigorous fire, and finally succeeded in setting the courthouse on fire. Many were killed in the burning building, and others, while attempting to escape, were shot down.

The following statement of Captain Jacobs, of the steamer Southwestern, we copy from the *Picayune*:

We arrived at Colfax on Sunday evening about eight o'clock, and found that the white people, and the sheriff, I suppose, had captured the town, after having had a conflict with the negroes. It was reported to me that about 100 negroes had been killed and many wounded.

We saw from the boat about eighteen or twenty lying around on the banks dead. One white man was reported killed, whose name I did not learn, and two very seriously wounded, Messrs. Hadnot and Harris. Mr. Hadnot was shot through the bowels, and it is supposed that he is mortally wounded. We brought Messrs. Harris and Hadnot down from Colfax to Alexandria. Three or four white men were slightly wounded.

About one hundred negroes escaped, but it was reported that the whites were still pursuing them. All of the leaders of the riot escaped, especially the white men. The negroes ambuscaded themselves in the courthouse, and the whites, finding that there was no other mode of attack left them, set fire to the building. The whites numbered in the neighborhood of one hundred and fifty men. The fight lasted from about 12 M. until nearly 5 P.M. The whites are now in possession of Colfax, and when I left, late last Sunday night, everything was very quiet.

Editorial, p. 2

THE COLFAX MASSACRE

Referring to another column for the only details known, we can give no other name to this portentive act. A portion of the people who believe that the existing State government is lawful, assemble to maintain the local officers in possession. The people of other parishes invade with arms and intervene in the local controversy; they drive the undisciplined combatants into a building, set it on fire and shoot down from eighty to one hundred, with a loss to the assaulting party of two men wounded. The world will learn all the facts and will characterize this act according as authentic investigation may justify. It is thus that our political strife has culminated in bloodshed. We shall not exasperate feeling nor unsettle public judgment by violent words, or by assigning responsibility where we may think it belongs. The consequences of the deed are too signal. Some of these poor, ignorant laborers have gone to their account. There will be no further difficulty in keeping them from the polls. The survivors may exercise with fear and trembling a right which it required blood to gain and has required blood to maintain. They may even emigrate where these rights will be respected. Those violent men who shot down the laborers of their fields about a few miserable parish offices have not yet seen the end of their unhappy act. There is a power elsewhere

greater than their own. There is a spirit elsewhere as intolerant as their own. There are severe laws and terrible penalties to which an appeal may be made. The injury to the production of the country, to the business interests of the city, to that confidence between the landlord and the laborer which will result from this act of violence, are dreadful to contemplate. The reopening of this bloody chasm into which so much has been cast that is precious may be apprehended, and all the public interests of Louisiana may suffer beyond the possibility of contemplation.

This event has made a crisis in our political condition. The attack on the State credit has been successful. The obligations of the State are unsalable. The administration of city affairs is equally impotent with that of the State. There must be a solution of this crisis, but an armed occupation of the State cannot produce it. In our belief there is a class determined to administer the State and city government or defeat their administration by any others. We believe this class to be in the electoral minority in the State. Those who differ with us may, perhaps, apply the same candid expression of distrust to ourselves. Very well. We have always been willing to abide by the full and fair vote of the State, but we are not willing that the poll and publication of this vote shall be left to the possible influence of fraud, force or terror, whether coming from the one party or the other. There is but one authority sufficiently powerful and impartial to conduct a fair election in Louisiana. To this authority we are willing to submit, and this authority there is none will dare resist. But at this moment there is no authority for the intervention of the federal government. The Governor may, and no doubt will, ask for troops to protect from "domestic violence." He may, perhaps, be conscientiously of opinion, from demonstrations in this city, that a special force should be established here. The commandant of local forces may be authorized to determine whether a proclamation of martial law, and the consequent installing of a military mayor and provosts, may be proper. This we can not foresee. But we may say this: That if Congress, in regular or special session, shall, upon review of our political events and position, decide to remand this State to a territorial condition, and exact an enabling law by which a new and general election shall be held for State and federal offices, we will cheerfully abide by its arbitrament, assured that the polls will be kept open and the ballot pure. This great concession we would make in the sincere belief that the present State government is strictly legal, but to demonstrate our devotion to the interests of the State and the peace of the Union. Will our opponents say the same?

Friday 18 Apr 1873, p. 1

**FROM GRANT PARISH - OFFICIAL REPORT OF STAFF OFFICERS ON THE GROUND
TUESDAY MORNING - BURIAL OF SIXTY BODIES - AN INTERVIEW WITH NASH - THE
KILLED AND WOUNDED**

The steamer B. L. Hodge, which arrived in this city yesterday afternoon, brought back to the city Colonel T. W. DeKlyne and Colonel William Wright, of General Longstreet's staff, who had been sent on the Saturday previous to investigate the trouble in Grant parish.

We publish below the official report of these officers to the Adjutant General of the State:

Headquarters First Division, Louisiana State National Guard, New Orleans, April 17, 1873

Brigadier General Henry Street, Adjutant General:

GENERAL—In obedience to special order No. 22, current series, Adjutant General's office, the undersigned officers left New Orleans on Saturday, April 12, instant, to proceed to Colfax, Grant parish.

We reached Pineville, opposite Alexandria, at about 9:30 A.M., on Monday, the fourteenth instant, where we were informed that a severe action had taken place at Colfax the day before (Sunday); that from 150 to

200 colored men had been killed; that two white men, named Hadnot and Harris, were wounded, the former mortally, and that Colfax, or part of it, had been burned.

Upon crossing the river to Alexandria we became cognizant of the existence of a violent, though suppressed popular excitement. Numbers of men from the parish of Rapides had participated in the struggle, and were now returning to Alexandria. Parish officials expressed themselves as apprehensive of an outbreak in Alexandria, directed against the colored men and the officials holding office under the administration of Governor Kellogg. We were urged to procure the presence of troops as speedily as possible. Attempts had been made to induce Mr. DeLacy, the sheriff of Rapides, to go to Grant parish, and failing, the person claiming to have been elected sheriff on the Fusion ticket accompanied the party that went from Alexandria.

We left A at about 11:30 A.M. During our stay there mounted men were constantly crossing the river, coming from the direction of Colfax, and just as we left a party of twenty, mounted, and armed apparently with shotguns, crossed the river in a body.

Believing that Colfax was destroyed, and as we could not reach there before dark, on our arrival at Cotile we deemed it expedient to remain there for the night. Everything in this vicinity appeared perfectly quiet and peaceful.

Having secured an ambulance, we crossed the river into Grant parish early on the morning of Tuesday, the fifteenth instant, and started for Colfax, distant about fifteen miles. We found the parish in a most deplorable state. The crops are being neglected, many of the residents, both white and colored, have left their homes, and a general sense of insecurity prevails, which we are satisfied can be removed only by the presence of troops.

About one-third of a mile below the courthouse we came upon a party of colored men and women carrying away a colored man upon a sled. At a little distance in the field were the dead bodies of two colored men. About two hundred yards nearer the courthouse were three dead bodies of colored men, and from that point to the courthouse and its vicinity the ground was thickly strewn with dead. We were unable to find the body of a single white man, or to ascertain the loss of the whites. Colored women assert that two wagon loads of whites, dead and wounded, were carried away, but it is persistently denied by any of the whites claiming to have knowledge of the actual loss, they asserting that but one man on their side was killed, and Hadnot and Harris were wounded. We may state here that Hadnot has since died in Alexandria.

We send herewith a plan of the courthouse and its defenses. A space of about 200 yards square was inclosed in a slight earthwork, with ditch inside. This ditch was from ten to eighteen inches in depth, and the breastwork in front of it from twenty to thirty inches in height, and was protected in front by two and a half inch planking. On the lower side of the ditch the greater portion of the breastwork was composed of planking alone, laid in zig-zag and without ditch.

From what information we could get, we believe that the fight commenced on Sunday, the thirteenth instant, between 10 and 11 A.M., and continued until nearly dark. Of the numbers engaged on either side it is impossible for us to form any definite ideas, though we were satisfied that the parties holding the place were less in number than their assailants. It is asserted by the colored people that the assailants consisted of parties from the parishes of Winn, Rapides, Natchitoches, Catahoula and Caddo, in addition to those from Grant, but they were unable or unwilling to give us the names of any parties participating in the attack. This information, however, will doubtless be obtained hereafter.

All statements that we have heard agree substantially in the main particulars. It is agreed that the attacking party was commanded by C. C. Nash, and the assailed by a man named Lev. Allen; that a surrender was demanded and refused; that the besieged were given thirty minutes to remove their women and children, and that at the expiration of that time the fight was commenced by the assailing party. Appended hereto, and marked A, is the statement of a meeting between Columbus C. Nash and Colonel DeKlyne.

The attacking party had in their possession a small cannon, taken from the steamboat John T. Moore, from which they fired bolts, a sample of which we deposit in your office. The besieged had rigged up a couple of guns by fastening lengths of gas pipe on rafter timbers, blocking up one end with a pine plug and drilling a touch-hole. One of these was bursted while trying it, some days before the fight, and the other has not the appearance of having been used.

Some time during the afternoon the besieged were drawn from the field and from their breastworks into the courthouse. One end of this building was without windows, nor had the besieged prepared loopholes. A colored man named Isaiah Atkins informed us that Mr. Nash had forced a colored man called Pink to come to this end of the building and hold a pine torch to the edge of the roof until it caught fire. It is our opinion that few of the colored men had been killed up to this time, but that when forced by the fire to leave the courthouse they were shot down without mercy. The position and condition of many of the bodies go far to prove this. Under the warehouse, between the courthouse and the river, were the dead bodies of six colored men who had evidently crept under for concealment, and were there shot like dogs. Many were shot in the back of the head and neck; one many still lay with his hands clasped in supplication; the face of another was completely flattened by blows from a gun, the broken stock of a double-barreled shotgun being on the ground near him; another had been cut across the stomach with a knife after being shot; and almost all had from three to a dozen wounds. Many of them had their brains literally blown out. It is asserted by the colored people that after the fight thirty-four prisoner, who were taken before the burning of the courthouse, were taken to the river bank, two by two, executed and buried in the river. We caused to be buried in the ditch near the ruins of the courthouse, the remains of fifty-four colored men, three of whom were so badly burned as to be unrecognizable. There were inside the courthouse the charred bones of one other, and five bodies we gave to their friends for interment elsewhere. We also saw twelve wounded colored men, two of whom will certainly die, and others of whom are very unlikely to recover.

The names of the killed and wounded are hereto appended, marked B.

We are informed that since the fight parties of armed men have been scouring the country surrounding Colfax, taking the mules and other property of the colored people.

Since writing the above report we have seen on board the steamboat the colored man Lev. Allen, who commanded the party holding the courthouse. He assured us that not a single colored man was killed or wounded until after their surrender, and that they were then shot down without mercy. We will obtain his sworn statement hereafter.

On our return to Alexandria yesterday we were again implored by citizens to have troops sent there at once as the only means of averting a disturbance.

Very respectfully,

T. W. DeKlyne, Colonel, Assistant Adjutant General, [and] William Wright, Colonel, Assistant Inspector General

INTERVIEW WITH MR. NASH

Shortly after our arrival at Colfax, on the morning of the fifteenth, a message was brought to me that Mr. C. C. Nash desired to see me, and that he would meet me out beyond the town. I accordingly went out to see him, and met him in the open field about half a mile above Colfax. Several gentlemen belonging to the parishes of Rapides and Grant were present at the time.

On meeting Mr. Nash I informed him of the purpose for which Colonel Wright and myself had come there. I then told him that I had been told by a colored man, named John Miles, that on the morning of Sunday he (Nash) had sent in a flag of truce, and that Miles had gone out to meet it; that Nash said, "Go tell Lev. Allen to come out here;" that Allen came in company with Miles, and that the following

conversation took place:

Nash—What do you depend upon doing in there?

Allen—We are doing nothing more than we were before; standing still, as we've been standing.

Nash—We want that courthouse.

Allen—We sent an answer to Mr. Hadnot by Mr. Calhoun. Didn't you receive it?

Nash—I want you to understand that Mr. Hadnot does not command this company.

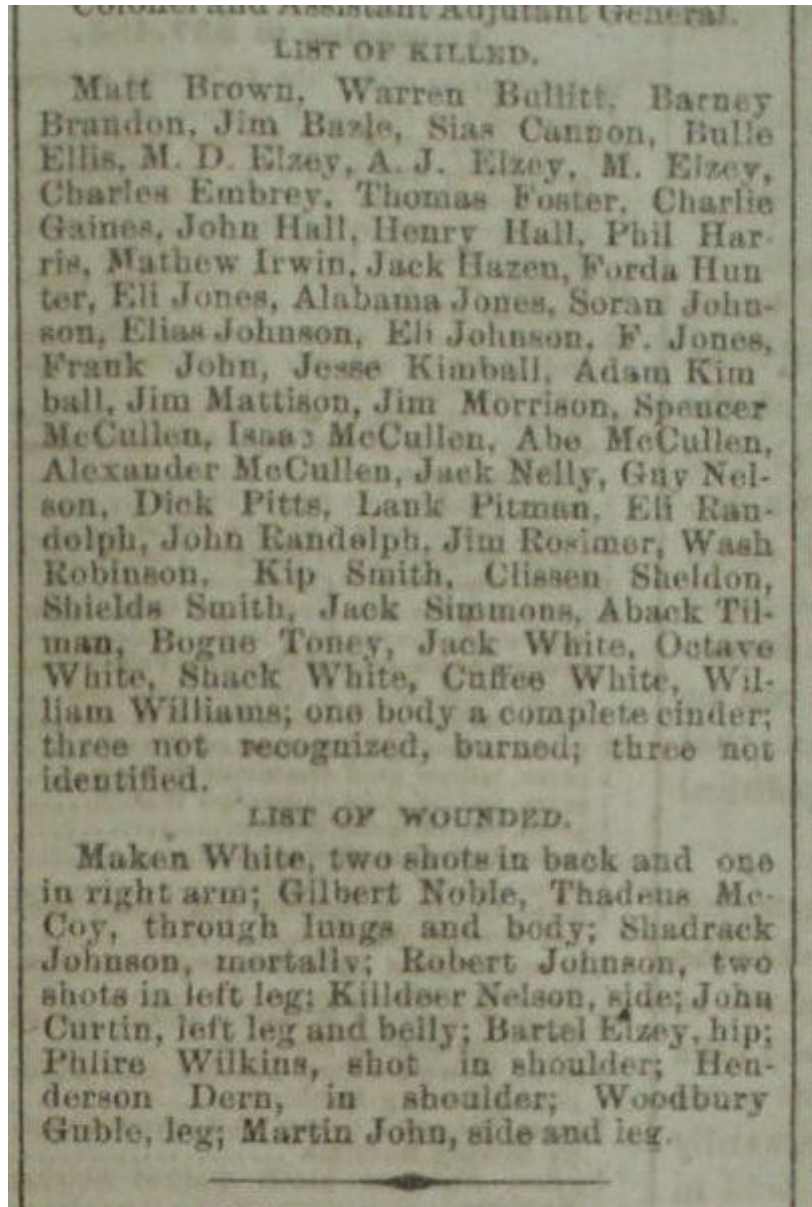
Allen—We are going to stand where we are until we get United States troops or some assistance.

Nash—Then go in there and say to your people that I advise them to get out of there. I give you thirty minutes to remove your women and children.

I asked Mr. Nash if this statement was correct, and he replied that he did not remember the reference to Mr. Hadnot, but otherwise it was correct.

Upon asking Mr. Nash if he

proposed prosecuting any further hostilities, he responded in effect that he did not, and would use his influence to prevent any violence by his followers.



I asked Mr. Nash if he was acting as sheriff by virtue of a commission from Governor Kellogg, to which he responded that he had not received his commission, but had seen a notice of his appointment to the position in the New Orleans REPUBLICAN.

During our conversation, Mr. Nash stated that after the colored men got into the courthouse, they displayed a white flag, that Messrs. Hadnot and Harris went to see what was wanted, and on approaching the building were shot.

This is denied by colored men. Mr. Hadnot was shot through the stomach from side to side, and Mr. Harris in the back under both shoulders.

T. W. DeKlyne, Colonel and Assistant Adjutant General

Saturday, 19 April 1873, p. 1

The Colfax Massacre—A Thorough Investigation Ordered—No Pains or Expense to be Spared to bring the Guilty to Punishment—General Emory to Render Aid—The Modoc Peace Commission Dissolved—Professor Hayden's Description of the Lava Beds—Indian Subsistence—Telegraphic Orders to General Emory.

Washington, April 18. —The Attorney General has instructed United States District Attorney Beckwith to make a thorough investigation of the affair in Grant parish, and if the United States laws have been violated to spare no pains or expense in causing the guilty parties to be arrested, and if necessary to execute any United States process, to call upon General Emory for that purpose, as he (General Emory) has been instructed by the acting Secretary of War to give him all aid.

The Attorney General has forward full copies of the telegrams received by him to-day to the Acting Secretary of War, Robeson, with the request that the commanding officer at New Orleans be informed of the necessity of furnishing military aid, if it should exist.

The acting Secretary of War, in his dispatch to General Emory, instructs that officer to render all the military aid necessary to enforce the processes of the United States courts....

Editorial, p. 2 **OUR COLORED POPULATION**

The natural effect of a conflict like that which has just taken place in Grant parish is to inflame that hostility of race which, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, must necessarily exist in a community where slavery, based on such distinctions, has so recently prevailed. It is true that now, since slavery is utterly done away with, the ill feeling which it could not but engender, having no more food upon which to live, ought to die; and undoubtedly would gradually do so did nothing occur to fan it into freshened life. The negroes are naturally mild and placable. Under the encouraging and elevating influence of freedom and equal laws, they would soon cease to remember the years of wrong under which they formerly groaned. They are also reasonable and grateful, and they know that if one class of white men were formerly their oppressors, to another class of white men they owe their liberty and the civil and political privileges which they now enjoy. If the former slaves might thus in the course of time forget the wrongs they suffered from slavery, so likewise might the former masters forget the loss they suffered from emancipation. The sooner each class takes this wise part the better. In the meanwhile, it will not do

for the more cultivated race to seek to interfere with the natural workings of the new order of things; it will not do for them to attempt to intimidate the colored population from the exercise of their rights by a resort to bloodshed. There are parts of the State where the negroes largely outnumber the whites. A spirit of retaliation on the part of the preponderating class in such localities would soon pledge our State into a condition too dreadful to contemplate; and the only hope of peace left, the armed interposition of the general government, is an alternative to be regarded only as a choice of evils. In either case, as constantly suppressed by the State authorities or the establishment of a military government, the material prosperity of the State would suffer incalculable injury. Commerce would desert our cities; agriculture our fields. Emigration would ignore us.

We have heard it said that some of our citizens hopes that the result of the present incipient strife between the two races (for such it certainly is) will be to drive the negroes in large numbers away from the State, and actually think that such a result would be an advantage. An advantage to drive away nearly one-half of the population of the State, and that the half from whose labor the bulk of its wealth proceeds! The negro part of the population represents cotton, rice, sugar, cooking, cleanliness, comfort—labor which must be done, and which the white man will not do if he can help it. As for the theory that the negro once out of the way, his place would soon be filled by white emigrants, that is fallacious. The Anglo-Saxon, willing as he may be to perform agricultural labor in the North, is afraid of our climate. When he seeks it is with the view of “bettering his condition” by some lighter and more remunerative kind of employment. Emigration, as applied to large numbers, follows isothermal lines; and the peasantry of Europe, residing in countries having a climate like ours, although an agricultural people, are not accustomed to such work as is required in our cotton fields. The cultivation of the vine, the olive and the mulberry; the care of herds, the occupation of fishing, and similar comparatively light labors form no apprenticeship for the severe toil required in the cultivation of our staples. Accordingly, we see that the few immigrants who come here from the countries of Southern Europe seldom take to agriculture as an occupation. The notion that this class of immigrants would ever come in numbers sufficient to replace our present agricultural class is simply absurd. Equally so is the notion that if they did come they would make better citizens than our colored population. These have already, within the short space of time which has elapsed since their emancipation, disproved many of the theories with regard to their characteristics which were propagated in slave times by their masters; such as that they would not work unless coerced; they would not appreciate freedom; would relapse into barbarism, and more of the same kind.

But they do appreciate freedom; they have practically learned by heart the fundamental law that for them life is labor; that industry is the only road to advancement. The advantages of education they appreciate as thoroughly as if they knew what education was; and they are determined, for the most part, that their children, at least, shall partake of those advantages.

The negro element in our midst then, though no longer “property,” is still wealth—as the agricultural and laboring class is in every country. To drive them away would be to invite poverty and desolation to our bosom. To seek to deprive them of their legal rights is to establish strife, destroy business, and abdicate self-government. Only by strict justice, by such a practical recognition of their rights as shall make absolutely no distinction whatever, politically, on the ground of color, can we have peace. Above all things, let our hot-blooded young chivalry abandon the notion that our prosperity as a State would date from the exodus of our black population, for that would, instead, send us back centuries in the scale of civilization.