



Rebel Underground

Sons of Confederate Veterans
Major John C. Hutto Camp # 443
Jasper, Alabama

Published Monthly

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The Major John C. Hutto Camp's February Camp Meeting
will be in Jasper, Alabama on

Sunday 16 March 2025 at 2:00 pm

The Program for March will be

Distinguished Historian Jerry Allen presenting

Hotbed of Secession - Wisconsin

It's not too late to pay your 2025 SCV dues.

Please help us preserve and honor our Confederate Family & Heroes

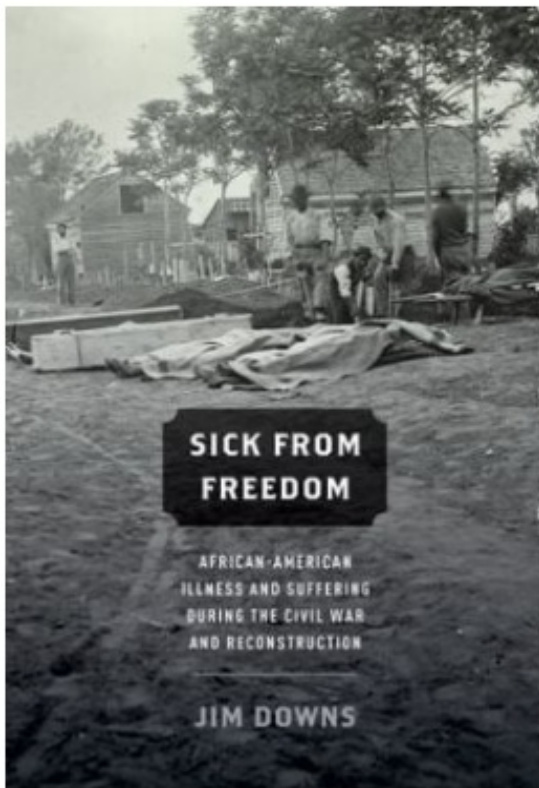
Please remit your dues (\$55.00) to the Camp Adjutant :

John McGraw

702 Haston Terrace

Jasper, Alabama 35504

Fatal Freedom
David Gordon - Mises.org
Book Reviews, U.S. History, War and Foreign Policy



[*Sick from Freedom: African-American Illness and Suffering during the Civil War and Reconstruction* by Jim Downs. Oxford University Press, 2012; 266 pp.]

The distinguished Southern historian Clyde Wilson called *Sick from Freedom* a “remarkable study” in an article that was published on the Abbeville Institute website, and it was this that drew my attention to the book. Unlike Wilson and the other Abbeville Institute writers, Jim Downs is unsympathetic to the South; and the book is based on his doctoral dissertation at Columbia University, which was directed by that quintessentially anti-Southern historian Eric Foner. But Downs is a rarity among historians, particularly so among those with his anti-Southern point of view. He recognizes the wisdom of the Swiss historian Eduard Fueter’s dictum that every historian must decide whether he is writing

from the perspective of the historical actors he is writing about or from the perspective of his own time.

Downs indicts partisans of a favorable opinion of the War and Reconstruction for violating Fueter's dictum. Downs is a historian of medicine, and his dissertation is on hospitals during the War between the States and Reconstruction. The period was one of plague and famine, and the upheavals caused by the Northern invasion of the South uprooted massive numbers of blacks, making these calamities much more difficult to cope with than they would have been had the support system of the Southern economy remained intact. Downs describes the support system in this way:

The collapse of the plantation economy and the breakdown of the enslaved community created broader social transformations that left bondspeople defenseless against sickness. The exigencies of war and emancipation separated black families and triggered an abrupt breakdown of their networks, which resulted in freed people not having the systems of support that sustained them during slavery.

Moreover, the Union forces displayed little concern for blacks. Downs writes:

In general, Union commanders saw the presence of newly emancipated slaves, who formed makeshift communities just outside Union barracks, as a distraction from larger military objectives. Army leaders regularly ordered them to be moved from one camp to another. Yet keeping freedpeople on the move and thereby preventing them from settling often had devastating consequences on their health.

Historians who view Northern policy as the onset of measures that culminated in the Civil Rights movement and "woke" inanities, Downs tells us, suppress inconvenient facts:

The few and scattered references of freedpeople suffering from the challenges of emancipation have been overlooked because these episodes do not fit into the patriotic narratives of the Civil War. Frozen feet and starvation complicate accounts dominated by heroic black soldiers or freedwomen in Union camps, caring for both freed slaves and Northern troops. These carefully cast representations of freedpeople were often created by

white authors in the late nineteenth century who strove to highlight the happy outcomes brought by emancipation. Agents of the federal government did not tell the stories of the tens of thousands of emancipated slaves who suffered and died during the Civil War from the explosive outcome of epidemic disease. The names and experiences of these freed people were too politically problematic to be recorded.

A defender of emancipation might say, “Even if the emancipated slaves faced grave difficulties, at least they were free,” but this was not so.

Freed slaves were left as hostages in Union camps throughout the South. As “contraband” they were stuck, and they could not leave Union lines even if they wanted to. They were promised support but had little hope of actually receiving it. Placed under such tight restrictions, they were forced to live in unsanitary and overcrowded living environments, in which they became increasingly vulnerable to camp diseases.

The term “contraband” is a reference to the Second Confiscation Act, passed by the Radical Republican controlled Congress on July 17, 1862. It is clear that the authors of that Act were not concerned with citizenship for blacks. Indeed the Act “stipulated that people of African descent were to be colonized ‘in some tropical country beyond the limits of the United States.’”

Abraham Lincoln was fully in accord with this policy. As Farell Evans notes,

On August 14, 1862, Lincoln met at the White House delegation of Black leaders to make his case for the voluntary emigration of African Americans to countries outside the U.S. “Your race suffer from living among us, while ours suffer from your presence... It is better for us both, therefore, to be separated,” Lincoln told the delegation. [Frederick] Douglass, who wasn’t invited, and who read about the meeting in a newspaper, wrote in his *Douglass’ Monthly* that the proposal “reminds one of the politeness with which a man might try to bow out of his house some troublesome creditor or the witness of some old

guilt.”

And the unconcern with blacks went even further. Faced with famine conditions in 1862 and 1863, many supposed medical experts thought the heavy losses of life among blacks were an indication that blacks were becoming extinct, a prospect these experts viewed with unconcern. This attitude continued during Reconstruction, when an outbreak of smallpox occurred:

The leaders of the Medical Division of the Freedman’s Bureau expected the extinction of the black race and consequently did not provide Bureau physicians with adequate money and resources to quarantine infected former slaves or to conduct vaccination campaigns to protect freedpeople from the virus.

The pattern of suppression of inconvenient facts that forms a principal theme of Sick from Freedom began early. “In his 1869 report to the Secretary of War, Bureau leader O.O. Howard recounted the great progress and success that his various field agents observed in 1867-1868 in the South, ignoring the cases of starvation, dislocation and destitution caused by the famine.”

Faced with the horrors of those made sick by false “freedom,” genuine opponents of slavery like Lysander Spooner and Murray Rothbard rejected the Union’s invasion of the South.

Note: The views expressed on Mises.org are not necessarily those of the Mises Institute.

HUTTO CAMP OFFICERS

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2nd Lt. Cmd	Jeremy Jackson
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