



The Aftermath of War

Student Name _____ Date _____

Activity #1: The Conditions in the South at the End of the War

Directions (Group A—South Carolina): For this activity, you have been assigned to a group with a document to review. You will also use the interactive maps [temporarily located at <http://civclients.com/nehint/recon/>] in this activity. Each group will review a document authored by someone affected by the devastation of the Civil War. The authors were selected to show a variety of contrasting views and also to reflect the different ways that reconstruction affected various states. While one document cannot speak to the effects of the war on an entire state, it will give you an insight into what may have represented a common experience and reaction to the War and its aftermath.

In your group, you will analyze the impact of the Civil War through the claims in your document and as they relate to your assigned state. To do this, you will also work through the interactive maps, pictures and quotes as you complete the worksheet that follows.

Upon receiving your document assignment, your group should read and discuss the meaning of your document. Then locate the interactive maps for this lesson [temporarily located at <http://civclients.com/nehint/recon/>] and begin working through the worksheet that follows.

Excerpt from the Diary of Emma LeConte, 1864-1865, February 18, 1865 (South Carolina):
<http://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/leconteemma/leconte.html>

After having captured Savannah, Georgia, in late December, General William T. Sherman's Union army turned north and entered South Carolina in January 1865. By this time the Confederate forces opposing him had been virtually shattered, capable of conducting little more than delaying actions. When Sherman's army marched into Columbia, South Carolina's capital, his men were prepared to take vengeance against the state that had been first to secede from the Union in 1860.

“Two Corps entered town - Howard's and Logan's - one, the diabolical 15th which Sherman has hitherto never permitted to enter a city on account of their vile and desperate character. Slocum's Corps remained over the river, and I suppose Davis' also. The devils as they marched past looked strong and well clad in dark, dirty-looking blue. The wagon trains were immense. Night drew on. Of course we did not expect to sleep, but we looked forward to a tolerably tranquil night. Strange as it may seem we were actually idiotic enough to believe Sherman would keep his word! - A Yankee - and Sherman! It does seem incredible, such credulity, but I suppose we were so anxious to believe him - the lying fiend! I hope retributive justice will find him out one day. At about seven o'clock I was standing on the back piazza in the third story. Before me the whole southern horizon was lit up by camp-fires which dotted the woods. On one side the sky was illuminated by the burning of Gen. Hampton's residence a few miles off in the country, on the other side by some blazing buildings near the river. I had scarcely gone down stairs again when Henry told me there was a fire on Main Street. Sumter Street was brightly lighted by a

burning house so near our piazza that we could feel the heat. By the red glare we could watch the wretches walking - generally staggering - back and forth from the camp to the town - shouting - hurraing - cursing South Carolina - swearing - blaspheming - singing ribald songs and using obscene language that we were forced to go indoors. The fire on Main Street was now raging, and we anxiously watched its progress from the upper front windows. In a little while however the flames broke forth in every direction. The drunken devils roamed about setting fire to every house the flames seemed likely to spare. They were fully equipped for the noble work they had in hand. Each soldier was furnished with combustibles compactly put up. They would enter houses and in the presence of helpless women and children, pour turpentine on the beds and set them on fire. Guards were rarely of any assistance - most generally they assisted in the pillaging and firing. The wretched people rushing from their burning homes were not allowed to keep even the few necessaries they gathered up in their flight - even blankets and food were taken from them and destroyed. The Firemen attempted to use their engines, but the hose was cut to pieces and their lives threatened. The wind blew a fearful gale, wafting the flames from house to house with frightful rapidity. By midnight the whole town (except the outskirts) was wrapped in one huge blaze. Still the flames had not approached sufficiently near us to threaten our immediate safety, and for some reason not a single Yankee soldier had entered our house. And now the fire instead of approaching us seemed to recede - Henry said the danger was over and, sick of the dreadful scene, worn out with fatigue and excitement, we went downstairs to our room and tried to rest. I fell into a heavy kind of stupor from which I was presently roused by the bustle about me. Our neighbor Mrs. Caldwell and her two sisters stood before the fire wrapped in blankets and weeping. Their home was on fire, and the great sea of flame had again swept down our way to the very Campus walls. I felt a kind of sickening despair and did not even stir to go and look out. After awhile Jane came in to say that Aunt Josie's house was in flames - then we all went to the front door - My God! - what a scene! It was about four o'clock and the State house was one grand conflagration. Imagine night turned into noonday, only with a blazing, scorching glare that was horrible - a copper colored sky across which swept columns of black rolling smoke glittering with sparks and flying embers, while all around us were falling thickly showers of burning flakes. Everywhere the palpitating blaze walling the streets with solid masses of flames as far as the eye could reach - filling the air with its horrible roar. On every side the crackling and devouring fire, while every instant came the crashing of timbers and the thunder of falling buildings. A quivering molten ocean seemed to fill the air and sky. The Library building opposite us seemed framed by the gushing flames and smoke, while through the windows gleamed the liquid fire. This we thought must be Aunt Josie's house. It was the next one, for although hers caught frequently, it was saved. The College buildings caught all along [with these], and had the incendiary work continued one half hour longer than it did they must have gone. All the physicians and nurses were on the roof trying to save the buildings, and the poor wounded inmates left to themselves, such as could crawled out while those who could not move waited to be burned to death. The Common opposite the gate was crowded with homeless women and children, a few wrapped in blankets and many shivering in the night air. Such a scene as this with the drunken fiendish soldiery in their dark uniforms, infuriated cursing, screaming, exulting in their work, came nearer realizing the material ideal of hell than anything I ever expect to see again. They call themselves "Sherman's Hellhounds". . . . By great exertions Dr. Thomson found Sherman, and secured a strong guard in time to rescue the hospital. Mrs. C. who had been to see after her house now returned, and sitting down sobbed convulsively as she told us of the insults she had received from the soldiery engaged in pillaging her home. An officer riding by ordered the men to stop. So broken down and humbled by the terrible experience of the night was she that she cried - out - "O, sir, please make them stop!" You don't know what I suffered this night." - "I don't give a damn for your suffering" he replied, "but my men have no right to pillage against orders." . . .

“The State house of course is burned, and they talk of blowing up the new uncompleted granite one, but I do not know if it can be done in its unfinished unroofed condition. We dread tonight. Mother asked Dr.

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Thomson (who has been very kind about coming in and in keeping us posted) for a guard, but he says it is unnecessary as double guards will be placed throughout the city. Dr. T. says some of the officers feel very much ashamed of last night's work. Their compunctions must have visited them since daylight. The men openly acknowledged that they received orders to burn and plunder before they crossed the river. The drunken scoundrels who tried to force their way into the Campus this morning have been under guard at the gate - several hundred of them - fighting and quarrelling among themselves, for sever hours. Poor father! What will be his state of mind when he hears of all this. The first reports that reach him will be even exaggerated. It is some comfort to us in our uncertainty and anxiety to hope that he may be safe. The explosion last night was accidental blowing up of the Charleston freight depot. There had been powder stored there and it was scattered thickly over the floor. The poor people and negroes went in with torches to search for provisions - When will these Yankees go that we may breathe freely again! The past three days are more like three weeks. And yet when they are gone we may be worse off with the whole country laid waste and the railroads out in every direction. Starvation seems to stare us in the face. Our two families have between them a few bushels of corn and a little musty flour. We have no meat, but the negroes give us a little bacon every day." . . .