

Union Troops Cause Destruction

Dolly Sumner Lunt



OVERVIEW

During the final year of the Civil War, Union General William Tecumseh Sherman marched from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia, ordering his troops—often called Yankees—to destroy everything in their path in order to break the will of the South. Excerpts from the diary of Dolly Sumner Lunt describe what happened on her plantation in 1864.

GUIDED READING As you read, consider the following questions:

- How does Lunt view the Union soldiers?
 - What do the soldiers do to the plantation?
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July 29, 1864—Sleepless nights. The report is that the Yankees have left Covington for Macon, . . . to release prisoners held there. They robbed every house on the road of its provisions [supplies], sometimes taking every piece of meat, blankets and wearing apparel, silver and arms of every description. They would take silk dresses and put them under their saddles, and many other things for which they had no use. Is this the way to make us love them and their Union? Let the poor people answer [those] whom they have deprived of every mouthful of meat and of their livestock to make any! Our mills, too, they have burned, destroying an immense amount of property.

November 19, 1864—I walked to the gate. There they came filing up.

I hastened back to my frightened servants and told them that they had better hide. [I] then went back to the gate to claim protection and a guard. But like demons they rush in! My yards are full. To my smokehouse, my dairy, pantry, kitchen, and cellar, like famished [starving] wolves they come, breaking locks and whatever is in their way. The thousand pounds of meat in my smokehouse is gone in a twinkling. My flour, my meat, my lard, butter, eggs, pickles of various kinds, . . . wine, jars, and jugs are all gone. My 18 fat turkeys, my hens, chickens, and fowls, my young pigs, are shot down in my yard and hunted as if they were Rebels themselves. Utterly powerless, I ran out and appealed to the guard.

"I cannot help you, Madam. It is orders."

As I stood there, . . . I saw driven, first, old Dutch, my dear old buggy horse, who has carried my beloved husband so many miles, . . . and who at last drew him to his grave. Then came old Mary, my brood mare, who for years had been too old and stiff for work, with her three-year-old colt, my two-year-old mule, and her last little baby colt. There they go! There go my mules, my sheep, and, worse than all, my boys [slaves]!