

Slaughter at Cainhoy, The Worst Racial Violence in the South Carolina Lowcountry During Reconstruction

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by Gene Kizer, Jr., Charleston Athenaeum Press

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The Brick Church, a/k/a White Church, north of Cainhoy in Berkeley County, S.C.

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During the presidential campaign of 1876, a political meeting took place at beautiful Brick Church near Cainhoy, South Carolina, Monday, October 16, 1876. It ended shortly after it started when

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Republican blacks savagely attacked the mostly white Democrats and shot, beat, hacked, mutilated and robbed them, killing five white men out of the group and severely wounding several others. An eyewitness, confirming the brutality of the attack, stated:
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. . . Mr. Whitaker met with a worse fate, for he was brought in alive, suffering fearfully from buckshot through his stomach, and huge hacks of flesh taken out of him by an axe or hatchet. . . .

Daly (18 years old) was also left on the ground when wounded. His head was hacked in five places when found.

Poor Walter Gradick, a mere boy, had his eye gouged out, and was cruelly beaten and wounded. . . .¹

All the victims had been stripped of their clothing and robbed.

This happened during the eighth year of Congressional Reconstruction in South Carolina, which began in 1868. Only three of the original eleven Confederate states were still occupied: South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana. In the other eight, white Democrats, often with black support, had regained control of their governments.²

There was despair and hopelessness among Southern whites during much of Reconstruction, especially in South Carolina. Of 60,000 Confederate soldiers supplied by South Carolina to Southern armies in the war, 20,000 had been killed and another 20,000 maimed. The war in its totality had claimed 750,000 dead and over a million maimed. It is hard to fathom the grief and heartbreak from all that though Basil Gildersleeve, a Confederate soldier from Charleston who today is still considered the greatest American classical scholar of all time, tried in his book, *The Creed of the Old South*, published 27 years after the war:

A friend of mine, describing the crowd that besieged the Gare de Lyon in Paris, when the circle of fire was drawing round the city, and foreigners were hastening to escape, told me that the press was so great that he could touch in every direction those who had been crushed to death as they stood, and had not had room to fall. Not wholly unlike this was the pressure brought to bear on the Confederacy. It was only necessary to put out your hand and you touched a corpse; and that not an alien corpse, but the corpse of a brother or a friend.³

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Reconstruction had begun this way for most white Southerners:

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For some time now a straggling procession of emaciated, crippled men in ragged gray had been sadly making their way through the wreckage to homes that in too many instances were found to be but piles of ashes. These men had fought to exhaustion. For weeks they would be found passing wearily over the country roads and into the towns, on foot and on horseback. It was observed that 'they are so worn out that they fall down on the sidewalks and sleep.' The countryside through which they passed presented the appearance of an utter waste, the fences gone, the fields neglected, the animals and herds driven away, and only lone chimneys marking spots where once had stood merry homes. A proud patrician lady riding between Chester and Camden in South Carolina scarcely saw a living thing, and 'nothing but tall blackened chimneys to show that any man had ever trod this road before'; and she was moved to tears at the funereal aspect of the gardens where roses were already hiding the ruins. The long thin line of gray-garbed men, staggering from weakness into towns, found them often gutted with the flames of incendiaries or soldiers. Penniless, sick at heart and in body, and humiliated by defeat, they found their families in poverty and despair.⁴

Blacks and whites could have adjusted to their new relationship after the war but the most unscrupulous people in all of American history, carpetbaggers and scalawags out for plunder and political advantage, did not want peace. They could not make money and hold power with peace, so they created racial hatred and division using violence and lies for their political advantage, not unlike the Marxists in America today with their "systemic racism" invention, and racial hate like Critical Race Theory, and fraud like the *1619 Project*.

If it is true that history repeats itself, then the methods of control during Reconstruction and the methods of control of American Marxists today match perfectly. Of course, it's not exactly true that history repeats itself. It's the manifestations of human nature that repeat themselves over and over throughout time because human nature does not change.

So, South Carolina endured the lawlessness and corruption of an entrenched Republican Party loaded with carpetbaggers and scalawags for over eight long years. White frustration was epitomized by lawyer George Rivers Walker, son of the British consul in Charleston, who was at Cainhoy. Walker identifies a black Republican named Cyrus Gaillard as the one who kept the massacre going by telling other blacks to keep shooting the whites.⁵ Walker laments that taking legal action against Gaillard would be a waste of time because:

. . . first, the Republican trial justices will throw all obstacles in my way; when I say Republican I mean by it always Carolina Republican, for you know my Northern education prevents my holding any prejudices against bona fide Republicans of the North - then

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Bowen has complete control of the sessions, and the prosecuting officer, Buttz, is too well known for you to doubt the futility of my effort. . . .⁶
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Walker is referring to the Republican sheriff of Charleston County, Christopher Columbus Bowen, and his protege, Solicitor C. W. Buttz.

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