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Reconstruction

RECONSTRUCTION

(U.S. Army and the Post-Civil War Era)

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

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NOTE: TRANSFER OF USCT TO TEXAS, 1866

The US Army concentrated its efforts on border defense following the surrender at Appomattox. Poor diplomatic relations with England endangered the coast-line and Canadian border, while Indian unrest and the pro-Confederate regime of Maximilian in Mexico made the Southwest vulnerable. To meet these dangers, whether real or imagined, stood an army in midst of demobilizing, its one million- plus strength diminishing to 800,000 by Oct, 1865. In 1866, black troops formed the majority of the standing army. See:

Ganoe, William A. The History of the United States Army. NY: Appleton, 1924. pp. 298-310. E181.G17.

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Moreover, a demonstration of strength in Texas was intended to impress more than the Mexicans. There were internal reasons for the massive troop transfer. Philip Sheridan noted in the report cited below that:

"taken into consideration the fact that all our military projects, during the war, against Texas had been failures, and that on this account the Union people there had come to look upon the government as weak, it was determined to throw a large force into that State and along the Rio Grande border."

In other words, the aim was to intimidate former rebels and prevent insurrection in this last outpost of the Confederacy. How better to demonstrate who had won the war than filling the state with black troops? See:

U.S. War Dept. Annual Reports.... Wash, DC: GPO, 1866. pp. 44-50. UA24.A1.