Cope, Cooperate, Combat: Civilian Responses to Union Occupation in Saline County, Missouri, During the Civil War

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Abstract
The Union occupation of Saline County, Missouri, during the Civil War brought many challenges to the civilian population. Civilians responded to the federal presence in a variety of ways: a few citizens coped with the situation, most cooperated in the face of an immediate threat, and others combated the federal incursion ruthlessly. A violent cycle of resistance and retaliation erupted between the pro-Confederate civilians and guerillas and the federals. Federal attempts to punish the Confederate enemy and to stabilize society encouraged more resistance. Faced with increasing defiance, the Union hardened policies. The presence of two rival forces in the county sharply divided the people's sympathies, destroying neutrality. Those who remained loyal to the Union suffered grievously since the Union failed to stabilize the situation and to protect them from guerrilla attacks. Some civilians cooperated with both Union soldiers and guerillas; however, this ambiguity only made them targets for both sides. Furthermore, Union forces tried to subordinate the pro-Confederate population by seizing local law, disrupting gender norms and familial structures, and inverting class, racial, and ethnic hierarchies, which initiated a complete dismantling of the antebellum southern social structure. By 1865, the citizens of Saline County, the majority of which had favored moderation and compromise before the war, had had their way of life destroyed by years of Union hostility and guerrilla violence: yet, hope remained.

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During the American Civil War, Missouri was a hotly contested border state populated by both Union and Confederate sympathizers. It sent armies, generals, and supplies to both sides, was occupied with a story of both flags, continued dual government, and endured a bloody neighbor against neighbor interside war within the larger national war.