

**NEGROES AND THEIR
TREATMENT IN VIRGINIA
FROM 1865 TO 1867**

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Negroes and Their Treatment in Virginia from 1865 to 1867 by John Preston McConnell

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JOHN PRESTON MCCONNELL

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VIRGINIA FROM 1865 TO 1867**

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PREFACE.

FROM 1865 to 1867 an unprecedented revolution was witnessed in the Southern States. In the following pages an attempt is made to note the essential features of that upheaval through which the negroes passed in two years from chattel slavery to full citizenship.

In these two momentous years the white people were called upon to adjust themselves not only to the full recognition of the freedom of the negroes but to accept them as fellow-citizens with equal civil and political rights.

Many old prejudices had to be reckoned with in this adjustment. This revolution was attended by less demoralization of society in Virginia than in most of the other Southern States, nevertheless the transition from the old order to the new was painful and confusing.

It is hoped that this discussion of that troubled period will, *in some measure*, prove useful in correcting any wrong impressions that may yet exist as to what were the sentiments of the people in regard to the changed condition of the negroes and what was the civil, political and social status of the freedmen during that unhappy period which culminated in the enfranchisement of the blacks by congressional act.

This little book is a part of a proposed larger work treating the history of Virginia since the War between the States. The cares and responsibilities incident to my work as a teacher have thus far prevented my finishing the proposed work.

In the preparation of this work I am indebted to Dr. R. H. Dabney and many other persons for assistance in many ways. I am especially indebted to my wife, who contributed many helpful suggestions and prepared the manuscript for the printer.

JOHN PRESTON McCONNELL.

*Emory and Henry College,
December, 1869.*

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CHAPTER I.

NUMBER AND DISTRIBUTION OF NEGROES IN VIRGINIA.

THE surrender of General Lee at Appomattox virtually closed the War between the States. This contest had freed the negroes throughout the seceding States; but the future status of the freedmen had not yet been determined.

In the spring of 1865 there were probably about half a million negroes in the State of Virginia—a number sufficiently large to prove a very disturbing factor amongst a white population of less than 700,000. It added much to the gravity of the situation that in a large part of the State the negroes were a very small part of the population, while in other grand divisions of the State the excited and idle freedmen were in a decided majority. There are no figures giving the population of Virginia in the year 1865, yet the census reports of 1860 or 1870 will enable one to determine with considerable accuracy the distribution of the white and colored population throughout the State at the close of the war.

The census of 1870 shows, in the eighteen southwest counties of the State, a white population of 152,297 and a colored population of only 21,595. In the twelve Valley counties having a white population of 117,321 there were only 25,681 negroes. In these two great divisions of the State, embracing thirty counties with a white population of

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