

Course of the Raiders—Their Depredations—Battle of  
Eatonton—Faithful Negro—Hancock Mounted Rifles, etc.

SPARTA, GA., August 4, 1864.

**Editors Constitutionalist**—The Yankee raiders to whom we referred, as passing through this county (Hancock) were the same who burned Gordon and the Oconee bridge. They separated from the main body above Clinton, and passed through Mountsville, twelve miles West of Milledgeville. Here they impressed a fat old gentleman by the name of Shoat, to guide them to Gordon—made him ride a bare backed mule, hard trotting and lean, as the tale goes, by way of punishment for his implacability. Of course they left him *hors de combat* before they reached the place. Thence they went down the railroad, burning the depots and destroying the Oconee bridge. They then turned up the river, crossed at Tucker's Ferry, below Milledgeville, passed in a few miles of the Capital, having one of Tucker's negroes for a pilot. Several were captured near the bridge at Milledgeville.

As they passed up the river they obtained the names of the principal farmers, but seemed in too great a hurry to visit many of them. They made Mr. Briscoe, of this county, pilot them to Weller's Ferry, under a threat of being shot, where they dropped their negro pilot and some others who were anxious to accompany them, with the consoling remark that they had no further use for them. Mr Butts, our informant, says they numbered 175 all told, when they crossed the river, and had seventy-five likely mules stolen from planters. This was about noon on Sunday. That night they camped near Long Shoals where Wright's cotton factory stands, and, strange to say, decamped next morning to parts unknown, without injuring the factory or Lawrence's flour mill near by.

Another party of raiders, 200 in number, made their appearance at Eatonton about sunrise on Monday morning, dismounted and set fire to the depot. While in the very act about 100 Hancock and Baldwin militia arrived from Milledgeville. They stopped the cars below, sent out scouts and approached cautiously the lurking foe, who it

near Hillsboro', in which Stoneman, their commander, was taken prisoner. A surrender was demanded, and the raiders instantly doffed their hats in token of submission, when some of the "melish," not understanding the manoeuvre, instantly fired into them, and the Yankees thinking no quarters would be allowed them, fled to their horses, and escaped, every man of them, except, perhaps, one wounded. The gallant affair will doubtless be recorded in the annals of this war as the battle of Eatonton.

The same rascals would have fired the Eatonton factory but for the rise of a faithful negro, belonging to Col. Devitt, of Wheeler's cavalry, whose family reside near this place, as refugees. The boy in question was driving some cattle of his master's to this county, and a short distance this side of the factory, met a Yankee scout, who pretended to be a member of Wheeler's cavalry, but finally acknowledged himself what the boy took him for, a Yankee. The faithful negro, fearful of the loss of his horse and cows, told him there was a large force of rebel cavalry at the factory. He instantly mounted his stolen mule, and left his mired horse, bridle and saddle, and two blankets behind as trophies for the negro. He galloped back, met his approaching comrades, told them that Iverson's forces were just ahead and turned them from their course. The depot was burning as the negro passed through Eatonton.