

****Early Dec 1863 -

MG Benjamin Butler was now commanding union forces in the northeastern NC and southeastern VA region. Troops under BG Wild would reek havoc on the southern peoples, burning everything, tearing up railroad, releasing slaves and a controversial hanging of a captured southern soldier - Daniel Bright who he hung outside of Elizabeth City. This was a big deal and sent further atrocities into motion with each army wanting to one up each other as pay-backs. Pickett would respond by wanting to hang everyone associated with Butler. He ordered the hanging of a colored soldier captured from Wild's troops during a union raid.

Feb 1864, Another controversial event was Pickett's ordering of 22 captured POW's from the New Bern operations (that failed horribly under Gen Seth Barton's involvement). The failed New Bern mission was scrapped after only a few days and was a huge disappointment. Union soldiers were captured at an outpost at Beach Grove. 22 were identified as being deserters of a Confederate local guard and sentenced to death as turncoats. All 22 were hung and it caused a lot of back-forth threats between the two armies of "we'll do this or that to captured prisoners....."

Much turmoil was attempted post war by several politicians to charge Confederates with war crimes. Especially General's Pickett and Hoke for the Feb-March 1864 hanging of 22 unionist and a USCT soldier. A Feb 17, 1864 military correspondence letter written by Pickett clearly shows responsibility by him for ordering the executions. This made the war crime possibility even more so serious and he and Hoke are VERY lucky they were not tried in a military court. Andrew Johnson's administration was eager to move past the war and I would also give MUCH credit to Ulysses Grant (1868 Pres) for also stopping these attempts and letting the country move forward to heal. Pickett had fled to Canada from October 1865 to Dec/Jan 1866. His wife and son had also caught up with him and stayed with him awhile there. He spent time at lodging in Montreal and was provided some basic financial support by RE Lee's cousin - BG Edwin Gray Lee who directed a Confederate espionage ring operating out of Canada. Confederates were eventually given amnesty by the Johnson administration prior to Grant's inauguration on Jan 1869.