

"PART 7"

"The Redemptioners"

O.A Kennedy, of Ogden Utah, wrote a very informative essay sent directly to the editor of THE STANDARD newspaper in the year 1917. His message to the readers of paper was to express his disapproval of the handling of "widows and orphans" from Europe to Canada and to expose a serious issue he called "the scheme of the ruling class" to exploit the cheap labor of poor immigrants particularly of white Europeans. His intent was to create a clear scope of a problem deeply rooted in our history by giving a detailed account of an "important chapter in the story of the settlement of America".

Mr. Kennedy's first statement from the historian Bancroft sets the tone with brute force, when he quotes "the history of our colonization is the history of the crimes of Europe". It sets a very direct message as to the tone of the rest of the essay, this one sentence clears up any "confusion or the potential of any misread intentions right off the bat. The article had a particular voice speaking directly to the "class conscious" (woke) readers of The Standard giving different perspective to a predominately racialize subject.

The details lay-out as though common in "some school histories", he highlights key facts, with specific dates, in a very precise manner. One key point he supports puts black and white slavery in the United States in the same year, 1619 is bold and risky especially during his time. He almost immediately makes plan although not directly referenced, the clear distinction between cattle slavery and white slaves by withholding the superior or inferior nature of either.

As "**Redemptioners**" whites were offered the right to redeem their freedoms by "paying a certain cash sum or by working for a certain number of years of labor- generally seven. He explains further that the shipment of the "**Redemptioners**" to America was encouraged because a large piece of land had "no value with out people living on them." But when the demand was low for quality labor, the "jail birds and paupers" were sold on the docks to the highest bidder right long-side African slaves.

In the facts that follow, Mr. Kennedy very persuasively describes all the key points that shaped the narrative of the slave experience even to today. He gives detailed accounts of extortion, corruption, runaway slaves, lashes, branding and slaves sold on auction blocks. The difference is that this narrative described the plight of the "**Redemptioners**" who were all white men, women and children. It is here Mr. Kennedy's makes reference to the Negro educator "Booker T Washington" makes his most definitive statement, "that if African's were not discovered white slavery would have continued."

As you read through the details of Mr. Kennedy's and work through subtle messages you don't get this bias overtone of racial identity that we know as the core of our history. This was a man in 1917, exactly one hundred years ago, who placed no distinction between the deportation of bodies and souls and the scheme of the ruling class to exploit cheap labor for the sake of capitalism. It was clear that for him that this was a human rights issue that needed to be addressed and should not be allowed to continue with the "widows and orphans from England". At the end Mr. Kennedy's perspective is made clear, in that cattle slavery, indentured servitude and serfdom were all various degrees on the same spectrum and the long standing "scheme of the ruling classes" exploiting poor immigrants had to be exposed.



(1916 Boy Picking Cotton in Oklahoma)

Click links below to read the full articles:

Reference:

1. Kennedy, OA (January 1, 1917), [“War Widows and White Slaves as seen by Ogden Man’s peep into History”](#) The Ogden Standard, page 2
2. Kennedy, OA (January 1, 1917), [“War Widows and White Slaves as seen by Ogden Man’s peep into History”](#) The Ogden Standard, page 8

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