

## Transcription

Excerpt of John C. Underwood's testimony before a Congressional committee:

When I was holding court at Richmond recently, I had a conversation with one of the leading men in that city, and he said to me that the enlistment of negro troops by the United States was the turning-point of the rebellion; that it was the heaviest blow they ever received. He remarked that when the negroes deserted their masters, and showed a general disposition to do so and join the forces of the United States, intelligent men everywhere saw that the matter was ended. I have often heard a similar expression of opinion from others, and I am satisfied that the origin of this bitterness towards the negro is this belief among leading men that their weight thrown into the scale decided the contest against them. However the fact may be, I think that such is a pretty well settled conclusion among leading rebels in Virginia.

---

**Citation:** Testimony of Federal Judge John C. Underwood on January 31, 1866, *Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, at the First Session Thirty-Ninth Congress*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1866), 2:8.