

“Richmond”

Richmond was burnin’ when we got there; a hundred thousand Federals, we marched into the square.

*They blew the bridges on the James, building for miles around in Flames,
As Jeff Davis rode out on the last Danville train.*

From Wilderness to Petersburg they stretched our lines out thin, and we lost ninety thousand on the road to Richmond.

And with a wild cavalry, Sherman marched into the sea; burned Atlanta to Savannah destroyed the Confederacy.

(Chorus)

The night that Richmond fell, from coast to coast they rang the bells, drinkin’ and dancin’ in the streets, as the ‘Stars and Bars’ burned in defeat, singin’ “Na na na...”

On Palm Sunday Grant sat down with Lee, on friendly terms to reunite the country.

By Good Friday Lincoln was dead; they shot a hole right through his head;

Now it’s Radical Reconstruction instead.

(Chorus)

Historical Background:

The United States Civil War was the most transforming and catastrophic event in this country’s history. 620,000 Americans died in this conflict, and four million slaves were released from bondage. For the first two years of the war, the Confederate Army was extremely successful, and it appeared unlikely that the Union Army would be able to defeat the South and reunite them with the North. However, the superior manpower and material of the North began to take its toll on the South. The Battle of Vicksburg in the west, and Gettysburg in the east, both of which occurred in the first week of July 1863, marked a major turning point in the war. For the next two years, the South continued to inflict heavy casualties on the North, but by April 1865, with the fall of Richmond, the South was all but defeated.

Abraham Lincoln had been crafting lenient peace terms, and a plan of reconstruction, which were both favorable to the South, as early as 1863. When Lincoln was assassinated, just five days after the surrender at Appomattox, the friendly peace and reconstruction plans died along with him. A group of radical Republicans won sweeping victories in the mid-term congressional elections of 1866, which enabled them to implement a program of reconstruction that was designed to punish the South. This program of radical reconstruction left a legacy of resentment and hatred of the North by the South that lingered well into the 20th century.

