

**December 10, 1864 - Predicament of black and white refugees in the Murfreesboro environs,
excerpt from a letter by Major-General R. H. Milroy to his wife in
Rensselaer, Indiana**



January 1, 1865

My Dear Mary,

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. . . There were thousands of poor negroes and their families who had been living and working on the R. R. cutting wood-taking care of horses-cattle etc and there were about 2000 refugees-mostly white men who had run away from the Reb conscription in the surrounding counties. All these were deprived of the means of substance. Several hundred of these refugees had come in on good horses for which they would obtain no feed. I got Rousseau to issue an order authorizing my Qr Master to purchase all these horses for Cavalry and artillery horses that were fit, which helped them along very much. But the poor darkies suffered very much for both fire wood and food. The Rebs were so near our own pickets that it was unsafe to go out for wood and all the stumps, logs, fences, and shade trees inside the pickets were mostly used up-and everything in the way of provisions became very scarce and could hardly be had for any price. I frequently seen the poor darkies greedily grabbing the entrails of hogs and beef cattle that our butchers had killed for food-There is a fine steam mill in the town that kept us from starving. We sent out our forage trains to the country for corn. All our cavalry with a brigade of Inf. and a section of Artillery accompanied each train and though they had skirmishing with the Reb Cav they always succeeded in bringing in a train loaded with corn. Part of this corn was taken to the Mill, shelled and ground, and the meal issued to all of us for bread, which was all the kind we had for ten days. . .



Papers of General Milroy, p. 478.