The sign at Colfax

By Bill Decker | bdecker@theadvertiser.com

The Colfax Riot in which three white men and 150 negroes were slain. This event on April 13, 1873 marked the end of carpetbag misrule in the South.
The Colfax massacre took place on April 13, 1873. It was on Easter Sunday. In it, Jesse McKinney, one of the black Colfax residents agrees. He's a descendant of African-Americans who, through a network of black and white abolitionists, helped freed black slaves and got them to freedom in Colfax.

A marker in a cemetery near the First Baptist Church of Colfax, memorials to three men who died at the massacre on Easter Sunday in 1873. It reads, “In loving remembrance of the memory of Stephen Decatur Parish, John West Hadnot, Sidney Harris, who helped Colfax fight for white supremacy. All soldiers.”

RESOURCES
Publisher’s page for “The Day Freedom Died” by Charles Lane: http://tinyurl.com/dayfreedomdied
Publisher’s page for “The Colfax Massacre” by LeeAnna Keith: http://tinyurl.com/colfaxmassacre
David Blight’s Yale lectures on the Civil War and Reconstruction: http://tinyurl.com/davidblight

Colfax today

Doris Lively, the librarian at the Colfax Library next door to the marker, said she is most impressed about history of Colfax from West Virginia. “I don’t feel it,” Lively said. “I’ve had a hard time in here and we were pleasantly surprised.”

Colfax is a hotbed where people are getting strung up. But just because there’s an absence of protest doesn’t mean the violence is necessarily reduced. The limits on federal enforcement power increased in the Reconstruction years, mostly in the South and on from 1866 to 1875. Pre-Reconstruction laws were mostly intent to limit African-Americans’ rights to vote. The African Americans were employed in some of the major institutions, including the bank for the family’s benefit and the schools that were started.

When I see that, it’s a reminder that it’s really important for us to remember that there was a massacre, that there were persons who were lynched, but it wasn’t taught in school, it was one time when I heard about it. It was a discussion about it in church. They happened once.

But the Hammer family had its own story of a different kind. In the 1870s, all of Jesse McKinney, one of the black Colfax residents, killed in the massacre.

Of Jesse McKinney, one of the black Colfax residents agrees. He's a descendant of African-Americans who, through a network of black and white abolitionists, helped freed black slaves and got them to freedom in Colfax.

The limits on federal enforcement power increased in the Reconstruction years, mostly in the South and on from 1866 to 1875. Pre-Reconstruction laws were mostly intent to limit African-Americans’ rights to vote. The African Americans were employed in some of the major institutions, including the bank for the family’s benefit and the schools that were started.

When I see that, it’s a reminder that it’s really important for us to remember that there was a massacre, that there were persons who were lynched, but it wasn’t taught in school, it was one time when I heard about it. It was a discussion about it in church. They happened once.