

THEY DESERVED A BETTER FATE
THE CIVIL WAR SERVICE OF THE SECOND KANSAS STATE MILITIA
REGIMENT AND THE BATTLE OF THE BLUE

by

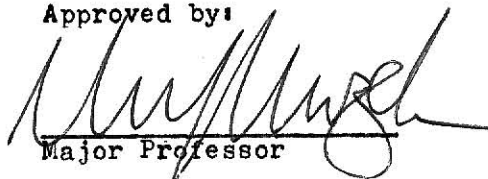
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INTRODUCTION

The history of the United States' military establishment before the Civil War included spoken and written debate between opposing groups of military theorists -- on one hand stood those who favored a volunteer, professional army, and on the other those committed to the idea of the democratic citizen soldier. Early in American history the citizen militia was relied upon; politicians were obsessed with the fear ingrained by the founding fathers that a large standing army posed a threat to the liberties of the nation. The Mexican War had been a moral victory for the advocates of this militia or volunteer army. Regulars supported by volunteers drawn from the states won victories.

During the years between the end of the Mexican War and the secession of the southern states the army stagnated. No major war was anticipated; the military took on the characteristics of a defensive force with a small number of regular soldiers which would be expanded should the need arise. Regulars would form the nucleus of a volunteer-militia army. As Emory Upton pointed out after the Civil War, this resulted in one soldier for every 1,200 miles for suppressing Indians and guarding inhabitants and immigrants in the region west of the Mississippi. Theoretically the militia could be called on, and theoretically it could bring three million men to the colors, but in fact the militia was destitute of instruction and training and very nearly destitute of equipment.

The Civil War in Kansas was defensive in nature. The frontier state was relegated to a minor role in the Union's overall strategic plan for the war, with most major campaigns taking place east of the Mississippi. Kansas was expected to provide volunteer regiments to the war effort,

but she held no value for Union strategists busy fighting in Virginia and the deep South. The Confederacy made only one serious threat of invasion toward Kansas, in 1864, and the Kansas State Militia responded under the principles of the expansible army; it formed itself around a core of regulars and experienced volunteers to face the invasion. Whether the Battle of Westport and the fight-within-a-fight at the Blue River proved or disproved the expansible theory of emphasized the defensive characteristic of the militia is a question which remains unanswered.

The Wyandotte Commercial Gazette reported on September 14, 1864: "The Richmond papers announce that the rebel General Price is about to invade Missouri again. Great numbers of the peaceable citizens of that State are expected to rally to his standard."¹ Following on the heels of more than a year of alarms and veiled threats from rebels and bushwhackers, this report aroused the people of the young state of Kansas to a frenzied fear and an uproar of defensiveness. For many Kansans the Civil War had begun in the mid-1850's with bands of free-state and proslave rivals skirmishing to determine the status of the territory. Minor but bloody fights had ravaged the Kansas-Missouri border throughout the remainder of that decade until Kansas became a state.

The future state capital, Topeka, was free-state and therefore was deeply embroiled in the slavery controversy. During the first year after its founding the fledgling city obtained needed supplies from towns along the Missouri River, inhabited by slavery sympathizers. Incidents between Topekans and the towns on the border were commonplace; for example, one man hired by John Farnsworth was robbed of team, wagon, and merchandise on a return trip from Westport and was told by proslave men that "he could go back to that place but once more, and that he had

better postpone that visit to the latest possible day."²

The legal territorial government of Kansas was proslave and supported the national administration of President Franklin Pierce. Shawnee County, surrounding Topeka, had within its borders two proslave towns, Tecumseh and Indianola. Both communities were at least as large as Topeka at the time, and Tecumseh was vying with Topeka to become the county seat. Each community was morally supported by the territorial legislature. With nowhere to turn for Eastern merchandise and with serious opposition from their neighbors, the inhabitants of Topeka (and other free-state centers) faced a crisis by late 1856. Fry Giles, a resident of Topeka during the period, wrote later of the original company of militia formed in the town. To fill their larders denied goods from the Missouri towns, this first company was little more than a raiding party. "A train was taken along," wrote Giles, "With which the commodities captured were brought to Topeka." Indianola and Tecumseh were the victims of the Topeka militia, and a depot for the stolen goods was established for distribution until lines of communications could be created with Iowa and the East through Nebraska.³

Other para-military companies were formed in the county during the troubled decade, and most of them were free-state. The Indianola Free-State Guards were organized at this time and took part in a confrontation with slavery people of that community which was later dubbed the "Battle of Indianola." Auburn and Dover, on the western edge of the county, had companies by then, and units of militia were also organized in Monmouth Township in the county's southeastern corner and in Tecumseh. A free-state militia for the territory was set up by the extra-legal Topeka legislature's executive committee in February, 1856, and it was voted to prepare as fully as possible for

self-defense against Missouri invaders.⁴ Jim Lane and Charles Robinson, a pair of prominent state politicians, were appointed major generals with Robinson commander-in-chief.

One of the major reasons why many military theorists leaned toward professionalization of the army was the lack of training and experience of the militia. Not so in the case of the Shawnee County companies. This local militia met, drilled, and campaigned on numerous occasions during the territorial period and early statehood. When Missouri bushwhackers crossed the border and killed a number of free-state farmers on Pottawatomie Creek in southeastern Kansas, Jim Lane called out the militia around Lawrence and Topeka and headed south to avenge the murders, but these men never saw action.⁵ Various companies from the county briefly took part in engagements or confrontations in "Bleeding Kansas," but many of these actions were undertaken on the members' own initiatives. These guerrilla tactics led to an undying enmity on both sides. Bitter hatred was engendered between Missourians and Kansans; the citizens of the border would often come into conflict until Kansas became a state and the slavery question was finally settled at the close of the Civil War.⁶

This high emotion carried over into the Civil War in 1861. Union volunteer regiments from both Kansas and Missouri fought numerous battles against General Sterling Price and secessionist Missourians. The ethical character of troops on both sides was bad, both Confederate and Federal volunteers showing very little military organization and much emotion in the border war. Several Shawnee County men died at one of the earliest and bloodiest battles of the war in Missouri, Wilson's Creek. The truly serious fighting brought a new rash of "Military meetings" in the county and the establishment of more militia

companies. One August meeting reported by the Kansas State Record (in the same weekly issue which tolled the casualties of Wilson's Creek) expressed the feelings of most men of the county; Monmouth Township organized a militia company "as a home guard" and resolved "to go anywhere within the bound of Kansas for the protection of all loyal citizens."⁷

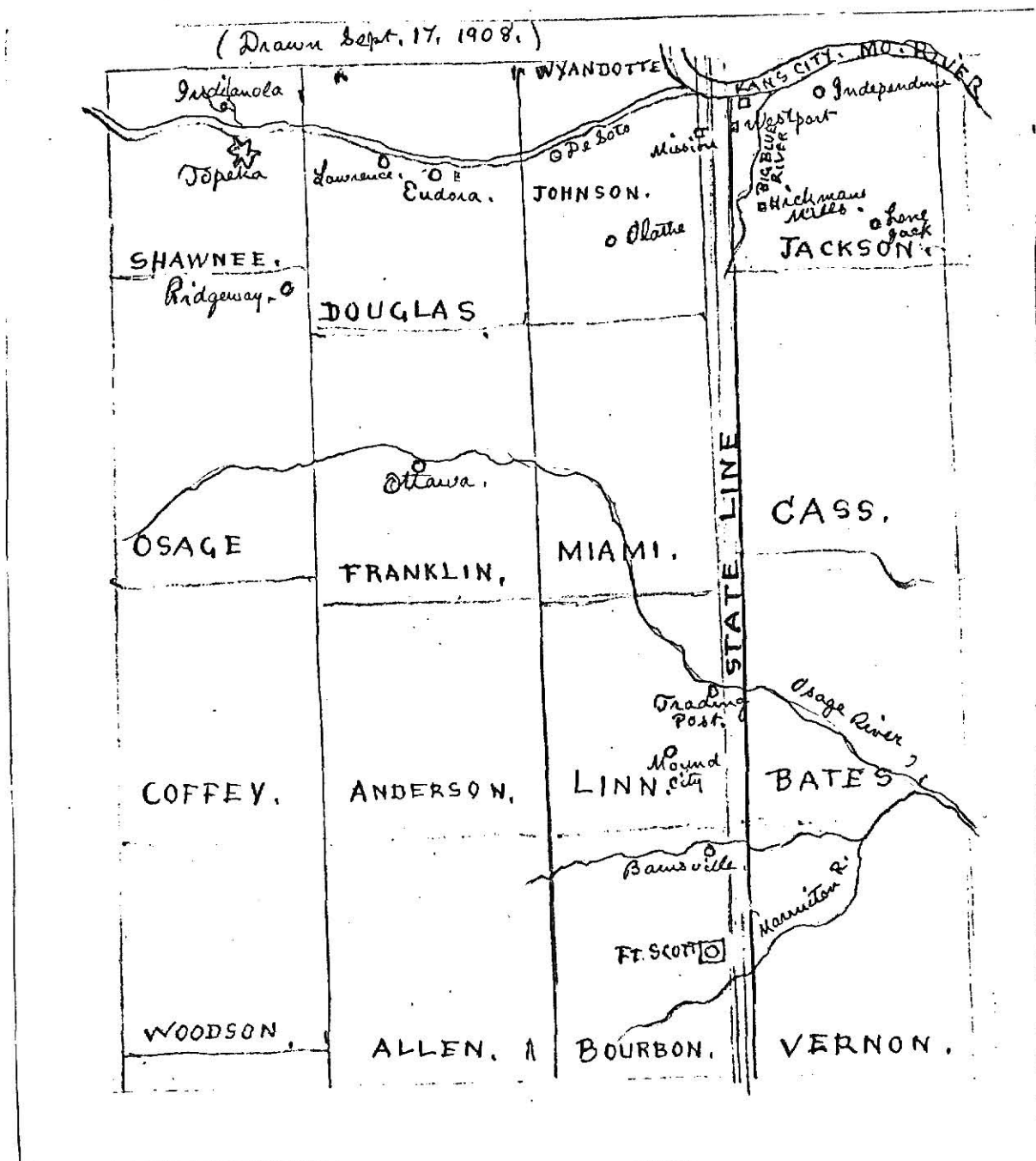
But despite the creation of companies of militia and the departure of volunteers for embattled fronts east of Kansas, the state itself was not seriously threatened or attacked. Indeed, the state as a whole enjoyed good times in 1861 and 1862. A severe drought that ruined 1860 crops came to an end in April, 1861, and Kansas prospered economically during the following years. The problem for a while was one of surplus, not scarcity. Heavy Federal military purchasing provided a profitable market and eventually absorbed nearly all the agricultural output of the new state.⁸

This relative tranquility and prosperity ended abruptly in August, 1863. The death of some Southern sympathizers held in a Federal prison which collapsed touched off the anger of the infamous former school teacher turned guerrilla, William Quantrill. He and some 300 raiders crossed the border and traversed fifty miles of Kansas undetected. On August 21 they burned Lawrence, destroying more than 200 buildings and killing 150 citizens. Quantrill eluded all pursuit and returned safely to Missouri.⁹

Immediately after the sack of Lawrence, Topekan, fearing a similar attack, organized a militia company to protect themselves.¹⁰ A little over two weeks later, on September 6, a messenger arrived from Brigadier General Thomas Ewing, brother-in-law of William Tecumseh Sherman and commander of the Department of Missouri, carrying word that Quantrill

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WITH DIAGRAMS
THAT ARE CROOKED
COMPARED TO THE
REST OF THE
INFORMATION ON
THE PAGE.**

**THIS IS AS
RECEIVED FROM
CUSTOMER.**



MAP 1: Kansas - Missouri border. Drawing by Samuel J. Reader.
 Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

was again threatening Kansas, this time with a thousand guerrillas. This announcement confirmed the suspicions of people in the county, and a public meeting was called to examine defensive preparations for Topeka. The only action taken was advise for "every man to be prepared with arms and ammunition for immediate use, if necessary."¹¹ For over a year afterward the embryonic Shawnee County militia, now designated the Second Regiment, Kansas State Militia, would meet together for drill under the auspices of the State Adjutant-General, Topekan C.K. Holliday. The men were armed with ante-bellum muskets from the surplus at Fort Leavenworth. The regiment saw no action and obtained no more experience until General Price came to Westport. But when the time came for action the Shawnee County militia was to perform like regulars.

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PRICE COMES TO WESTPORT

In the fall of 1864, the only war in Kansas was in the west, where Plains Indians disturbed the furthestmost fringe of settlement. Kansans felt that the Civil War raging east of the Mississippi River was practically over for them. The Confederate Trans-Mississippi army was in Arkansas, far removed from Kansas. In neighboring Missouri, bushwhackers had evacuated counties bordering Kansas, and no longer posed a threat. The war was relegated to fourth position in the minds of Kansans, behind state politics, crops, and weather.

With the year 1864 came an election and incumbent governor Thomas Carney ran for re-election. He was elected governor in 1862 with the support of Senator James H. Lane, but political differences and a personal conflict between the two ended in a struggle to control the fall elections. Though Kansans still fought outside the state, Carney felt that the war would not be an issue in the election. But Kansans were not yet rid of the Civil War. Confederate General Sterling Price planned a raid into Missouri which eventually brought military and political scenes into conflict.

On May 19, 1864, Kirby Smith, commander of Confederate forces west of the Mississippi, ordered Price to prepare for an advance northward. Smith felt that such an expedition would afford Missouri's rebels an opportunity to rally beneath the South's battle flag. Whatever the outcome might be, the initiative by the Confederacy would distract the Federals from the prosecution of their own plans against the faltering South.

Price informed Smith that he could enlist "tens of thousands" or at least "50,000" Missouri recruits for the Confederacy, and he insisted

that an expedition into Missouri would "oblige the enemy to relax the pressure against Lee's and Johnston's armies."¹² His intelligence service indicated that Federal regulars were being removed from Missouri and that the loyalty of the Federal Missouri militia was at best dubious. He requested guerrilla bands to rendezvous with his army. On July 23 he reported that some Missouri communities, anticipating the advance of an army of liberation, already displayed the Confederacy's Stars and Bars.

On August 4, Price met with Kirby Smith in Shreveport, Louisiana, and hammered out plans for the Missouri raid. Price made clear his determination to free Missouri. Smith had first offered the command to General S.B. Buckner, who protested that he was an infantry officer without any cavalry experience and declined it.¹³ Smith then chose Price to lead the expedition, even though Price had led only infantry also. Against Smith's better judgement the cavalry divisions picked to participate in the invasion were thus consigned to "another infantry officer without cavalry experience."¹⁴

Price was a native Southerner. He was born in 1809 in Prince Edward County, Virginia, was well-educated and studied law. He moved with his family to Missouri in 1831 and served his adopted state in both civil and military capacities. He held a seat in the state legislature and later in Congress; he was colonel of the Second Missouri Mounted Volunteers in the Mexican War.¹⁵ He came home a hero and general. As a result he was elected governor of Missouri "by a sweeping majority."¹⁶

At the outset of the Civil War he organized an army of Missouri foot-soldiers called the State Guards and was given a commission as major general by Governor C.F. Jackson. These infantrymen marched under the state flag for over a year. Following the Battle of Pea Ridge in March, 1862, the Missourians were finally mustered into Confederate service.

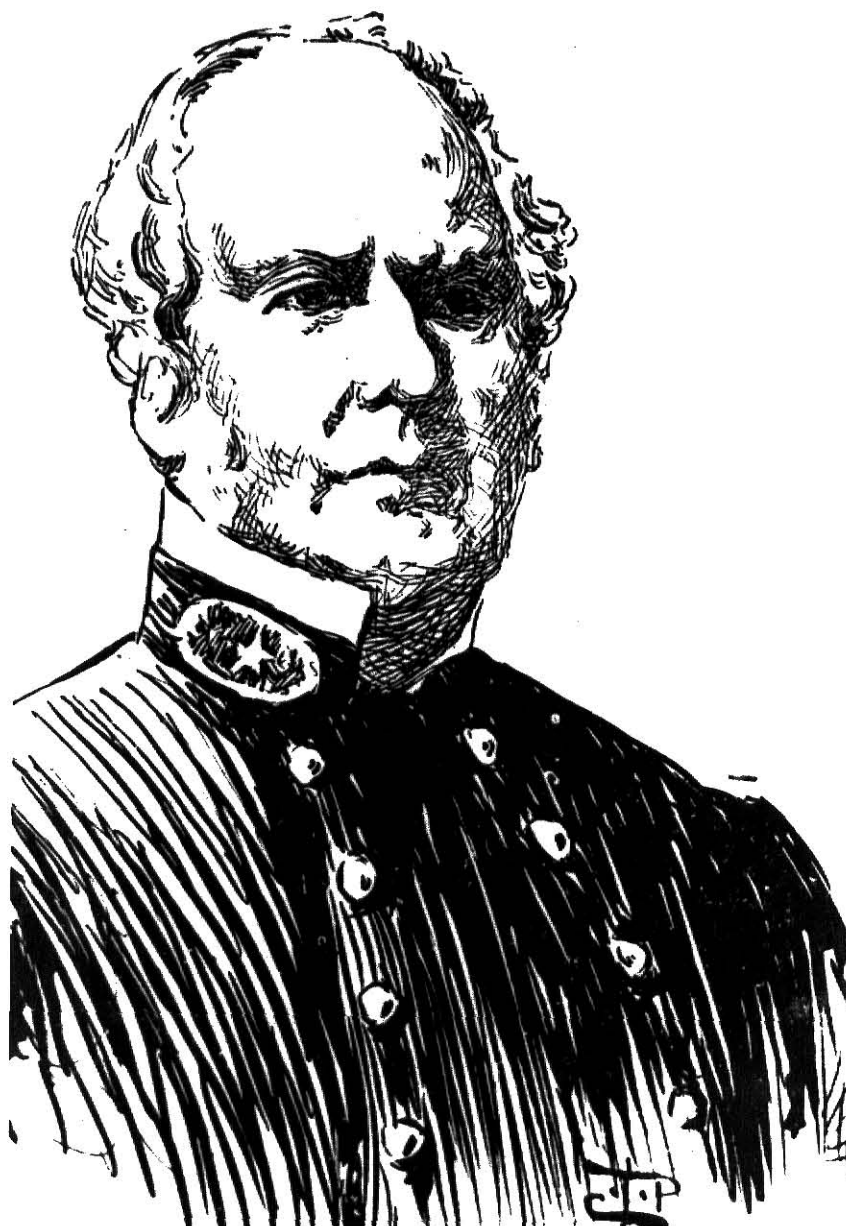


PLATE 1: General Sterling Price in Confederate military uniform. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

When Price was commissioned a brigadier in the Confederate army, he was promptly ordered east of the Mississippi, far from Kansas and no threat to her citizens.¹⁷

Price entered the southeastern part of Missouri on September 19, 1864. With Price went troops experienced at Kansas border warfare. During the decade prior to the war some of these men were bushwhackers who had crossed over from their homes to take part in fixing elections, clandestine and open thievery, and murders of free-state Kansans. Many were guerrillas who joined the general at his request. But this group composed a minority of Price's army. Most of the Missourians were no more than simple civilians when the war broke out and had joined Price only because they believed in states' rights, slavery, or both. Their state never seceded, but many secessionists, Price included, hoped for a Confederate army in 1861 "to occupy Missouri and enable it to secede in accordance with the will . . . of the overwhelming majority of its people."¹⁸ The majority of Price's men had no real quarrel with Kansans, excepting obvious differences which they held with all unionists.

There have been estimated between a mere 5,000 and an unlikely 30,000 rebels with Price that September. Of some 50 regiments reported in Price's army, the total probably never exceeded 10,000 men under arms, and Paul B. Jenkins wrote that the majority of the units were only skeleton organizations "consisting of mere handfuls of men."¹⁹ This is verified by one of Price's divisional generals, the cavalier Jo Shelby, who wrote to the Kansas City Journal on November 24, 1861: "...Gen. Price -- never with over 15,000 men, and rarely with over 10,000 fighting men -- moved north from Red River over 700 miles into and within the enemy's lines."²⁰

Shelby suggested a possible explanation for the wildly conflicting numerical reports in the same letter noting that Price "gathered to his

standard fully 10,000 young and ardent Missourians as recruits."²¹ But these youngsters were virtually unarmed and untrained and could take no serious role in any fighting. They were more of a hindrance to Price than an aid. In addition, Shelby claimed that the purpose of the invasion was to create a diversion in favor of General Joseph Johnston east of the Mississippi and cause a withdrawal of as many troops as possible from the Union army opposing him.

Federal commanders soon noted the invasion of Missouri. Two days after Price crossed the border into Missouri, various Union camps were alerted. General M.S. Grant, commander of the First Brigade District of the Kansas State Militia in Leavenworth, told officers in his district to "hold their respective commands in readiness for active service at a moments notice."²² Union generals followed Price's invasion route from the Arkansas border northward toward Jefferson City, near the center of Missouri. There the rebels could turn either west to Kansas or east toward St. Louis. An unchecked westward movement would threaten Kansas City and Westport. From either of these points the rebels could march to Fort Leavenworth and seize the munitions in the military fort and make it necessary for the Federals to send forces from St. Louis and other points to resist the invasion, thus giving the Confederate forces in other sections more freedom to act.²³

Federal commanders informed Grant of these movements. He ordered "A rigid inspection of arms" and directed officers to "see that every man is supplied with ammunition who has a gun."²⁴ Grant's militia prepared to help protect Leavenworth, the most important Union military post west of the Mississippi, should the need to do so arise.

Federal authorities had no idea whether Price intended to head east toward the major Mississippi River transportation center at St. Louis

or west to take Fort Leavenworth. There was much speculation at the time concerning the rebel's real objective. Shelby's statement of the number of troops with the army reduces the likelihood of its capturing or even seriously menacing that important river city. Although Price could not have taken St. Louis, he may have considered demonstrating before it. Yankee officers simply did not know what Price might do.

Price himself did not decide on a course of action until September 26, nearly a week after entering Missouri. On that day he learned that another Union corps, under General A.J. Smith, had reinforced the St. Louis garrison. Abandoning all hope of taking the city, "Price decided then and there to turn the point of his column toward Jefferson City."²⁵ Few of Price's movements escaped the attention of the Union command due to efficient Yankee observers. The capture of St. Louis was clearly beyond Price's capabilities.

The Confederate officers planned for the raid to begin in July, and the lack of infantry assured that it would be only a raid, not a full-scale invasion. One historian, Robert Kerby, claims that those were factors in the character of the raid.

Had Price's invasion been launched in late July as originally scheduled, and had it been mounted by an adequate joint force of infantry and cavalry, it might well have won control of much of the state [Missouri].²⁶

General William S. Rosecrans had assumed command of the Department of Missouri following his defeat at Chickamauga. Samuel R. Curtis commanded the Department of Kansas and was west of Fort Riley fighting Indians when Price first invaded Missouri. At the fort "Curtis received dispatches advising him of the advance from the south of the Rebel general"²⁷ Curtis turned his Indian-fighters over to a colonel "and, taking his Kansas troops with his body-guard and staff, made a forced march down the Kansas

river . . ." to aid Rosecrans against Price.²⁸

Curtis received dispatches from Rosecrans indicating possible danger to Curtis' department. "Realizing that his troops were too far away to call back in time for action against the advancing Confederate cavalry, General Curtis immediately set to work to marshal what opposition he could."²⁹ He had four full regiments and a portion of another available, possibly 4,000 men. More simply had to be found. There was only one place to find them -- in the Kansas State Militia. General Curtis promptly wired the Kansas governor for help. As early as September 17, Curtis told Governor Carney all he knew about the rebels' activity -- notices which all crossed Carney's desk and passed into pigeonholes.³⁰ Curtis warned Carney that the militia might be needed. The Federal commanders, however, did not yet know precisely where Price was bound; Carney received no more than a warning.

Curtis was assigned to command the Department of Kansas in January, 1864. His life had been a series of varied careers. He was educated at West Point, but soon gave up soldiering for a more lucrative civilian job. His career later included engineering, law, and politics, as well as the military.³¹ Upon his return from chasing hostiles that fall, he began arming the fieldworks already established along the eastern border of Kansas from Fort Scott to Fort Leavenworth. He worked to secure the towns of Fort Scott, Paola, Leavenworth, Lawrence, and Olathe against possible guerrilla attacks.

On September 20 Curtis again warned Governor Carney of the threat to Kansas and requested him to order the State Militia "to be ready to cooperate against the foe."³² The governor's reaction to these warnings was certainly not one of alarm. Carney was not convinced that the

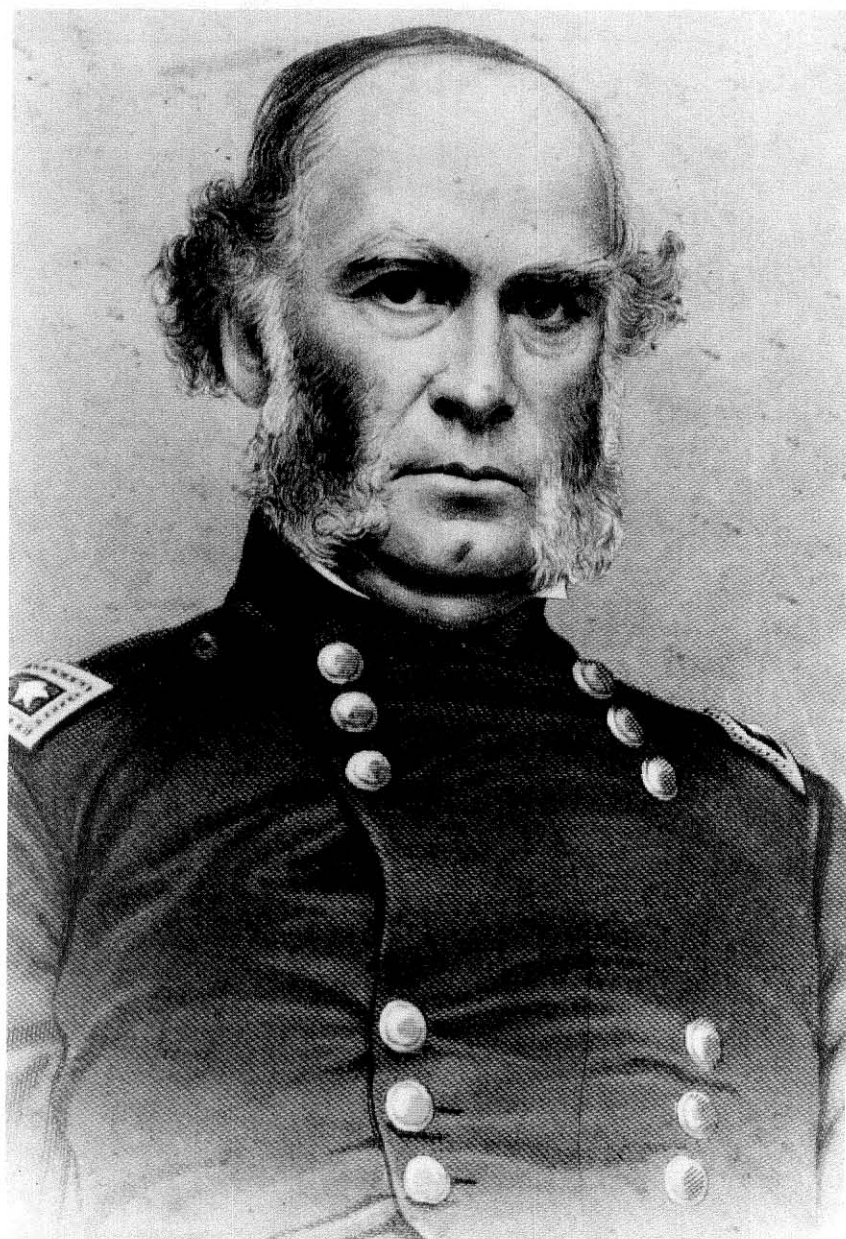


PLATE 2: General Samuel Ryan Curtis in the uniform of a Union general. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

Confederate invasion implied a danger to Kansas. He exacted a promise from General Curtis that if the militia were called up it would not be used in the field but employed only in garrison duty and rear echelon capacities. Curtis made this promise and, "through the co-operation of the governor, the Federal commander was able to gather and distribute arms and equipment to a large part of the militia."³³

Some of Curtis' problems in rousing the state to action were probably attributable to the approaching state and national elections. Governor Carney was embroiled in a factional fight within the Kansas Republican party. His struggle for power against the mighty Jim Lane, foremost of Kansas politicians, left him little time for any other considerations. Democrats were merely present and exercised no actual influence in the state elections of 1864. The two Republican factions fought between themselves for both the United States' Senate seat and control of the state. Remembering Curtis' prior political intrigues, many Kansans thought that the call-up of the militia was a maneuver to draw voters away from the polls in November.

The Republicans of Lane's group styled themselves the "Union Party" and labeled the Carney politicians and the few Democrats as " 'seceders' and 'copperheads.' "³⁴ All three groups feared the prospects of all of their respective voters serving against Price during the election. Each believed that the others would have an unfair advantage should the militia be pressed into service. Until the rebel invasion was a reality, therefore, politics would act to deter citizens from becoming soldiers.

Carney also became involved in a political squabble with General James G. Blunt. Blunt had become the first general from Kansas by using his political pull with Jim Lane. Carney naturally opposed Blunt because



PLATE 3: James G. Blunt, first general from Kansas, in his brigadier's uniform. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

of his party affiliations. The governor had attempted to have Blunt removed from his command of the Department of Kansas a year before when the general displayed unusual adroitness in using his army to take power away from civilian authorities and impose his own will upon many civilian authorities within his reach.

Because of the political opposition he was meeting, General Curtis was nearly frantic in his efforts to arouse the governor.³⁶ Throughout the first week of October, telegrams and dispatches flew back and forth between the Departments of Kansas and Missouri. From Leavenworth Curtis inundated Carney's office with news of Confederate advances in Missouri and with pleas to "hurry out the militia."³⁷

Carney arrived in Leavenworth on October 8 to confer with Curtis and the commander of the State Militia, George W. Deitzler, about the necessity of using that body. Shortly after nine o'clock that evening, Carney informed Curtis that as soon as Deitzler arrived from Lawrence the next morning they would all meet concerning the situation. "However," says Howard Monnett in Action Before Westport, 1864, "by midnight Governor Carney at last committed himself to General Curtis. 'I shall call [the militia] as you desire.'"³⁸

The same day a cursory examination of the Union works surrounding Jefferson City convinced Price that the capital of Missouri could not be taken without severe loss. Some 12,000 Yankees were reported drawn up about the city, and the reinforcing corps of A.J. Smith had left St. Louis and even then hastened down the south bank of the Missouri River toward Price's rear. One of the officers in the rebel army was Thomas C. Reynolds, "a former lieutenant governor of Missouri who hoped that the raid would swing his state back to the Confederacy and that he would be inaugurated governor after the November election."³⁹ Price, a former

governor himself, sympathized with Reynold's desire. The Confederates were so close to Jefferson City that they could see the dome of the capitol; forward elements of their army skirmished with Federals on the afternoon of October 7, driving them into their fortifications. Price's scouts then reported the 12,000 defenders (actually there were only 7,000). In a council of war that night, Price decided that he would not attempt to take Jefferson City.

According to John L. Margreiter, Jr., there was a large arsenal in St. Louis containing "thousands of rifled muskets and ordnance stores which the South could not obtain from any other source."⁴⁰ But the seven miles of fortifications garrisoned by 6,000 troops which protected the river city influenced Price and his staff in their decision to head toward Leavenworth for further capture of arms and artillery. "Price," writes Margreiter, "whose lines had been cut to pieces by artillery at Helena, Arkansas, on July 4, 1863, probably would not have fared any better in an assault on St. Louis."⁴¹ D. Alexander Brown summarizes Price's army and its situation when the rebels at last turned toward Westport: "Next morning October 8 as the column faced westward toward Kansas, it was no longer a political force, but an army seeking recruits, supplies of war, and an escape route back to the Confederate lines. The raiders were prepared to give battle if necessary but were no longer seeking a fight."⁴²

The Army of Missouri, as Price's army was designated, consisted of three divisions totalling nine brigades, plus several unattached regiments and battalions as finally organized on leaving Jefferson City. According to Price's official report, it amounted to 12,000 men, of whom only 8,000 were armed. Artillery consisted of 14 field pieces, mostly smoothbores. Other contemporary estimates of strength as Price

moved west varied, and the actual number probably changed from day to day, depending on enlistments and desertions.⁴³ Margrieter states that discipline remained uniformly poor from start to finish.⁴⁴ Three divisional columns separated by from 10 to 20 miles made the advance through Missouri. Two of these columns, one commanded by Shelby and one led by Arkansas general James F. Fagan, converged at Fredericktown, Missouri, on September 24, where they spent two days in "distributing supplies and organizing recruits"⁴⁵ The third division, under John Sappington Marmaduke (who had forced the retreat of Union forces under General Blunt at Prairie Grove, Arkansas, in 1862⁴⁶) did not join the main body until the 26th because of a longer route.

Price moved across Missouri north to Jefferson City in these three columns, with Shelby on the left, Marmaduke on the right, and Fagan in the center. Because General Price had no cavalry experience, he ordered that the army should march an average of fifteen miles per day -- a respectable amount for infantry but terribly slow for a cavalry outfit. Several skirmishes and a major battle at Pilot Knob, Missouri, further impeded his advance, so much so that Thomas Reynolds accused him of "hesitating generalship."⁴⁷ The sluggishness of the Confederate advance enabled Rosecrans' scouts to keep an accurate account of the invasion as well as allowing Federal troops to prepare their defenses as Price proceeded.

As the rebels marched across the state, Brown claims they collected "sixteen additional pieces of artillery, large numbers of small arms, much ammunition, hundreds of horses and cattle, stores of flour, bacon, and coffee, blankets, overcoats, and underclothing."⁴⁸ They had recruited enough novice soldiers to organize a new Missouri brigade of two regiments by the time they arrived in Boonville on October 10. Rather than being

a mobile cavalry army which Kirby Smith expected when plans were drawn up the previous summer, Price's train of captured goods had grown to 500 wagons and 5,000 cattle accompanied by 1,500 unarmed raw recruits.⁴⁹

The day Price marched west from Jefferson City, Alfred Pleasonton arrived there to commence assembling a provisional Union cavalry division. Most of Rosecrans' mounted infantry and cavalry were scattered across Missouri in small garrisons. Pleasonton realized that his hopes of catching up with the rebels depended on 4,000 cavalymen in Jefferson City and the 4,500 infantrymen coming from St. Louis with A.J. Smith's now-depleted corps. Pleasonton promptly sent two brigades under Brigadier Generals John McNeil and John B. Sanford in pursuit. Pleasonton spent the following week assembling two more mounted brigades for the chase to Westport.⁵⁰

One of Price's intentions at the outset of the raid was to collect the various bushwhackers' bands and make them into official units in the Confederate organization. The guerrillas were unruly, ragged groups of men, unaffiliated with the regular Confederate army. They fought and ravaged independently, and generally were more interested in loot than military objectives. With intentions to increase his manpower and exercise some control over the raiders, Price commissioned "the famous southern guerrillas Quantrill and Bill Anderson to set out on side-raids to destroy railroads in order to prevent forwarding Federal reinforcements."⁵¹ Quantrill did not take part in the campaign, but Anderson and another irregular, George Todd, created havoc (and wild rumors) in assisting the rebel army after it quitted the Missouri capital. "The telegraph lines between Sedalia and Lexington were cut on the evening of the 8th, the guerrilla Anderson having been reported the previous day at Lexington, with five hundred men," as R. J. Hinton, a contemporary and participant

in the battle at Westport, later said. "The same day all the wires were cut east of Pleasant Hill, indicating the westward advance of the rebels."⁵²

Once all telegraph wires were cut east of Independence, the Union officers became certain that Kansas was Price's objective. St. Louis was safe and Rosecrans was free to concentrate all his efforts in helping Pleasanton's chase. But when it was ascertained that the rebels were headed west, "Kansas City, Leavenworth, Atchison, Lawrence, Topeka, and all the farming areas of eastern Kansas speculated blindly on their fate."⁵³ The spectre of more Lawrence raids visited each village. General Curtis redoubled his efforts to hurry Governor Carney and prepared to proclaim martial law from his office in Leavenworth, should the rebels reach any point near his Department of Kansas. But no positive information had been received of Price's location since he left Jefferson City. Rosecrans and Curtis knew he was moving toward Kansas, but they had no idea where he might cross the state line.

From October 8 to 13 General Blunt rode up and down the border in his District of South Kansas from Leavenworth to Paola. At one o'clock in the morning on October 13, Blunt was awakened by his orderly who handed him instructions from Curtis. Curtis directed Blunt to take all his cavalry and artillery and move immediately to Hickman Mills, Missouri. Blunt arrived there at noon on the 14th and was reinforced the following day by veteran cavalry units under Colonels Charles R. Jennison and Charles W. Blair and militia commanded by militia general W.H.M. Fishback and Colonel James D. Snoddy.

The Confederate Military History gives an accurate account of the rebels' situation as they neared the border:

When General Price reached Lexington he had accomplished

all he could hope to accomplish. He might have turned southward from there and had an unobstructed line of retreat. He might turn southward from Independence and have all the forces opposed to him in his rear. But if he crossed the Big Blue, just in his front, he would be hemmed in between three rivers -- the Missouri, the Kansas and the Big Blue -- and have to fight two armies to recross the last named river. 54

Political skirmishing had not prevented the Kansas State Militia from being called out. The next weeks would bring new Republican designs on the militiamen -- Governor Carney still believed the troops were being intentionally drawn away from the polls in November. The Kansas executive made the call after over a month of persuasion by the military officials. Civil and military conflicts continued for the duration of the militia's service, with the governor and even General Blunt inadvertently thwarting Union efforts to counter Price.

The rebels' sluggish drive toward Kansas was one of two major mistakes Price made on leaving Jefferson City. Having achieved all that he could hope for with the limited force he had with him, the rebel general should have turned south to escape. Such a maneuver would have the same effects as other cavalry raids of the war. Instead, Price attempted to create a full-scale invasion with no reserves to hold captured prisoners, goods, and territory. He now faced Curtis' volunteers and militia on his front and Pleasonton's pursuit to his rear. He lay between the hammer and the anvil, and the blow would soon be struck.

CHAPTER II

THE KANSANS RALLY

The local militia companies of Kansas which formed at the outbreak of the war had gradually fallen in enrollment over three years of fighting. By 1864 many of these citizens' companies were only partially filled with youngsters and older men. All of the units provided their own accoutrements. Few had any realistic military training, and few contained members with practical experience.

The year 1864 was an election one in Kansas. Politics were destined to play a detrimental role in the militia mobilization. Governor Carney, up for re-election, convinced himself that Curtis and Blunt were trying a political ploy against him in calling out the militia. He divided the Union generals with his lack of concern about Price's invasion and hampered their efforts to supplement their small force with Kansas militiamen.

The men of Shawnee County failed to let this state of affairs deter them when they were finally called out. These citizens responded en masse and created a viable military force in the span of two weeks. Their regiment proved effective in action against a veteran army, although they were untrained and, for the most part, unskilled in the art of soldiering.

General Price had passed Jefferson City and crossed over half of Missouri before Governor Carney issued a call to arms. Carney continued to argue that Price was not in Missouri and General Curtis used the military for political advantage, even when this was not the case. Curtis finally convinced the governor to make the call in the night of October 8, 1864, and Carney issued a proclamation the following

morning. "Let all business be suspended," he said. "The work to be done now is to protect the State against marauder and murderer. Until that is accomplished we must lead a soldier's life, and do a soldier's duty."⁵⁵

Although he called up the militia, Carney still believed the rebels were no threat to Kansas. He opposed Curtis' military movements until fighting broke out two weeks later near Westport. He made political speeches in militia encampments and hindered efforts of the rival Republican faction to support Curtis. Curtis and General Blunt received constant reports indicating that Price was moving west. The Federal generals realized the danger and wanted to meet Price east of the Kansas-Missouri border. Carney, however, claimed that the generals were only intent upon removing voters from the state and urged the militia to remain in Kansas. The day after the militia was called out, Curtis made the situation a strictly military affair by proclaiming martial law throughout the state and ordering all men between the ages of 18 and 60, white or black, into military service. In compliance with Governor Carney's call and Curtis' General Orders, the militia immediately mobilized for service and co-operated with the volunteer troops in resisting Price's threatened invasion.

The militia mobilization included all normally eligible men in the state. They were ordered to attach themselves to one of the companies. According to one of the Second Regiment historians, James W. Steele, "the roads were instantly lined with men hastening to join their neighbors at the places appointed."⁵⁶ Colonel C.K. Holliday, Adjutant-General of Kansas, reported: "Nowhere, at no time, and under no circumstances, had such an uprising been witnessed. It was widespread and complete. . . ."⁵⁷

Commanders of the units were ordered to prepare their men for 30 days' service, and to see that each man was provided with "two blankets, a tin cup, knife and fork, a haversack; and also a coffee pot and frying pan for every five men."⁵⁸ In addition each man was ordered to come "with such arms as are at hand and a full supply of ammunition."⁵⁹

On the same day Curtis declared martial law, he began organizing the militia and the few volunteers into his newly-created Army of the Border. He divided it into two wings: a cavalry division under James Blunt, and the militia division under Major General George W. Deitzler, the overall commander of the Kansas State Militia. The combined force numbered about 17,100 men, of whom some 12,600 were militiamen.

The Second Regiment, K.S.M., the militia of Shawnee County, promptly mustered at Topeka. Of the ten companies of the Second, seven were mounted, two were infantry, and one was a two-gun battery consisting of a twelve-pound and a twenty-four pound howitzer. These companies were drawn from Topeka and the surrounding towns of Tecumseh, Auburn, Dover, Indianola, Big Springs, and Monmouth Township. George W. Veale was elected colonel of the regiment. He had previously served as an officer in a Kansas volunteer regiment, and was a prominent citizen of Topeka. He was first voted captain of Company A, but resigned when chosen regimental colonel.⁶⁰ D.H. Horne filled that empty office along with the remaining captains, Dr. A.J. Huntoon, Joshua B. Hannum, Sterling B. Miles, John H. Banks, James Thompson, H.E. Bush, Perry Tice, William Disney, and Ross Burns. Few of the troops had any military experience. Most prior-service men became officers. According to Colonel Veale, this was the case with Captians Huntoon, Hannon, Horn, Banks, and Bush. Bush had served in the Army of the Potomac, and upon moving

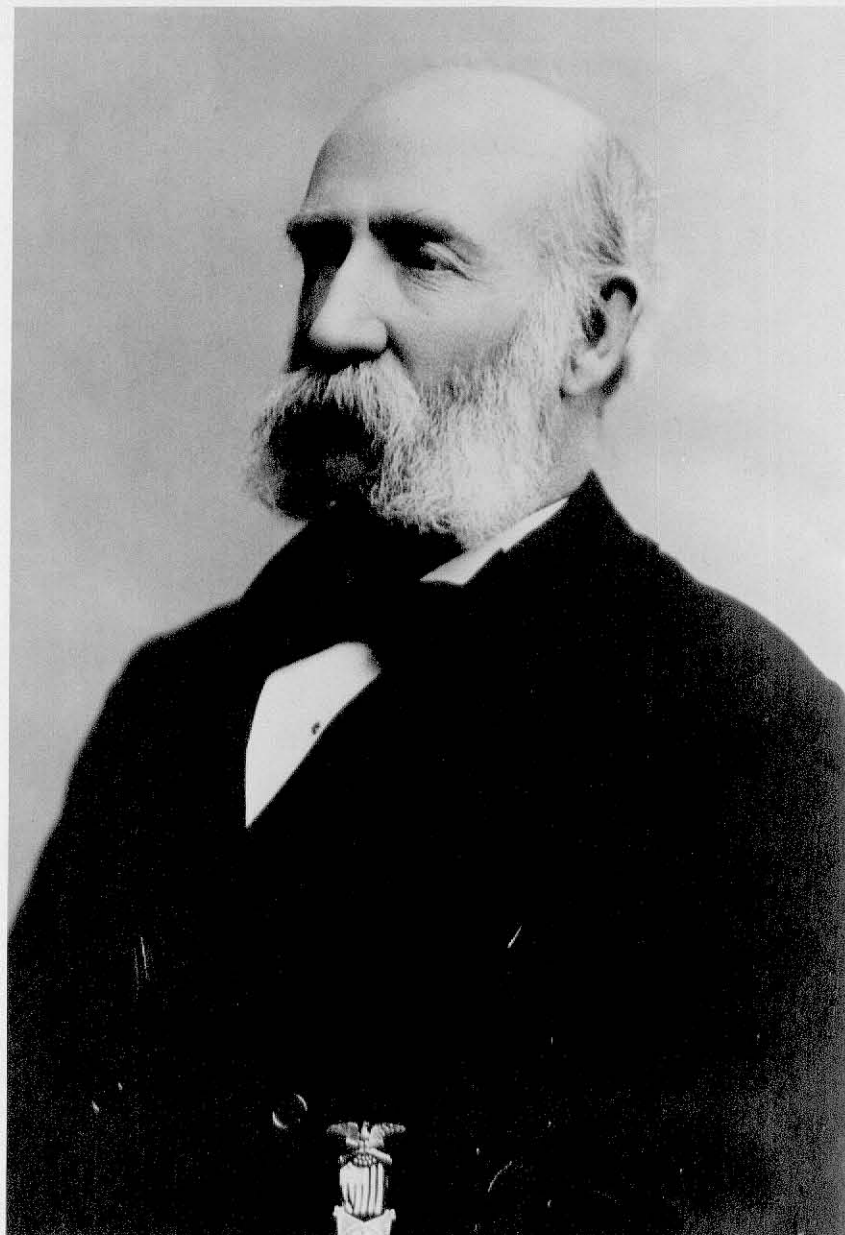


PLATE 4: George W. Veale as a businessman
after the war. Courtesy Kansas State Historical
Society.

to Shawnee County almost immediately responded to the call of the governor and raised a company of recruits.⁶¹

A considerable number of men did not arrive in Topeka until after Colonel Veale's command departed for the front. Veale designated Major Andrew Stark to remain and form these late-comers into a "home battalion" to protect Topeka from Confederate stragglers. In accordance with this order, four additional companies of the Second were organized in Topeka; one of infantry, under F.W. Giles; one of cavalry, under L. Craigie Shields; one of exempts under H.S. Gale; and one of black recruits under Thomas Archer. One half of the battery remained with the twelve-pound howitzer, commanded by Lieutenant Thomas Billings. Elsewhere in the county were formed a company of infantry led by Joseph Trew and a company of cavalry under Edward Drappe. These two companies united and camped on Mill Creek.⁶²

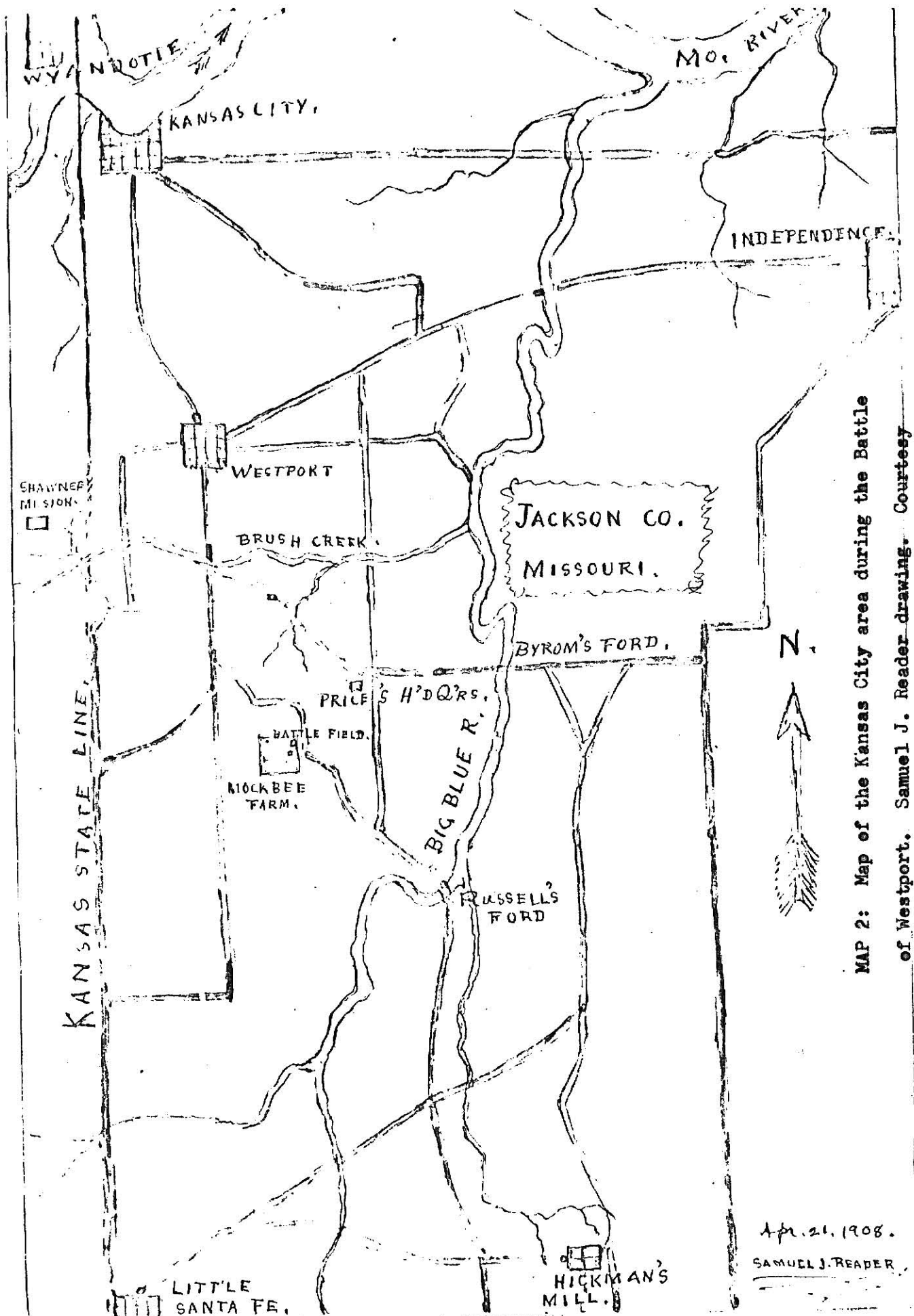
Within three days of the governor's call, Colonel Veale had gathered his forces and depleted Shawnee County of men of military age. The Second K.S.M. became a portion of the force of "12,622 determined men" of the militia. These troops lacked one ingredient necessary in a Civil War army. The prerequisite of organization was discipline, and the greater number of General Deitzler's militia division were only untrained farmers. Of the 12,600 militiamen, the Fifteenth Regiment, from Davis, Dickinson, and Saline Counties, was detained at Fort Riley. The Seventeenth Regiment did not respond to the call, being apprehensive of Indian attacks on its county, Lincoln, while the men were absent. The brigade commander of the Sixth and Sixteenth, Brigadier General S.N. Wood, did not assume his office. The total number available to Deitzler was about 10,000.⁶³

The Second Regiment consisted of seven companies of mounted men,

two of infantry, and the twenty-four pound brass howitzer with 22 men to man it. Those men arriving later did not join Veale but remained in Topeka. At first no arms or equipment were issued. The men took farm horses from plows, mules and cow ponies for their martial steeds; they took their own overcoats "and tore blankets from their beds."⁶⁴ These materials and whatever supplies they could collect from their homes they piled into farm wagons. The ammunition for the howitzer was loaded into a lumber wagon which was donated for the purpose by a resident of the county, as were the four horses for the artillery limber.

Nearly a year had passed since the disastrous raid on Lawrence, and the people of Topeka had "met and discussed plans for the protection of the city."⁶⁵ Responding to the new emergency, the citizens built a stockade at the intersection of Sixth Street and Kansas Avenue as a rallying place for the home battalion. A force of woodchoppers went to the Kansas River where they located timber in abundance; elm and cottonwood were plentiful along that stream. The timber was cut in twelve foot lengths, split in half, and hauled to the building site. "Here they were set in the ground to a depth of three or three and one-half feet, in the form of a circle, with the back side out," according to Freeman Sardou, a long-time resident of Topeka. Loop holes were cut between each log -- one row for firing while standing and one row for kneeling position -- around the fort. One opening on the west allowed entrance and egress, and four others facing in each direction exposed the potential enemy to the fire of the twelve-pounder. Rifle pits were dug in the outlying areas of the city. These defenses were manned by about 350 militiamen of the home guard.⁶⁶

Several times in the ensuing weeks guerrillas or detachments of



MAP 2: Map of the Kansas City area during the Battle of Westport. Samuel J. Reader drawing. Courtesy

Apr. 21, 1908.
SAMUEL J. READER.

Price's army were reported in the vicinity, and on one night in particular "many buried their treasures and some laid out in the ravines around town all night."⁶⁷ The two-week period during which the Second was under arms allowed the men to do their best to make themselves soldiers. Their anxiety stemmed from their belief that if the rebels succeeded in battle against the Army of the Border, Price would break his army into separate detachments. There is no evidence that Price intended to split his force. Such an action would leave his scattered army open to attack. A composite force of Confederates would retain a defensive power against any counterattack. Kansans also feared that guerrillas of the ilk of Quantrill and Bill Anderson would then be free to punish their towns.

Major Stark's battalion was understrength, as was the Second Regiment and the state militia in general. Each county was authorized to raise a regiment of 1,000 recruits. None enlisted much more than 600 for the march to Westport. Shawnee County sent half that thousand with Colonel Veale. About 350 men remained with Stark in Topeka.⁶⁸ The total number of men enlisted from the county was larger than most -- around 900 men.

The Second Regiment left Topeka on the morning of October 12, marching over the bluff road high above the Kansas River. On the way to Kansas City, it passed Leecompton and Lawrence, both sites of territorial strife and the latter of Quantrill's bloody raid.⁶⁹ The men did not know how to march properly or make a military camp, but they established a camp of sorts near Olathe, Kansas. Here, on the 17th the regiment received new Enfield rifles to replace the weapons they had brought from home. A few possessed old and nearly worthless carbines issued to them over a year before.⁷⁰

At Olathe the Second joined with other militia regiments for the march

northward to Kansas City, headquarters of the Army of the Border. This group arrived in the vicinity of General Curtis' army too late for formal assignment to brigades and therefore served generally under orders from Major General Deitzler. The commander of this informal band of militia units was Brigadier General M.S. Grant of Leavenworth.

At various other locations in the state, militia gathered. The regiments assembling at Atchison were ordered into Missouri, but owing to a conflict of authority, "they did not move till after the battle of Little Blue...." Curtis determined on a forward movement east from the border, but he was stymied by militia opposition to crossing the line.⁷¹ Governor Carney wished, if at all possible, to have no state troops serve outside Kansas. Carney supporters circulated newspapers from Leavenworth and Lawrence which declared that Price was no longer in Missouri. The political situation in Kansas flared once more, and the campaign against the rebels was termed "an egregious humbug."⁷²

Many of the militia regiments hesitated to cross into Missouri or, if they did so, to go any distance. General Deitzler believed that Price was south of the Arkansas River and so informed the troops. The Leavenworth militia, which supported Carney, were particularly antagonistic toward Curtis. Albert Castel says: "On October 19 they burned Lane in effigy and paraded a jackass with Blunt's name on it through the camp at Shawneetown [where the northern regiments collected]." He continued by stating, "Political speeches at the Shawneetown camp by Lane and Blunt did not improve the matters."⁷³ When Blunt ordered the force at Shawneetown to move toward Lexington, Missouri, by way of Independence, in the process crossing the border, a part of the Nineteenth Regiment refused "declaring that there was no power to compel them," as R.J. Hinton, commander of a black regiment in the

Army of the border, stated later.⁷⁴ General M.S. Grant and Deitzler both appealed to the Nineteenth and along with its companion unit the recalcitrant regiment took its line of march to Independence.

At Hickman Mills the situation was more tense than at Shawneetown. Colonel C.W. Blair of the Fourteenth Kansas Cavalry took command of a brigade when militia Brigadier General Fishback apparently agreed to waive his privilege of rank. However, Fishback and Colonel J.D. Snoddy of the Sixth, K.S.M., soon expressed dissatisfaction. Fishback ordered the Fifth, Sixth, and Tenth militia back to their home counties without conferring with Blair or any other superior. Blunt ordered the three regiments to remain. Early on October 16, the dissatisfaction culminated in an attempt by Fishback and Snoddy to march the Sixth back to Kansas. The regiment was already on its way before Blunt was informed of the action. Blunt and the Fifteenth Kansas Volunteers stopped the troops and placed the disgruntled officers under arrest. The General marched the militia back to camp and instructed them to elect new officers. "They returned most willingly," according to Hinton, "greeting the General's action with cheers, and displaying an enthusiastic desire to meet the enemy."⁷⁵

For the first time, Kansas militiamen crossed the border into Missouri. Most of the militia wore civilian clothes. To differentiate between themselves and the Confederates, who also wore no uniforms, the men of the Second pinned the red October summac leaves to their clothes, identifying them as Yankees.

Now under General Grant, Veale's force moved east to Hickman Mills "in its varied equipage, and followed by the incongruous huddle of farm wagons and teams, in haste to be a military train. . ." as Fry Giles described it.⁷⁶ General Grant's command at Hickman Mills lay

on the escape route for Price's large wagon train. The militia arrived at Hickman Mills on October 20.⁷⁷ Once there the two infantry companies of the Second, A and E, were detached and placed with Colonel Williamsen's Third, K.S.M. The remainder of the regiment was a mounted battalion with a one-gun battery.⁷⁸

General Blunt took a position on the west bank of the Little Blue eight miles northeast of Independence, Missouri. He wanted a decisive fight on this stream. Pleasonton was pressing Price's rear, and Blunt proposed to destroy the rebels between the two Federal armies. William Connelley told why Blunt's plans failed: "Governor Carney and his politicians still insisted General Price was not in Missouri at all and that all military movements of General Curtis were the result of Lane's scheming for political advantage."⁷⁹ Carney even went so far as to prepare a proclamation disbanding the militia "the very day that General Blunt formed his line along the Little Blue."⁸⁰

The political maneuvering behind the military measures derived largely from the rivalry of the Republican factions in Kansas. Carney owed his election to Lane, but he had fallen under the influence of Lane's political enemies, who opposed the re-election of President Lincoln. To this end Carney and his associates strove to embarrass and hamper the movements of Union forces they might control. Anti-Lane newspapers claimed that the majority of the citizens called into the militia opposed Lincoln; and Lane, a dear friend of the President, moved these voters out of the state so the November election in Kansas would favor Lincoln.⁸¹

By October 19, however, the political scene had taken second place behind the military crisis. Although Carney's adherents claimed that Price was nowhere near Kansas, efficient Yankee scouts indicated that

he was just east of Lexington, Missouri, and heading toward Westport. For his main line of resistance, General Curtis chose the Big Blue, which ran eastward across the Kansas line below Westport, and then turned north toward Independence.

Although Blunt wished to fight behind the Little Blue, the governor of Kansas refused to allow the state troops to advance so far into Missouri, and Curtis was inclined to move cautiously. "Politics had been his Curtis' undoing in Missouri in 1862," says D. Alexander Brown; ". . . he had been exiled to Kansas and replaced by Rosecrans...." So Curtis marched only a few miles into Missouri and only allowed Blunt to move in a reconnaissance in force to Lexington with no militia.⁸² Curtis had learned that Pleasonton was in full pursuit of the rebels on October 13; but Price's forward elements were even then reported to be near Lexington. Curtis ordered Blunt and Deitzler to move east on parallel roads to Lexington "to feel out the enemy's approach."⁸³

As his division watched the Confederate army, Curtis summoned civilians to the Big Blue to assist the soldiers in fortifying the stream. At the main fords they felled trees and built barricades. Colonel Blair erected abattis and breastworks at salient points and rifle pits to cover the line of advance and materially strengthened the natural advantages of the Big Blue. In his history of the Army of the Border, Hinton said martial law was enforced rigidly in Kansas City, "and all available force set to work constructing a long line of entrenchments on the east and south, thus creating a formidable obstacle to the rebel army."⁸⁴

On October 19, the day before the Second K.S.M. arrived at Hickman Mills, Blunt's force engaged in a delaying action against Price's forward troops in Lexington. At dawn that morning Blunt and his

two aides, Senator Lane and Colonel John T. Burris, inspected the town he had taken, placed all of Lafayette County, Missouri, surrounding Lexington under martial law, and ordered every able-bodied male of Lexington between 15 and 60, white or black, to report for work on fortifications.⁸⁵

Price was sandwiched between Blunt in Lexington and Pleasonton with A.J. Smith's infantry near Sedalia. To prevent the convergence of the two forces, Price flanked to the left, intercepting the Yankee line of march. With Jo Shelby in the lead, he advanced on Blunt. The bluecoats put up a stiff resistance, but were slowly forced to fall back.

Blunt had the advantage of terrain in this fight. Open rolling country allowed him to move freely and to observe any flanking movements that might develop against his two brigades. He had the road to Independence in his rear should he be forced to retreat. His eight mountain howitzers were carefully placed behind his line.⁸⁶

The fight at Lexington dragged on through the afternoon of the 19th. The main body of Price's army pressed the Federals; Pleasonton was still far away. Blunt prepared to withdraw toward Independence. He ordered Colonel Thomas Moonlight to take the Eleventh Kansas Cavalry and four howitzers to cover the retreat. Moonlight made four stands within six miles. The fourth stand was made on a ridge which enabled Moonlight to utilize his howitzers to best effect.⁸⁷ There the Eleventh Kansas held off the rebel advance until darkness. The Confederates bivouacked near the field. Blunt marched until two o'clock the next morning when he finally reached the Little Blue, east of Independence.

On this position Blunt once more asked that a major stand be made. Curtis replied that the Kansas militia would not leave the line of the

Big Blue. Blunt was ordered to fall back to Independence, leaving Colonel Moonlight and his Eleventh Kansas to guard the crossing of the Little Blue. The check at Lexington gave the militia on Curtis' line facts and let "that army of independent citizens know what they were there for to a certainty."⁸⁸

The men of the Second were not as affected by the political arguments as were other regiments. As Blunt and Moonlight fought at Lexington, the Shawnee County men voted in favor of crossing into Missouri. They crossed the line "because they judged that action best in carrying out the purpose of their long march to the front," said G.G. Gage.⁸⁹ Colonel Veale's command was increased by the addition of the mounted portion of the Douglas County Third regiment. At Hickman Mills the Second consisted of all mounted companies plus the twenty-two men of the Topeka battery.⁹⁰

Veale was a cavalry officer by training. "since the beginning of the war in 1861, he had served three years as an officer of a regiment that had been in many engagements."⁹¹ His service and experience would prove invaluable in the coming fight. The second waited at Hickman Mills for further orders, while reports and rumors of the battle at Independence filtered through the lines all that day. The militia moved no farther than the Big Blue, even though the "fight of the Little Blue was known to be sure to come. . . ."⁹²

Colonel Moonlight spent all day October 20 preparing his meager force along the Little Blue. Howitzers were placed to cover the bridge over that stream, but it was so shallow it could be crossed at any point. However, the banks were steep and heavily timbered; and Moonlight formed his force into a line of heavy pickets. For the entire autumn afternoon Moonlight's troops waited.⁹³ No rebels



S T R 41

PLATE 5: "Night Before Battle." Members of Second K.S.M. in bivouac on the night before the Battle of the Blue. Samuel J. Reader watercolor. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

showed themselves on the Independence - Lexington road. With Rosecrans' Army of Missouri in his rear and only the 600 men of the Eleventh Kansas before him, Price would surely advance. An early twilight dropped, and the weather turned cold.⁹⁴

The Second's men huddled in blankets from home. The Confederates were expected to attack the next day. The Second Regiment and the Army of the Border waited for dawn. In a few short days an army of citizen soldiers came into being. The following days would test the fighting capabilities of militia against veteran soldiers in battle. Politics took a heavy toll on the morale of these troops. But when the time for fighting arrived, they showed themselves as trustworthy, if not as skilled, as regular soldiers.

CHAPTER III

THE BATTLE ON THE BIG BLUE

A Confederate trooper with Price commented on the impending Battle of the Blue after the war: "Danger gathered fast. Rosecrans had assembled a large army and was advancing from Sedalia; additional cavalry forces were coming from Boonville, while Kansas was ablaze and her cruel militia swarming to the front from the far west" (author's emphasis).⁹⁹ Price's task as he approached the Kansas border was threefold. He had to cross the Big Blue River and defeat the Army of the Border before Generals Pleasanton and Smith came to Curtis' aid. He had to hold Pleasanton's cavalry at bay until Curtis was defeated. Finally, he needed to place his immense wagon train in the middle of his army to prevent its capture by Pleasanton. The divisions of Shelby and Fagan received the first assignment, and Fagan was given the additional task of protecting the wagon train. Marmaduke had orders to keep Pleasanton at a safe distance.

Shelby and Fagan faced only moderate numerical opposition at the Little Blue on October 21, and the next day Colonel Veale's Second Regiment lay in their path. The Second withstood the onslaught of almost 4,500 rebels at a farmstead for nearly three-quarters of an hour. This action helped to finally check the Confederates' westward drive into Kansas and turned Price's army south into a series of running fights along the state line.

Price was so elated by the brief, sharp fight at Independence and Blunt's retreat on October 20 that he issued a statement that he would dash at the enemy the next day and take Sunday dinner at Fort Leavenworth.¹⁰⁰ Only 4,000 volunteers and the Kansas militia

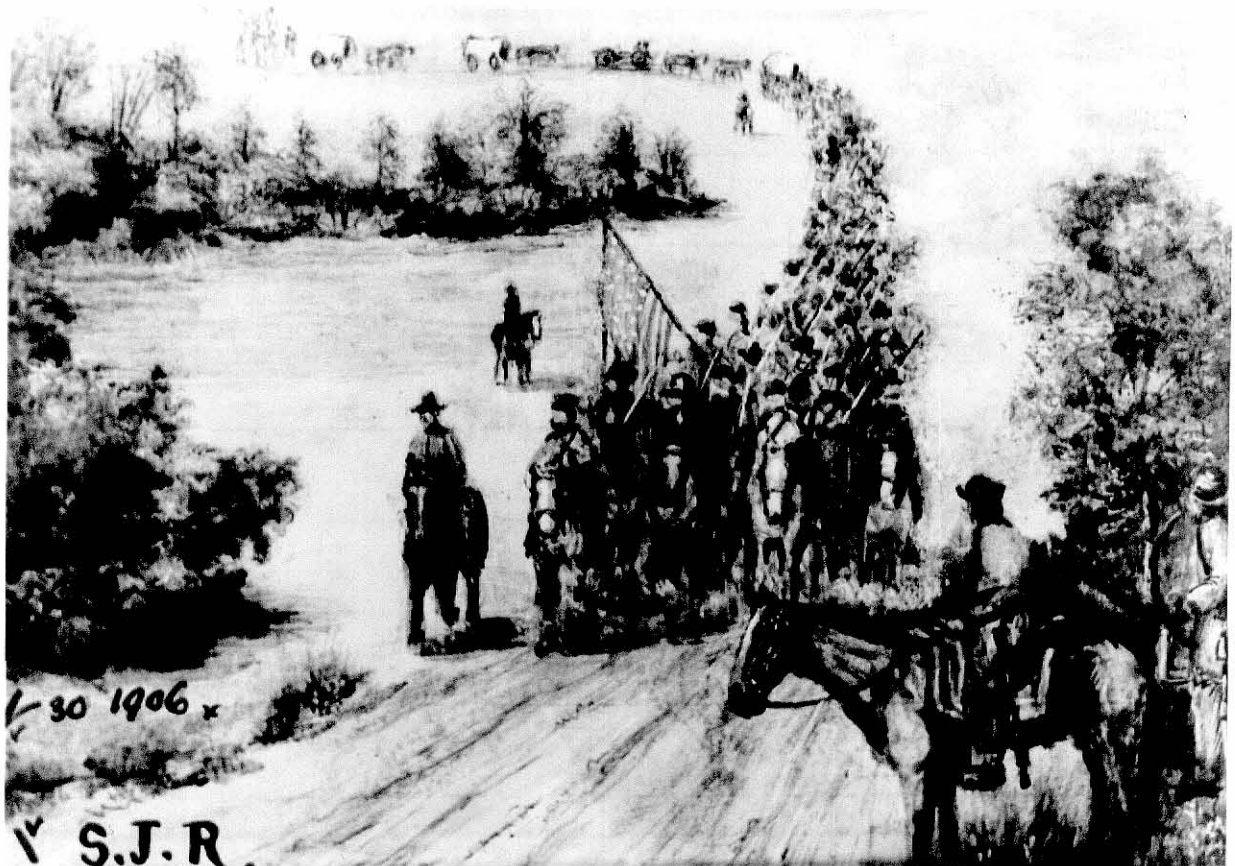


PLATE 6: "Second K.S.M. Invading Missouri." Samuel J. Reader
watercolor. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

stood between his force and the border. The troops he brought from Arkansas were trained and hardened veterans and were supported by conscripts gathered on the march. The simple logistics of the situation justified Price's confidence.

The two Federal armies prepared to confront Price at Westport. The Army of the Border waited for a Confederate attack from the east. Pleasonton's Provisional Cavalry Division continued its attempt to catch up with the rebel army. Union Brigadier General John F. Philips wrote in his diary that day: "Up at 12:30 a.m. Raining and cold. Marched at 1 a.m. toward Marshall, my right in advance Marched all afternoon toward Lexington Expect to fight tomorrow."¹⁰¹ General Rosecrans (who still retained overall command of Federal forces east of Westport) did not believe the Confederates could break Curtis' line on the Big Blue; so rather than sending A.J. Smith's infantry to Independence in order to hem the rebels in, he allowed Smith to spread out southward from Lexington in the direction of Chapel Hill. Rosecrans did so because he expected Price to be blockaded at the Big Blue and forced to turn southward.¹⁰²

The morning of October 21 brought a flurry of activity in the Confederates' camp long before daylight. Colonel Moonlight's outguard on the Little Blue was attacked in force as dawn broke. The first company of General Marmaduke's division came upon Moonlight's pickets a mile east of the river. A third of the rebels went down in initial firing according to Monnett.¹⁰³ Moonlight's Eleventh Kansas skillfully defended the crossing of the Little Blue. At times the combat was hand-to-hand as the rebels charged with revolvers and sabers.

Blunt hurried troops to reinforce Moonlight and met with some early success, but "about this time General Curtis came up, and by interfering

with the disposition of [Blunt's] troops without conveying his orders through me, threw the command into confusion," as Blunt later wrote.¹⁰⁴ Curtis did not intend to bring on a battle at this time. He wished to feel out Price's strength and check him as much as possible. The action lasted all day. The scene of battle shifted toward the southeast as the Confederates tried to flank the Union right. Blunt made an effort to get about 10,000 Kansas militia under General Deitzler into position for countering the attacks, but without much success. He commented caustically that "the north side of the Kansas River possessed peculiar attractions" for them.¹⁰⁵ Blunt's statement was politically motivated. He believed that the militia refused to come to his aid because Deitzler was politically opposed to him, but more likely a conflict in command occurred. Deitzler held command of the militia division of the Army of the Border and had no desire to relegate that authority to Blunt's command of the volunteer division.¹⁰⁶

Blunt's men fell back slowly, fighting a stubborn rearguard action. He made a stand wherever possible and retreating whenever too hard-pressed until he reached Curtis' fortifications on the Big Blue. Curtis saw the Big Blue as a more defensible line and planned to stop Price there the next day. Blunt and Moonlight retreated west through Independence where violent street fighting took place. Blunt joined forces with Curtis along the Big Blue as night fell.

While Blunt met the rebels along the Little Blue and in Independence, Pleasonton still attempted to catch up. General Philips wrote in his diary that night: "Marched at 3 a.m. via Burn's place [east of Lexington], where we expected the army to concentrate. Old Pap drove Blunt, with his Kansas Marmelukes, back and gone on by Lexington . . . Overtook command in camp . . . rode into Lexington, badly torn up."¹⁰⁷

Pleasanton's cavalry was over a day's march behind the Confederates. Pleasanton himself was ignorant of Curtis' plans and movements and feared that the Kansas troops were not yet ready or able to co-operate effectively with his force.

Curtis hoped to hold the Confederates until the force in their rear could strike. On the night of October 21 Daniel Boutwell, a volunteer soldier and resident of Topeka, contacted Pleasanton after a daring journey. Boutwell crept through rebel lines and informed Pleasanton that Curtis was preparing to withstand Price on the Big Blue.¹⁰⁸ Upon receiving this information, Pleasanton quickened his pursuit.

The Army of the Border's last line of battle on the 21st was along the western outskirts of Independence. The Confederates lost nearly twice as many men in casualties as Blunt's force, according to James W. Steele.¹⁰⁹ Night brought an end to the battle. In the delay caused by darkness Pleasanton's cavalry drew almost within striking distance, and the militia regiments were placed in the Big Blue defenses. General McNeil, commanding the leading elements of Pleasanton's force, reached the crossing of the Little Blue, where Moonlight's fighting retreat had begun that morning. The Army of the Border rested on the west side of the rebels, stretching some 15 miles along the banks of the Big Blue.¹¹⁰

Price and his Confederates found themselves in desperate straits upon reaching the Blue. Curtis now had his entire army in position behind trenches and barricades. The stream could be crossed at several fords, and all of these were guarded. Southern scouts reconnoitered all morning on October 22 before deciding where to attempt a crossing.

The Second Regiment, K.S.M., had idled in Camp Grant in Johnson County, Kansas, since October 17. The regiment moved to Hickman Mills and then to one of the crossings of the Blue called Russell's Ford by the local

residents. When orders came to move on October 21, Samuel Reader rode toward Missouri and the advancing rebels. That night he wrote in his diary: "We crossed into Mo. in a few miles march Thro' Westport and between two stonewall fences where our boys were killed last year. We went on to the Big Blue and camped 1/2 mile N. West of the stream in a grove of blackjack saplings, covered with dead leaves."¹¹¹

General Curtis believed the rebels would make their drive directly along the Kansas City - Independence road and against his strong fortifications at the main ford of the Blue. Blunt remonstrated with him, arguing that the wily Confederate commander would only feint at Curtis' preparations and then flank the Union right at one of the other fords. Curtis remained adamant. Blunt later wrote of his subsequent actions in his manuscript account of the battle: "I acted upon my own theory and sent Colonel Jennison with his brigade to guard Byron's [Byram's] ford -- well to the south of the fortified position with instructions to keep his pickets well out in the direction of Independence."¹¹² Byram's Ford was located about five miles south of the main crossing, far from where Curtis expected the major conflict to occur. A secondary road from Independence crossed at this ford and ran west to Westport and the state line. A mounted battalion of the Fourth K.S.M. held the ford. By nine o'clock that Saturday morning, these men were joined by Jennison's brigade.¹¹³

Further upstream was Russell's Ford. Colonel Veale and the Second, with the mounted companies of the Douglas County regiment, making the command about battalion strength, arrived there on the morning of October 21. Later that day, Colonel Sandy Lowe and the 21st K.S.M. joined them. These combined forces totaled around 1,200 men, supported by Captain Burns' 24-pounder. Friday night had been spent awaiting the arrival



PLATE 7: General Joseph O. Shelby in the uniform of a Confederate general. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

of General M.S. Grant with additional militiamen.¹¹⁴

About eleven o'clock in the morning General Shelby, designated to lead the rebel assault that day, could delay the attack no longer. He had to force a crossing of the river and he determined on Byram's Ford as the place for a breakthrough. Colonel Jennison's brigade had filled the ford with felled timber. The road was narrow and lined with abatis.

Shelby's division crossed the Blue under Jennison's guns early that afternoon. Shelby later wrote that "it was a pretty hot fire at that as we had to get over the Blue, with the water belly-deep, and the banks on each side steep and slippery."¹¹⁵ Colonel Sidney Jackman dismounted a part of his brigade and started the movement, but by two o'clock Shelby was convinced that Byram's Ford could not be forced by a frontal assault. After instructing Jackman to continue pressure at the ford, Shelby sent Colonel Frank B. Gordon with the Fifth Missouri Confederate Cavalry upstream to search for a crossing and Lieutenant Colonel Alonzo Slayback's Missouri Confederate Cavalry Battalion to seek another one downstream. Neither officer had gone very far before succeeding in his mission.¹¹⁶

General Curtis quickly became alarmed at the half-hearted efforts of Jackman in pressing toward the crossing. Only then did Curtis realize that the Confederate attack against his fortified line would come at some crossing other than the ford where he laid such elaborate plans. He frantically dispatched a message to Grant, who maintained his headquarters at Hickman Mills, to look out for his position. Curtis then ordered Grant "Send scouts out on road toward Pleasant Hill, and also toward Independence to see if [Price] is moving on my flank. Send me report every thirty minutes."¹¹⁷ The Second became one of Grant's scouting parties. Colonel Veale took the battalion of his regiment on reconnaissance but saw nothing

of the enemy. 118

Shelby's division finally forced a crossing of Byram's Ford about three p.m. Slayback and Gordon flanked Jennison's bluecoats, and the Federal troops fell back to Westport in order to avoid encirclement. Several rebel regiments forded the river near Hickman Mills, reached the crest of a ridge, and wheeled north, flanking Curtis' line of defense. Jackson's dismounted men then charged across Buram's Ford. One rebel officer, Jeff Thompson, later described the chase: "We drove the enemy so fast that the axes they had used to fell the trees were left by them, and they were speedily put to use opening a road for our artillery and train to cross."¹¹⁹ Shelby and Fagan commenced pouring their divisions through the break in the Yankee line. Jennison and his rag-tag force of cavalry and militia regrouped after the attack and held together long enough to withdraw a battery, then fell back steadily. Thompson pushed Curtis' right flank back northward across a stream known as Brush Creek into Westport.

Rebel Colonel Gordon and his Fifth Missouri Confederate Cavalry crossed the Blue near Hickman Mills and found themselves squarely between two Union forces -- Jennison's, which was collapsing at Byram's Ford, and General Grant's militia at Hickman Mills and Russell's Ford. Upon receiving Curtis' warning that Price would attempt a river crossing on the right of the Union line, Grant immediately sent large reconnoitering parties in all directions, scattering his command. Gordon's regiment might have been crushed, but Grant was in no position to aid Jennison when the breakthrough occurred at Byram's Ford.

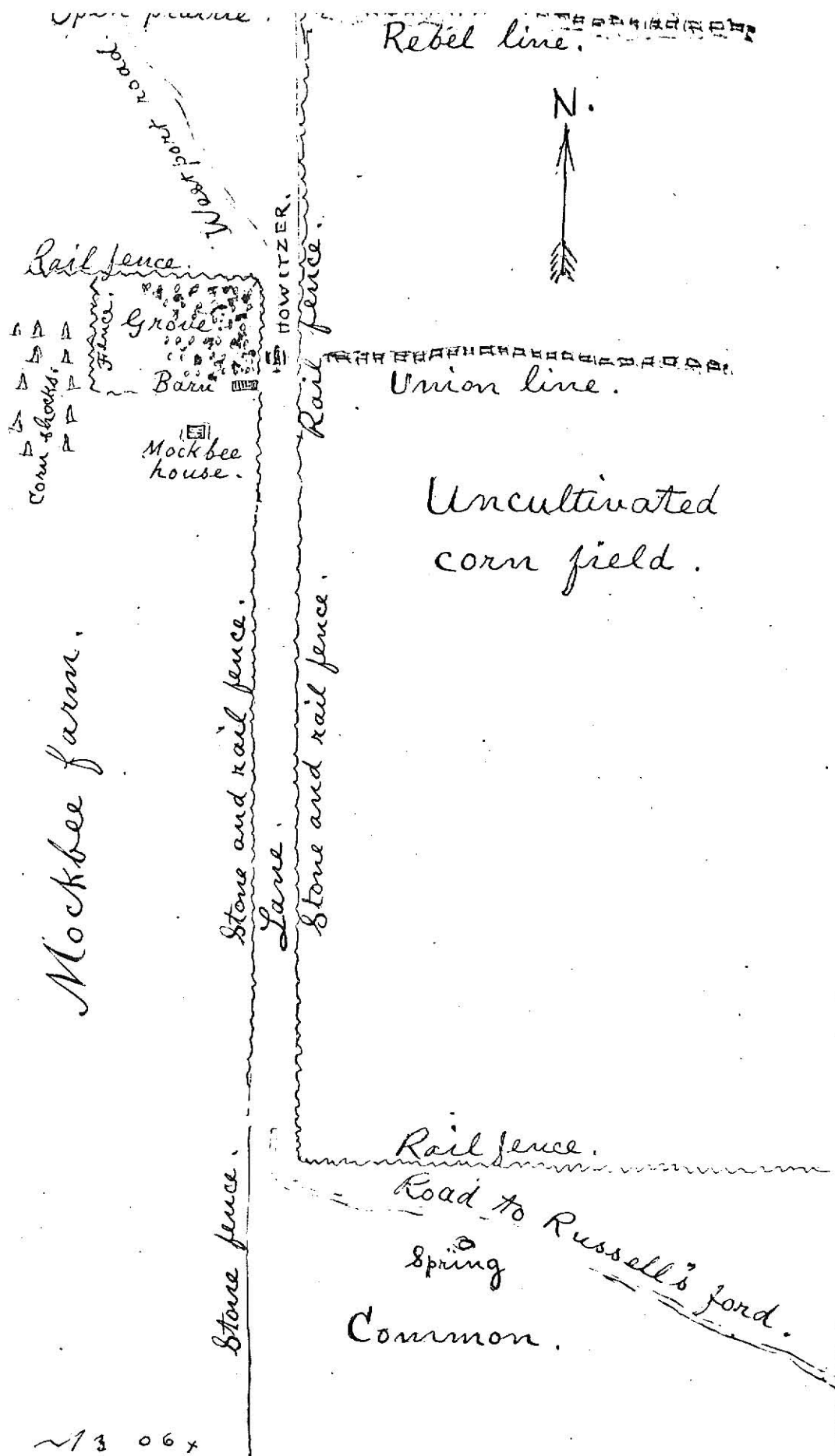
The Topeka Battery, remnants of the Third K.S.M., two battalions of the 23rd K.S.M., and the 13th K.S.M. were all of Grant's force available for action.¹²⁰ These troops fell back steadily in an effort to contact

Jennison. They arrived at the Mockabee farm on the Westport - Harrisonville road when Gordon's regiment, reinforced by Jackman with another regiment and a battalion of cavalry, attacked them.

The Second was returning from one of Grant's reconnaissances when the general and his staff approached. They crossed to the north side of the Blue where they met a messenger with word of the fighting near Hickman Mills. Grant and Veale hurried a mile down the road to where the old brass howitzer stood in the lane, unsupported, facing the rebels. "The battalion of the Third Regiment, Douglas County, under command of Captain Hindman," wrote Colonel Veale, "had fled. The Wyandotte County battalion and the battalion of the Thirteenth K.S.M., under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson, had been driven from the field."¹²¹

The fight of the Second at the Mockabee farm was short but fierce. General Grant made his stand, forming his line alongside the howitzer. Like seasoned veterans the Kansas farmers held their position and returned rebel fire. With their line finally broken in some confusion, the militiamen hastily reformed and returned to their deadly task.

Captain Ross Burns and his battery were the first men of the Shawnee County regiment to see action. The land on the west side of the Big Blue consisted of rolling hills in 1864. The 24 men with Burns were still guarding Russell's Ford while Colonel Veale and the remainder of the Shawnee County mounted men scouted to the southeast on the opposite side of the river. A messenger brought orders to fall back with the gun to Westport as quickly as possible for the enemy was crossing the Blue behind the retiring Federals.¹²² Burns led the battery about a mile down a lane past the Mockabee farmstead. On the left-hand side of this lane was a locust grove and an orchard. Suddenly the rebels opened fire out of the grove.



MAP 3: Map of the battlefield along the Big Blue River. Samuel J. Reader

drawing. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

Gage later wrote of this initial action in a personal narrative: "Captain Burns instantly turned back to the gun and ordered us to unlimber and double-cannister. . . . He sighted the gun himself and we gave them this, and repeated the same dose without losing a moment."¹¹⁹ Both charges were sent into the locust grove at point-blank range. The Confederates quickly fell back over the knoll where the grove stood. The men in the battery not employed with the howitzer cheered and fired their rifles at the retreating rebels. As Captain Burns was loading the third charge Grant, Veale, and the Second came up. The general ordered Veale to form a battle line to the right of the gun in the field outside the lane, with Companies B and G occupying the grove.¹²⁰ Everything was quiet along the line for a few moments on the cold autumn afternoon.

Jo Shelby wrote a Confederate view of the fight a quarter of a century later:

The regiment of Col. Frank Gordon and the battalion of Maj. J.C. Wood were the advance of my division as we came upon the prairie in front of Westport. A regiment of Kansas troops was seen pushing for the town. Gordon and Wood charged them fiercely. The Kansans, ridden down, surrendered almost *en masse*. They had with them a 24 pounder howitzer which was also captured, together with two stand of colors, etc.¹²¹

The men of the Second heard the peculiar rebel yell as the Southerners began their charge. Contrary to Shelby's account, the Shawnee Countians did not surrender en masse, ridden down rough-shod. Rather Colonel Veale's troops began firing as the Confederates rolled down the lane toward the gun six abreast. Burns, Gage, and the men in the battery waited until the horsemen were within a hundred yards and fired. When the smoke cleared the rebels had again disappeared over the knoll, leaving the lane strewn thick with dead and wounded horses and men.

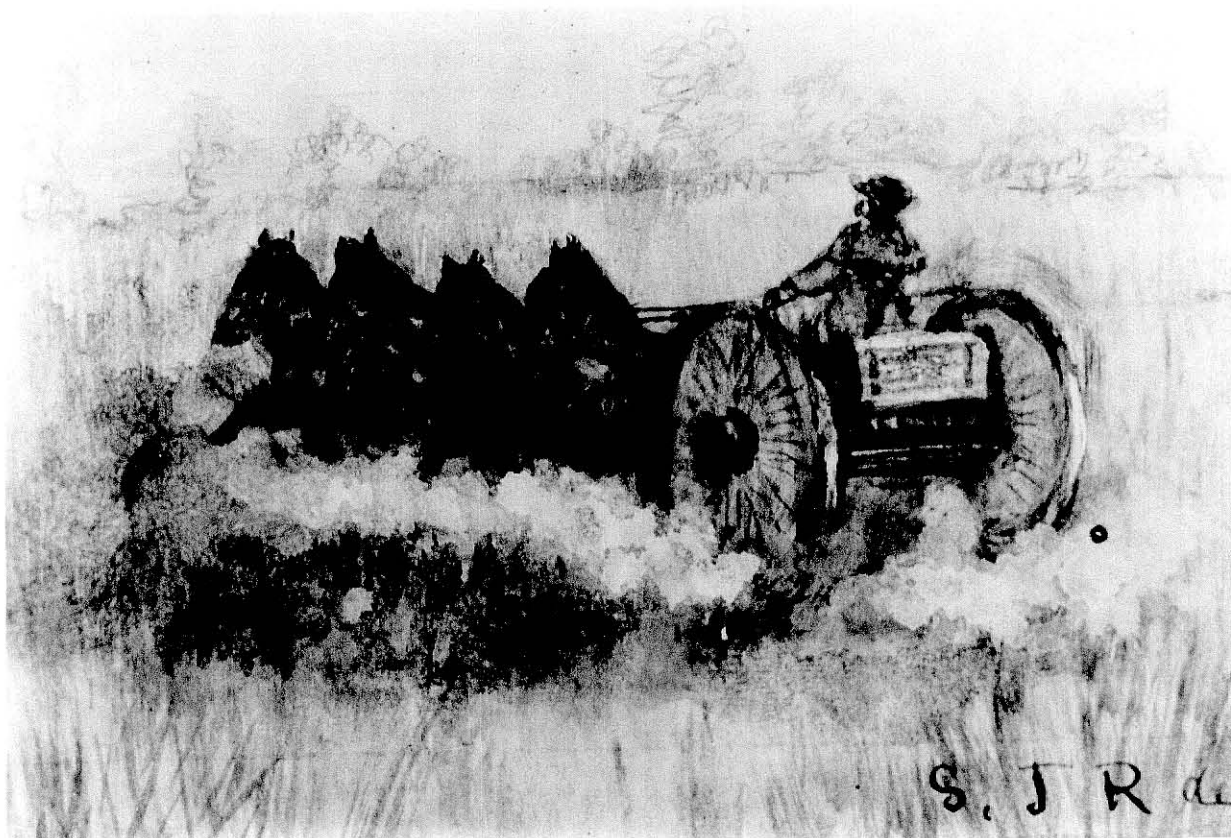


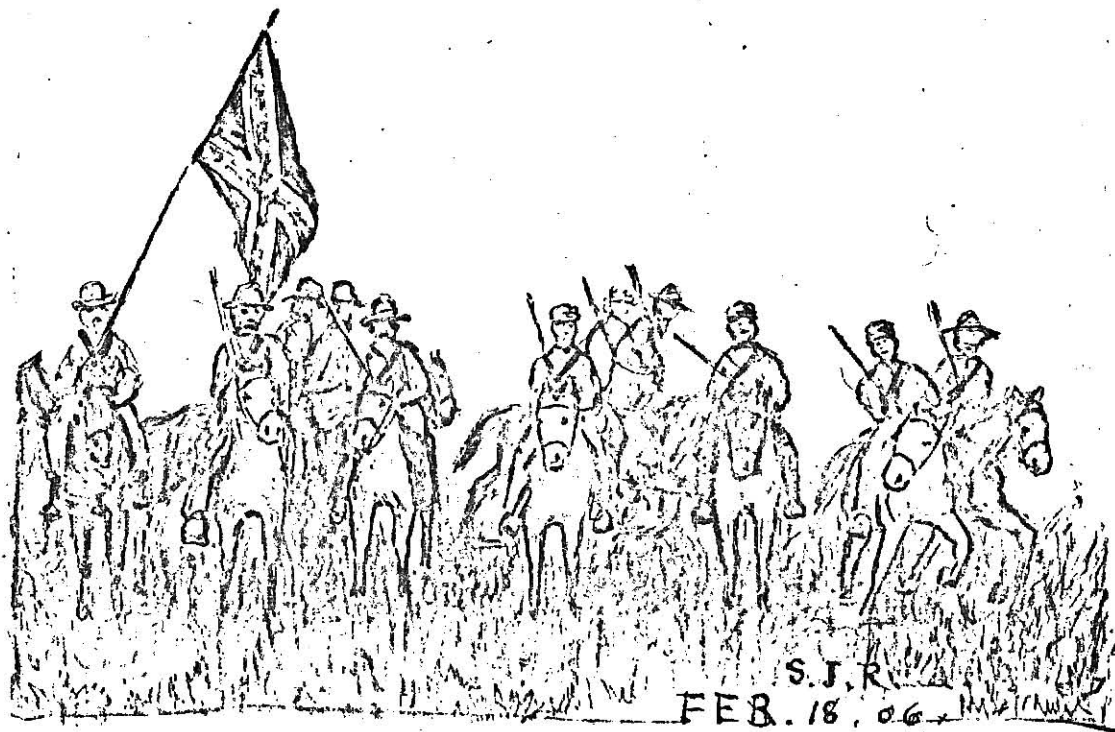
PLATE 8: "Trying to Save the Caisson." John Branner attempting to rescue the caisson of the Topeka Battery. Samuel J. Reader watercolor. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

As the Second awaited the next Confederate move, the battery shelled the far side of the hill. Then Burns ordered another load of double-cannister. The rebel yell came again, and the troopers once more came within a hundred yards of the gun before the captain gave the order to fire. Heavy rifle and howitzer fire repulsed the charge in less time than the previous attack and left the lane even more littered than before. The men of Shawnee County expected another, overwhelming attack, but Gage later wrote: "Our chances were desperate, but I believe that I would rather have been with that gun in the lane than a cavalryman on the charging side."¹²²

The Confederates were equally desperate. Apparently exasperated by the stiff resistance of those raw Kansas farmers-turned-soldiers -- pitifully few in number, with their old brass cannon, yet fighting like seasoned veterans -- Colonels Jackman and Gordon arranged their lines for a final charge. Every Confederate trooper of their commands would be engaged.

The Kansans saw the charge forming, but Colonel Veale's line did not waver. The militiamen could not escape, although some tried and were captured, and there were many killed or wounded. Captain Burns drew his twenty gunners about the howitzer. Behind them Veale arranged his battalion in support. The entire militia line was pulled together in a knot, strong and determined.¹²³ At last, the rebel yell rose in the autumn air for the third time that afternoon. Abruptly it ended, and in grim silence the gray horsemen galloped toward the waiting Kansans. General Shelby's adjutant remembered the charge later: "The prairie shook, the trampled grass, cut and whirled into yellow dust, rose up in clouds of smoke and minute particles. Not a shout, nor yell, nor battle-cry as the men neared the blue spot, coiled and massed like a

North.



REBELS RIDING INTO LINE OF BATTLE.

PLATE 9: "Rebels Riding into Line of Battle." Samuel J. Reader drawing. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

group of rattlesnakes."¹²⁴

The final rebel charge lasted but a few minutes. When it was over Colonel Veale no longer had a regiment, nor General Grant a command. Jackman's brigade struggled against the Second, resorting to saber and pistol opposed to Federal bayonets. The rebels outnumbered the militiamen nearly six-to one at this time, and the Second could hardly be expected to hold their position. Even regulars in this situation would not be disposed to face such odds. Shelby's adjutant wrote a description of the short, fierce engagement:

Death was everywhere, but no one saw him. Only the gaping guns vomiting grape -- only the infantry and cavalry heating the air with bullets were before the fierce Missourians. One swift, short, hungry yell now and no more. The Federal cannoneers were devoted soldiers and deserved a better fate; the supports beyond fought well at first, but in the murderous pistol combat they were no match for the Missourians, and rushed away toward Westport, disorganized and broken.¹²⁵

The Second fought Jackman's brigade for about three-quarters of an hour. Twice the Shawnee County contingent drove the Confederates back. The third thrust burst upon them in double column, flanking them on both the left and right. Under this overwhelming onslaught the Second's resolution wavered and broke. Veale's men were forced back in disorder to the south side of the Blue where they found, according to the Colonel's report, "Colonel Lowe and Major Laing, with their commands, who should have supported the Second Regiment in the fight, as should also the commands of Johnson, Guilford and Hindman."¹²⁶ Later Veale claimed: "Had they done so the result would have been different. As it was, my command was sacrificed; being ordered to fight six times my numbers of Price's veterans and bushwhackers, with raw militia."¹²⁷ In view of the circumstances the Second was indeed sacrificed. Unaided, the battalion administered the check which stopped the last attempt of Price's army to go westward that day. General Grant's mistake was too much

scattering and scouting by his entire command with insufficient reserve behind to fight the enemy.

Sam Reader wrote of the day's events in his diary that night:

A Sanguinary field. Hot enough for anybody. . . Cap't. Burns fired 24 pounder cannon. It made an awful roar. . . I went to the right of the cannon. A rebel line came in front of us in the field and shot at our flag. I shot my carbine at them. Reloaded. I went with the boys in the orchard, and I shot my Springfield at the rebels, coming in a long line, yelling. We ran out in the lane, and I crossed the field. . . Looking back I saw the Rebels within 40 yards and their bullets flying around me, so I dropped my face.¹²⁸

After the second charge and repulse the battery had shelled the rebels again and continued until the third attack closed in on the front and flanks. The men of the battery could not get out and could do no more. Many were killed or wounded at this time. The remainder attempted an escape, but could not get through and were taken prisoner. Captain Burns stayed with his gun as the last man, using his revolver when he could do nothing more. The rebels eventually beat him into unconsciousness with carbines and captured him where he made his stand. Before he was overcome, he carried away the sight of the gun to prevent his enemies from using it after its capture.¹²⁹

Shelby's men anticipated meeting a much larger force, and Shelby himself could not believe that the Kansas commander had the courage to oppose his division with such a meager amount of men. The rebels attacked confident that their mere advance would dislodge the Yankees. Shelby had this praise for the Topeka battery: "It was only after forty-three of our men were dead and wounded on the field, when Captain Burns himself had suffered a severe wound, when their ammunition was almost spent that they were compelled to surrender."¹³⁰

The capture of Burns ended the vicious scrap of the Second. The action was completely ended in an hour; when it was over the support battalion

North.



GLIMPSE OF A SHELL.

A flash. A jar. Out from the smoke
A screaming shell went flying.
One glimpse. It then in fragments broke,
The Johnny rebs dying.

PLATE 10: "Glimpse of a Shell." Samuel J. Reader drawing
of the Topeka battery firing at the enemy. Courtesy
Kansas State Historical Society.

had been dispersed by its attackers. Twenty-four Kansas farmers lay dead, and the same number were wounded. Colonel Veale reported 68 men captured in his report of October 30, but other sources claim 88 prisoners. Over 100 horses brought by the militiamen from their homes lay slaughtered. All of Burns' artillerymen were killed, wounded, or captured, their old howitzer in enemy hands.¹³¹ The wounded were cared for the night of October 22 and all day the 23rd behind Union lines. But the bold stand of the battalion detained Jackman's brigade of Confederates from marching into Kansas, turning the southern flank of the Army of the Border.

A few minutes following the final charge, a body of prisoners was led back to where the gun stood in the lane by the Mockabee farm. They were placed in a line and for each man of them there was a mounted rebel opposite with revolver in hand. The men of Colonel Jackman's command held the captives, and they were well-known to the Kansans as border bushwhackers. General Shelby himself suddenly rode between the two lines and, using "terse and easily understood" language, dispersed the ruffians and ordered the prisoners placed under a guard of his own veterans.¹³²

Shelby could not, however, prevent all the pent-up hatreds from erupting into atrocities. Lieutenant William H. Delong, Company G, Auburn, was shot in the hip and the spine after he surrendered and later died of his wounds in Kansas City. Meric D. Race, of the Topeka battery, was shot as a prisoner and died the following day. A. J. Huntoon saw Lieutenant-Colonel H. M. Greene stripped to his underwear, shot at three times, and wounded twice. At this juncture Huntoon himself lay low on his mount and rode for his life. He was soon re-captured.¹³³ Huntoon also wrote that "as we went up the bank the first object that met my eye was the body of Ben Hughes, the colored driver of one of our



2. 06 x

CAPT. ROSS BURNS.

PLATE 11: "Capt. Ross Burns." Samuel J. Reader
sketch of Burns after the battle. Courtesy
Kansas State Historical Society.

wagons. His throat was cut from ear to ear."¹³⁴ Hughes was a teamster for the battery, and the wound Huntoon described was obviously not a battle wound.¹³⁵

As darkness fell the prisoners were gathered and marched about two miles down the Blue to Price's headquarters. The Confederates established a hospital at a farmstead. The captives were stockaded in a stone corral with the wounded left in the yard of the enclosure. Here G.G. Gage held the wounded Captain Burns' head on his knees until around two o'clock the next morning. Then rebel guards came to ask for the captain of the gun and took him into the hospital. The remainder of the captives sat in the corral yard.

At sundown General Pleasonton sent a message from Independence saying that he pursued Price with 20,000 men and had fought the rebels on the field of Moonlight's fight the day before. The Yankees drove Marmaduke's division through the streets of Independence in a hand-to-hand struggle.

Under cover of darkness General Curtis took up a new position with his entire force behind a line of earthworks before Kansas City, abandoning his flanked line along the Big Blue. In the night Price dispatched his wagon train south and prepared to follow up his success of Saturday by crushing Curtis' army Sunday.¹³⁶ "All night," reported the Kansas City Star in a later article, "Shelby's tired men kept watch over the sleeping army. Hunger and thirst added to the misery of the cold bivouac, but the men were cheered at the thought of feasting in Westport on the morrow, all confident in Shelby."¹³⁷

In effect, the fight of the Second on the late afternoon of that Saturday in 1864 ended the invasion by Price's Confederates. The rebels needed to defeat the Army of the Border before Pleasonton and Rosecrans managed to come to its aid. The Federal pursuit arrived in their rear

about the same time the Second fought Jackman at the Mockabee farm. Trapped between the two Union armies, Price had no choice but to begin his retreat back to Arkansas.

The battalion of Shawnee County militia was by some mistake in judgment left unsupported on the extreme right of Curtis' line. As they hurried to Colonel Jennison's aid, they were struck by Jackman's flanking brigade. They fought bravely to the last, but were overpowered. Of about 300 men present only a few over 100 escaped.¹³⁸ However, by nightfall Shelby was stopped and Pleasonton's provisional cavalry had struck the rebel rearguard. Colonel Veale's Kansas farmers fought like trained veterans for forty-five minutes. Their sacrifice served to halt Price's westward drive -- the Missouri general would begin a battle of escape the next day.

CHAPTER IV

AFTERMATH OF THE BATTLE

The same Saturday afternoon that Shawnee Countians fought on the Mockabee farm also saw the long-awaited Pleasonton and the Provisional Cavalry Division finally come up in the rear of Price's Confederates. After Pleasonton received Private Daniel Boutwell's information that Curtis was ready for combat, the cavalry commander moved fast. He hastily constructed a makeshift bridge over the Little Blue River, replacing the original structure Colonel Moonlight had burned the previous day. He then crossed his troops, train, and artillery, maintaining close contact with the rebels all day.

On the opposite side of the Southern army, General Blunt had formed a new line running east and west just north of Westport. The Second K.S.M. had given the brigadier time to reform by withstanding Shelby's onslaught earlier that day. General Curtis was shaken by the failure of his army to hold the Big Blue and was pessimistic about chances for his army when fighting was rejoined the next morning. Not even a reassuring message from Pleasonton and the booming of the latter's guns beyond the rebel army lifted his spirits. Had it not been for the more energetic Blunt, the Army of the Border might have withdrawn into the defenses of Kansas City that night,

The Confederates were no less anxious in their camp. Shelby sent an officer to Price to suggest a night withdrawal to save the army. No reply came. The night was bitter cold, below freezing, the air thick and hazy until a chill wind began blowing. Although Price made no comment concerning Shelby's suggested retreat, saving his army and enormous supply train was uppermost in his mind. His troops were

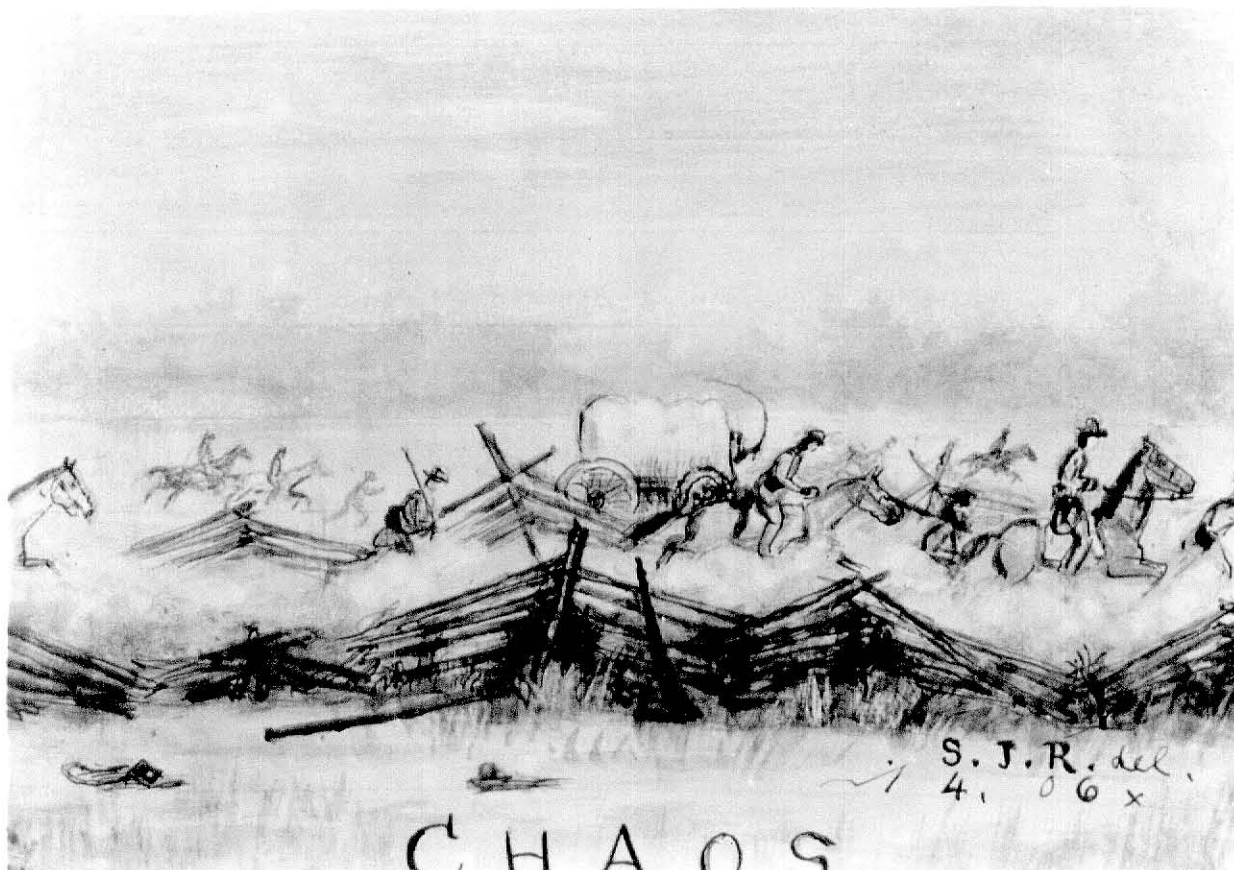


PLATE 12: "Chaos." Price's Confederates hurry south from Westport to escape Curtis and Pleasonton. Samuel J. Reader watercolor. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

encumbered by unorganized and useless recruits, over 100 prisoners, and the wagons. The purpose of the next day's fighting was to extricate the train. According to the Confederate Military History, "Marmaduke was opposing [Pleasonton] and Shelby was opposing Curtis, while Fagan's division was between the two, guarding the train and preparing to help either Shelby or Marmaduke. The object was to get the train out."¹³⁹

The prisoners of the Second were confined behind the train, but they were guarded by men of Shelby's division instead of Fagan's. That night rebel guards assured Sam Reader that they didn't try to keep prisoners; rather, captured souls were paroled as soon as possible. One Arkansan told him that it was a good thing he was a prisoner. Reader quoted him as saying "There's going to be some heavy fighting within the next few days, and if you were free you might be killed."¹⁴⁰

As the captives huddled under the few available blankets, rumors spread (as they continued to do for years) that the twenty-four men of the battery had been shot down wantonly after surrendering. Although there were members of the battery among the prisoners, and although most of the prisoners had been threatened with a similar fate, the rumor persisted for some time during the cold, bleak night. Most accounts of the battle agree that all 24 were either captured or killed in action.¹⁴¹

The fighting on October 23, a clear, cold Sunday morning, began with small arms fire and rapidly became an artillery duel. The two Yankee armies on either side of Price pushed toward one another, squeezing the rebel general south. A Union infantry force under A.J. Smith tried to cut off the rebels from the east and close the trap in which the Confederates found themselves. Price ordered Shelby and Fagan to turn eastward, support Marmaduke's withdrawal from Pleasonton's

attack and then concentrate around the wagon train.

The Confederates then started the five hundred wagons and their prisoners south with the intention of striking the military road to Fort Scott, in southeastern Kansas. The procession was guarded by several thousand troops. Gage later wrote: "The battle lasted behind us until nearly noon, and the train and prisoners had got several miles further south, and from that time on it was a running fight."¹⁴²

Rain began falling soon after the rebel army crossed the Kansas line and turned southward on the afternoon of the 23rd. The roads became slippery with mud, but the continued presence of Federal pursuit spurred the Confederates in their efforts. The weary army stopped long after dark Monday night near the Marais des Cygnes River. Price was confident that by this time he had saved his army; so confident was he that he laid plans for Shelby to ride ahead with his brigade next morning to raid Fort Scott and capture military supplies.

Shelby never reached Fort Scott. He had left the rebel army long before first light and was well on his way that afternoon of Tuesday, October 25, when he received an urgent summons from Price reporting an attack by Pleasanton's cavalry. Another running fight of several miles had ensued. The captives mingled among wagons were soon crossing Mine Creek a short way south of the Marais des Cygnes. To save the train Marmaduke and Pagan "formed a line-of-battle for the purpose of holding [the Union cavalry] in check."¹⁴³ Two Yankee brigades rushed across the prairie at a gallop. Marmaduke, whose division formed the first line of defense, ordered a charge, and the blue and gray lines clashed at full speed. In a matter of moments the Federal troopers captured Marmaduke, another general, four colonels, a thousand men, and ten pieces of artillery.¹⁴⁴ Only Shelby's timely arrival prevented the

capture of the train and the liberation of the prisoners.

At this time the captives had had no food since daybreak of Saturday, the 22nd. They had almost no water.¹⁴⁵ Gage later recalled that "in crossing a stream, which of course was stirred up by the hurrying army, we would catch up a little in our hats or in tins and drink as we ran."¹⁴⁶ Dr. A.J. Huntoon, who served as captain of one of the companies of the Second, observed that some of the prisoners were in a condition bordering on acute mania caused by extreme thirst. Shortly after the battle at Mine Creek, Dr. Huntoon tried to alleviate this situation:

The prisoners were all suffering such agony here that I asked for an escort to take me to the commanding officer. I had it in my mind to lay the case before him and ask for some relief. But when the place was reached the headquarters had been moved, and there was no one there. Immediately upon getting back to the rest of the prisoners we were set moving again.¹⁴⁷

Price's fighting retreat continued from daybreak far into darkness each day afterward, with Pleasonton's volunteers pressing him each step of the way. The column left the Mine Creek battlefield at two o'clock the morning of October 26. There was no hope of rest for either the rebels or their prisoners.

The captives were marched in groups of eight, alternating with rebel cavalrymen in columns of four. A Confederate flanker was also on each side of the unfortunate Kansans. The prisoners were forced to double-quick march most of the time to avoid being trampled by the closely following horsemen. Reader at one point grasped the tail of one of the preceeding guards' mounts and was virtually dragged on his feet.¹⁴⁸

The marchers received almost no food from their captors during the entire week after their battle. After a while the hunger pangs passed leaving only an incredible emptiness. Not so their indescribable thirst. Throats dried up; tongues swelled, men could neither talk nor swallow,

and all suffered intense agony.¹⁴⁹ Many of the captives' shoes or boots were taken from them shortly after their surrender to cover rebel feet. Those who managed in one way or another to retain their footwear were forced to cut their shoes from their feet on account of the swelling.¹⁵⁰

There were nearly 100 prisoners altogether, not all of them members of the Second. One of these was W.B. Laird of the Seventh Indiana Cavalry Regiment, who was captured about a mile below Westport. As he and his comrades were hurried toward Fort Scott, a guard asked him how he would like to be shot. "I jokingly answered that as I was a prisoner I had no right to talk," Laird later recalled, "but if the choice was left to me I'd rather not be shot."¹⁵¹ Instantly the guard shot the unarmed man in front of Laird, and the poor fellow let out a mighty cry and fell forward. "The yell of the dying man unnerved the guard, and I will always believe that is what saved my own life," said Laird.¹⁵²

Union troopers again struck the Confederate rear near the Little Osage River. "The excitement of the battle seemed to infuse fresh ferocity in some of the rebels," wrote Reader, "and we received an additional share of abusive language."¹⁵³ One of the Second's contingent in bondage was a black man. He received special attention during this episode, as Reader related:

Some of them yelled like wild Indians at sight of the Negro prisoner, and various were the modes proposed of killing him:

'Don't shoot him! Kill him with a white oak club!' shouted one ruffian.

The negro happened to be walking by my side, and I took an opportunity to advise him to escape at the first opportunity. ¹⁵⁴

Several of the captured Shawnee Countians made good their escapes from the agonies of the long march south. Sam Reader slipped away

West.

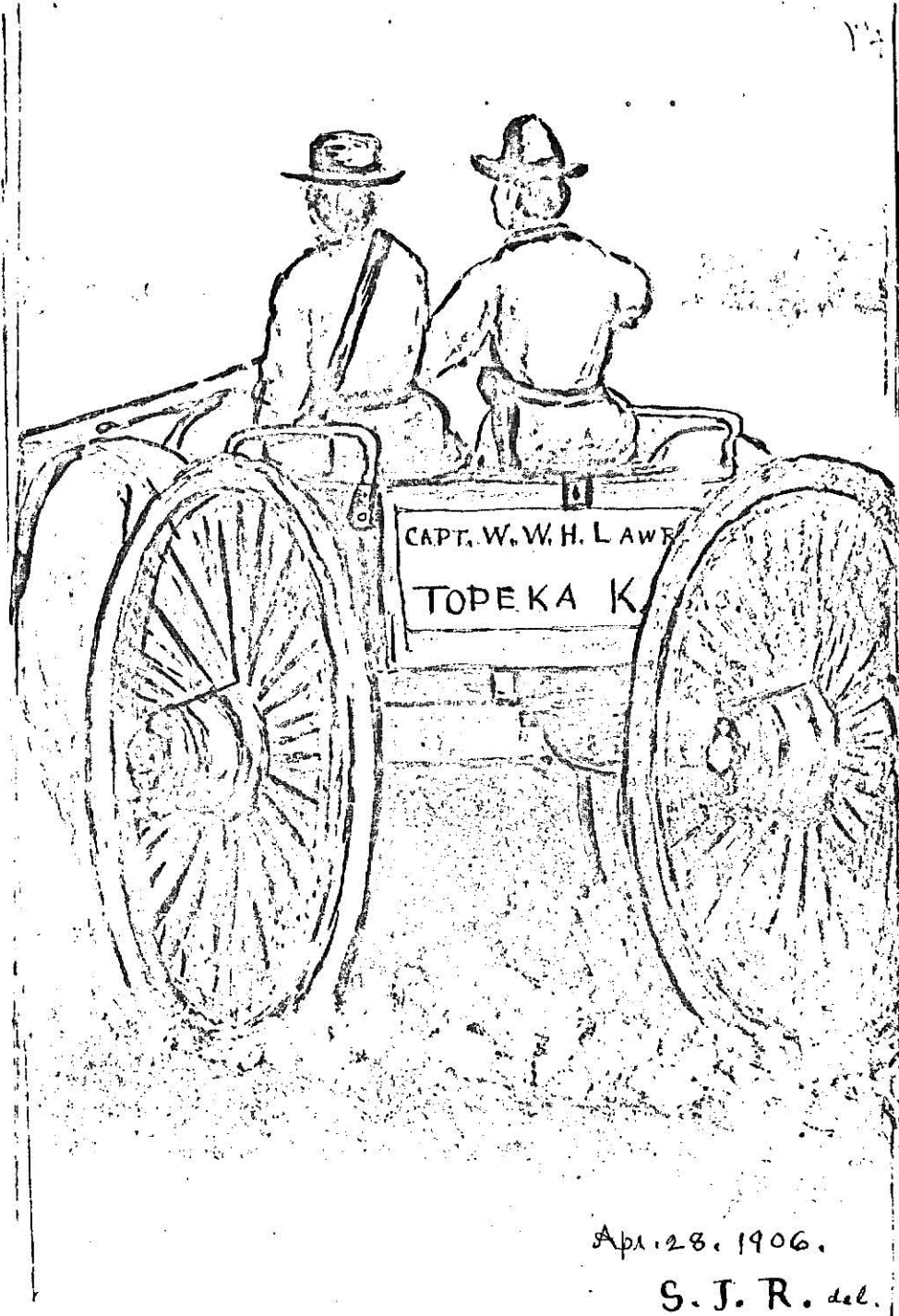


PLATE 13: "Captured Artillery." A Samuel J. Reader drawing of rebels driving the caisson of the Topeka battery. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

CAPTURED ARTILLERY.

one evening a few days after his capture. Surviving a diet of acorns, berries, and rainwater, he arrived at Topeka about noon on Sunday, October 30. He had left the city only eighteen days earlier, but the time he spent with the militia was filled with bravery and tragedy over which he reminisced for the remainder of his life. He reported to Colonel Veale in person, then crossed the Kansas River and reached his home in Indianola.¹⁵⁵ Gage and two companions -- J.A. Polley and Nelson Young -- disappeared from the ranks of the prisoners the night after the fight at Mine Creek. One by one they stole into the darkness while Dr. Huntoon (who refused to join the escape attempt, preferring to stay behind to assist the remaining captives) engaged the guard in conversation.¹⁵⁶

Those still held by the Confederates continued the march south. The first three days the column made 180 miles, accompanied by the footsore prisoners and the cumbersome wagon train. By Wednesday afternoon the southern army had reached Carthage, Missouri. Seven of the prisoners were so exhausted that they were left at a vacant farmhouse two miles south of town.¹⁵⁷

Pleasanton's Provisional Cavalry Division still raced after Price's rebels, but Shelby's stubborn rearguard kept it away from the train and from the captives. Price at last realized that he could not escape with both his army and his wagons. He ordered most of the wagons corralled and burned, and once more his army was a column of cavalry. Freed of the troublesome train, the Confederates pulled ahead of the Yankee troopers; once away from Pleasanton's volunteer and militia pursuers by some distance, Price felt safe enough to slow the pace of the retreat somewhat, allowing the prisoners a welcome reprieve from the hurried march.¹⁵⁸

The exhausted prisoners now had time to take stock of their situation. Ten days after leaving their homes, their battalion of the militia regiment took part in a major action and proved itself the equal of volunteers and regulars under fire. Nearly a quarter of the battalion were casualties or prisoners, a heavier toll than any Union unit engaged at Westport. This was little encouragement for the weary militiamen, however. As the march slowed, they became interested in feeding themselves. "As they [the Confederates] began to march more slowly they had time to gather in a few cattle," wrote Dr. Huntoon, "and we had a little meat."¹⁵⁹ This was the first meal the Kansas farmers were able to eat since their capture nearly a week before. Their captors ate no better; Shelby once rode alongside the prisoners and told them: "Gentlemen, I am doing the best I can; you are getting just as good fare as my men are."¹⁶⁰ The Confederates with Shelby were seasoned veterans, used to a meager diet; the Kansans were in no condition to soldier, let alone endure such hardship.

A week after the captivity began the fatigued column marched into Newtonia, in the southwest corner of Missouri. The Confederates and their prisoners had traversed the length of the Kansas-Missouri border, harrassed by Federal pursuit the entire distance. On Saturday, October 30, the Second K.S.M. prisoners and their fellow captives were unexpectedly paroled. Shelby, an adjutant, and several clerks attempted to hold formal proceedings, but no sooner had they begun than they Federals struck hard at the Southern army. The prisoners were hastily shuffled another two miles down the road, where, in a place of safety, they swore "not to bear arms against the Southern Confederacy, or in any way contend against that government until duly exchanged."¹⁶¹ They then received parole papers and were left to their own devices, while

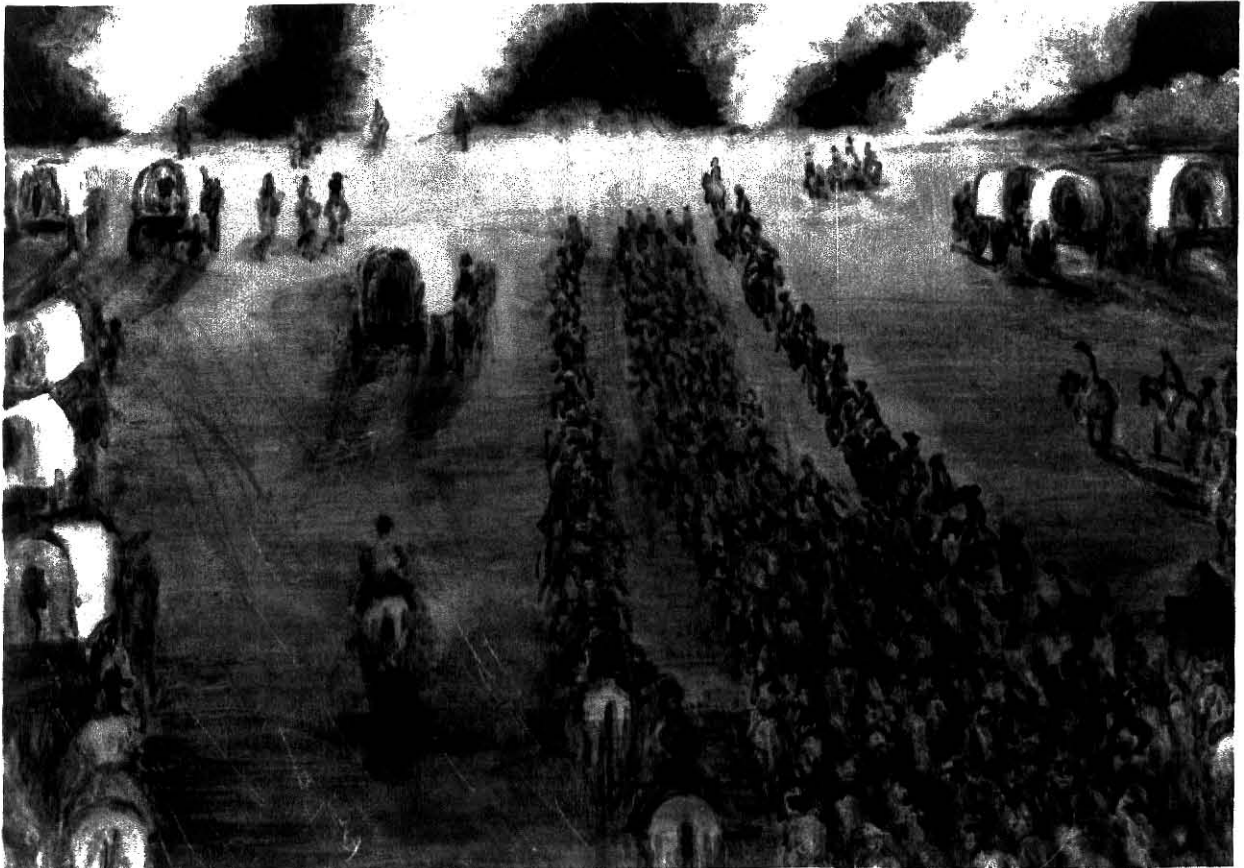


PLATE 14: "Before Dawn." Kansas prisoners marching south under rebel guard. Samuel J. Reader watercolor. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

Price eventually escaped with 5,000 men across the Arkansas River.

At home in the county, families were apprehensive about their relatives. Colonel Veale brought the remnants of his battalion to Topeka the week the prisoners were marching south. From those men homefolk learned of the dead and wounded. Some fears were assuaged by this knowledge, but a local circuit preacher, James Griffing Sayre, wrote his wife concerning the anxieties among some of his flock:

When a wife only knows her husband is dead then she knows he is free from suffering so far as this world is concerned, but to know that her husband is in the hands of these inhuman wretches, obliged to drag out a life more intollerable than death itself, seems almost past endurance. 162

The preacher told his wife that an unnamed individual who had been captured and escaped on Sunday night said there were 105 prisoners, mostly Kansas militia, who were in the hands of the enemy. This man gave vivid descriptions of the fight at the Big Blue, the condition of the prisoners, and of the initial flight from Westport by the Confederate Army. He pictured the men essentially as they had acted -- untrained, loosely organized, and loosely disciplined farmers who performed with reasonable credit, militarily. His comments aggravated the worry of folks at home, but he held no conception of the hardships his comrades experienced in the week after his escape.¹⁶³

At first light on the morning after their release, the Shawnee County men began backtracking towards home. A short distance from Newtonia they met a Federal patrol and were hastily conveyed to General Blunt's headquarters. Here Dr. Huntoon related their long story. Blunt provided teams and supply wagons to take the exhausted men to Fort Scott on November 1. At the fort General C.W. Blair hosted the Second Regiment men to a hearty supper and arranged for their transportation to Topeka. The last of Colonel Veale's command returned to the county

on November 13, over a month after they departed.¹⁶⁴

The prisoners' homecoming did not end their suffering. A week of privation and marching created tremendous strain on the constitutions of the newly-freed men. Less than two weeks after the parolees came home Griffing wrote to his wife of a visit to one of the Tecumseh company's invalids:

his disease was lung fever brought on by exposure whilst a prisoner He seemed quite glad to see me, and conversed quite freely and seemed to feel as though he was not long for this world which premonition was alas too true. ¹⁶⁵

The man Griffing wrote about, Osburn Naylor, died from his captivity before the winter was over. Numerous other returned captives died among friends; many were plagued with poor health from their week-long sojourn with Price.¹⁶⁶

The Second Regiment was mustered for the last time on December 10, 1864. The occasion of the final meeting was funeral services for those slain at the Battle of the Blue. The Congregational Church in Topeka was crowded with Shawnee Countians paying last respects to the fallen militiamen. The bodies of the men buried at Kansas City had had previously been disinterred for removal to Topeka. At 12:00 noon the regiment marched into the church sanctuary with precise military style and stood in ranks two deep, completely filling the aisles. Ministers of several denominations participated in the funeral services. "A procession was then formed," reported the Congregational Record, "and proceeded to the grave, the bodies were lowered to their resting places, their companions in arms fired three volleys of musketry over them and left them to 'sleep their last sleep'".¹⁶⁷

An anti-climactic conclusion was thus brought to the history of the Second K.S.M. as well as the war in the Trans-Mississippi West. The Kansas militia returned home to vote early in November. Samuel Crawford

was elected to replace Thomas Carney as governor with a legislature pledged to return Lane to the Senate. Abraham Lincoln was the state's choice for president. When the war finally ended east of the Mississippi, Kirby Smith still had a formidable force of thirty thousand men which some Confederates hoped might have been the nucleus of a never-ending Confederacy west of the river. Jo Shelby never surrendered but attempted to create a Confederate colony in Mexico, which failed dismally.¹⁶⁸ As late as 1886 men reputed to have been members of Quantrill's guerrillas bushwhacked a Major Ransom who was in a Kansas cavalry regiment.¹⁶⁹ Notorious outlaws such as the James brothers and the Youngers troubled the Kansas-Missouri border for years after the war, utilizing their experiences with Quantrill to prolong the hatred generated in the 1850's.

The tale of the Price raid and the Second's involvement was also continued through the years following the end of the war. Colonel Veale was elected to the state legislature in 1866. Letters began to flood his office soon thereafter concerning treatment of widows, the collection of bounties, and militia pay. A letter from a private in the Indianola company dated October 1, 1866, exemplifies the many inquiries to Veale:

Coln. Veale

Sir will you please inform me whether the Kansas Militia have been paid, and if so how I can get my pay, &c. I belonged to the Indianola Co. Capt. Miles. Please give me all the particulars and oblige

Yours Truly
O.T. Angell 170

The cost of the rebel raid to the citizens of Kansas, besides loss of life and incidental losses, was, according to one writer, at least \$500,000. Well over half of these losses were rejected by the state legislature with little consideration. The federal government was

obliged to reimburse the settlers for their claims. The state legislature provided in 1865 for assuming payment of those losses with appropriate reimbursement from the federal government. Eventually Kansas paid almost \$378,794 of the amount and Congress appropriated \$336,817.¹⁷¹

The Second K.S.M. incurred numerous expenses by purchasing needed supplies paid for in scrip. Clamorings for payment of that scrip continued throughout Veale's term in the state legislature and afterwards. Most of the debt was finally paid from the congressional appropriation.

Former members of the regiment met on the anniversary of the battle until the turn of the century. The dramatic action of the farmers from Shawnee County received emphasis in relation to the larger Battle of Westport. Veale, Ross Burns, and Sam Reader often spoke at meetings discussing the Westport fight in general. Two memorials, one in stone and one in land, each valued at \$10,000, were given to Topeka by G.G. Gage, who became a prominent citizen after the war. The granite monument is surmounted by a figure of a private soldier standing at rest.¹⁷³ It was presented in memory of the men of the Second who fell at the Blue. It stands in Topeka Cemetery near where these militiamen lie buried. At the unveiling in 1894 only 36 members of the regiment were able to march to the proceedings with the officers. The other gift Gage made to Topeka was a large tract of land which today constitutes Gage Park.¹⁷⁴

The howitzer of the Topeka Battery was discovered in Flat Creek, four miles north of Cassville, Missouri, in 1910. Rebels dumped it into twelve feet of water there after one wheel of the carriage broke when it struck a stone. Workers raised the gun by draining the stream and lifting the piece with a derrick.¹⁷⁵

The response of the Kansas State Militia is illustrated by the

following extract from the report of Colonel C.K. Holliday, State Adjutant-General:

Never was an appeal for help answered so promptly. in most instances on the next day . . . after the receipt of the proclamation at regimental head-quarters, the regiment itself, in full force, was on the march for the rendezvous designated by the commanding general. . . . But promptness alone was not the only commendable feature in the movement. Its universality was equally marked. . . very many outside the ages -- under 21 and over 45 -- voluntarily stepped into the ranks, and hastened 'to the front' with their comrades. All this occurred before there was the remotest intimation that the services of those outside the military ages would be required. 176

Of the militiamen of whom Holliday wrote, Colonel Veale's regiment suffered heavier losses in killed and wounded than any other engaged at Westport. An heroic attempt to save the howitzer as the fight drew to a close tendered a request that one Topekan, John Branner, be awarded the Congressional medal of Honor; in one writer's opinion his act was braver than any men's who won the honor.¹⁷⁷ The stand of the battery was as brave a struggle against superior odds as any during the war. The Shawnee County militia remained at its position when the Army of the Border was in the process of falling back. Before the rebel army, permitting preparations for the defensive battle the following day. Such acts of bravery by inexperienced militia with a bare minimum of training was only only equaled, never bettered, by regular or volunteer outfits in the course of the war.

The Second Regiment's fight at the Big Blue prevented the Confederate army's invasion of Kansas and marked the opening of the final chapter of the war in the Trans-Mississippi West. The history of the Second Regiment, Kansas State Militia was short-lived but exciting, cramming into two months' time as much valor and meritorious action as many Civil War volunteer units during years-long histories.

CONCLUSION

The Battle of Westport and the action at the Big Blue had no appreciable effect on the militia versus regular controversy. The relationship of volunteer regiments to the militia in the decades before the Civil War gradually turned in favor of volunteers, so much so that by 1861 President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers rather than calling out the nation's militia. The role of the militia as a military resource was seemingly proven during the War of 1812, and to a lesser extent in the Mexican War. Constituents of the militia were still strong as late as the Civil War, but military thought made a major shift toward volunteers during the war years, largely because of the shifting attitudes of the American society taking place at the same time.

Had the battle at Westport been a major conflict or even a portion of a much larger confrontation, those theorists who maintained that the militia remained the first line of defense might have pointed to the immediate response of the Kansas farmers as a case in point. The mere presence of over 12,000 militiamen supporting General Curtis' Army of the Border worried the Confederates, although these were for the most part untrained and untried citizens, not true soldiers. If Price and his officers assumed that the Kansas militia would pose no problems for his veteran cavalymen, the determined stand of the Second K.S.M. at the Mockabee farm surely proved his assumption foolish. The Kansas militia was unprepared for offensive operations; at the time Curtis called for them, he intended for them to play only a defensive role. The militia was always strategically defensive throughout American history, mustered to provide support for the experienced

volunteers preparing to attack any opposing force. In the case of the Kansas militia, their goal was providing numerical support in the form of arms and men to the Army of the Border near Westport. Curtis' skilled soldiers were too small in number to attack the rebels, and the militia which crossed the Missouri border was large enough to defy efforts to convert it into an effective offensive force. Hence it served the purpose that militia had come to represent in the minds of military men by 1864 -- defending home territory while volunteers and regulars conducted the war.

On the opposite side of the debate, military thinkers might have construed the fight on the Big Blue as representing the exception which proved the rule. Although Colonel Veale's command suffered the heaviest casualties of any Federal unit engaged and held their ground against superior numbers as well as any regular or volunteer outfit in Curtis' army, the general character of the militia remained more like those who opposed crossing the state line. For those arguing in favor of volunteers and regulars, the character of most of the militia was similarly unfavorable, and the heroic action of the Shawnee County regiment made little difference when compared to the majority of Kansas militia regiments. By the end of the war many theorists believed as did Emory Upton, that the militia "did not merit the name of a military force," since it was destitute of instruction and training and very nearly unarmed.¹⁷⁸

The fact remains that the Battle of Westport exerted virtually no influence on the outcome of the war and even less on military thought after the war. Still the history of the Second Kansas State Militia could have caused a re-evaluation of the militia-regular debate.

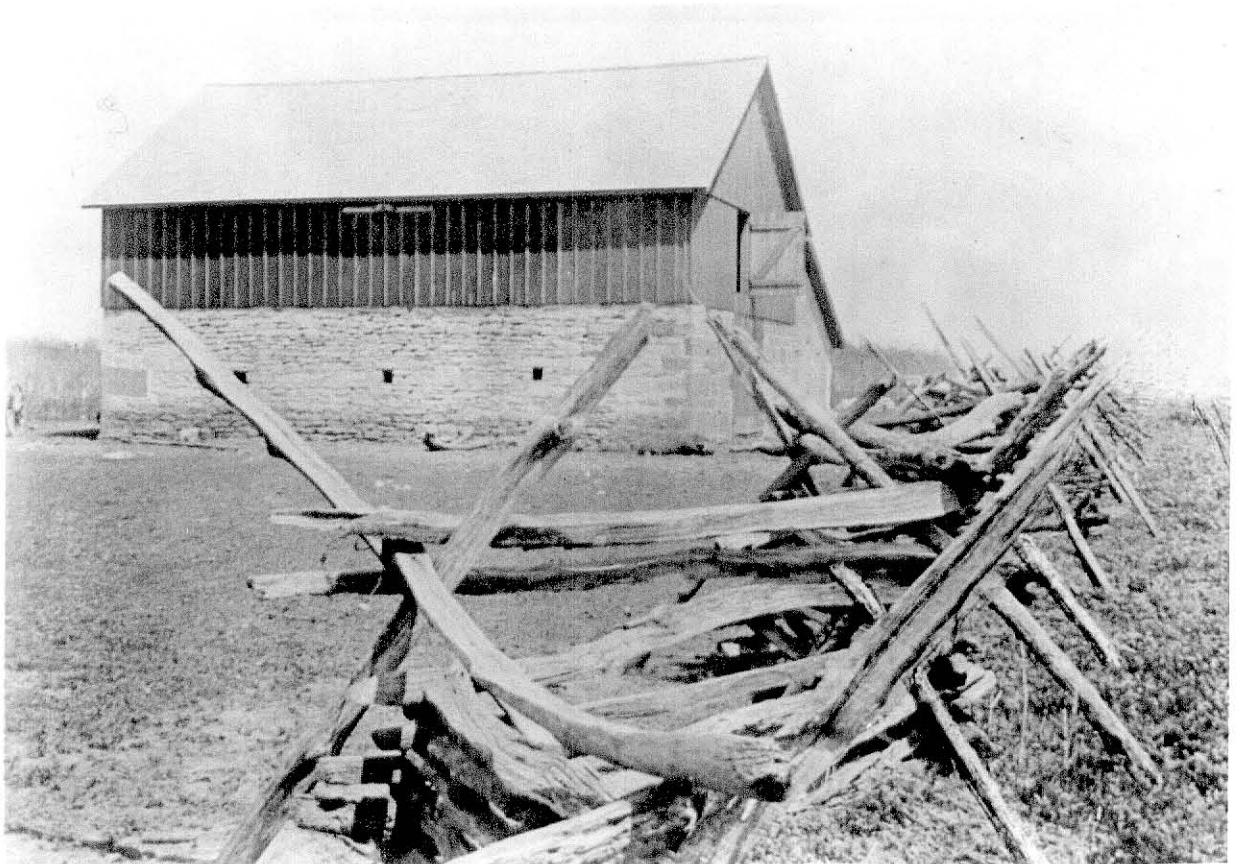


PLATE 15: Site of the Big Blue battlefield in 1896. The barn is the one which was on the Mockabee farm at the time of the 1864 fight. Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

Obviously the militia as it was originally organized had by the time of the Civil War become primarily a defensive army spread broadly through the states of the Union; the Shawnee County regiment functioned effectively in its defensive role. The goal of the entire Army of the Border was the defense of Westport and the prevention of a threatened invasion of Kansas. Colonel Veale's command was a small unit within this army and it performed its function creditably.

As the United States became a world power the concept of the militia as a defensive measure of the nation's citizens took a back seat to the need for a regular military organization with a powerful outward capability. Elements of the Kansas State Militia were called out occasionally to quell local political disputes, but the county regiments were never again used in a major military capacity.¹⁷⁹ It was the forerunner of the modern National Guard which came into existence shortly after the turn of the century during the major reorganization and transformation of the U.S. military establishment under Secretary of War Elihu Root. Kansas was called upon before the end of the century for volunteers for service against the Spanish in Cuba and insurrectionists in the Philippines, and the state later provided troops during the two World Wars, Korea, and Viet Nam.¹⁸⁰ But the state militia passed into history after the last of its members passed on, eventually becoming merely a topic for local historians.

A study of the Second Kansas Militia and its Battle of the Blue not only fails to resolve the debate for or against the use of militia completely, but even complicates the issue. Neither the poor conduct of those units of the Kansas citizen-soldiers who refused to cross the state line nor the heroism of the Shawnee County regiment changed the course of the military debates -- the militia was a dying

organization before the Kansas outfits were ever called for service. The nation no longer needed its farmers and its businessmen to hasten to its assistance. It had a professional core of regular officers and some regular regiments around which to form armies of volunteers to fight future wars. Although it is today all but forgotten, however, the battle of the Second Kansas State Militia Regiment on the Mockabee farm remains as an example of how militia could perform under special circumstances. If the example had been examined by military theorists, together with other notable militia experiences, the militia of the nation's early history might generally be regarded in a more favorable light.

APPENDIX I

COLONEL VEALE'S REPORT

The following is a report from Colonel George W. Veale to the commander of the Kansas State Militia, Major General George W. Deitzler, made on October 30, 1864. In it he gives a concise but emotional account of the Battle of the Blue, and some of the facts are incomplete or incorrect because he was writing only a week after the fight. It does give an accurate description of the battle.

Headquarters Second Regiment, K.S.M. Topeka, October 30, 1864.

To Maj.-Gen. George W. Deitzler, commanding Kansas State Militia,

Sir: On the morning of the 21st of October I received orders from General M. S. Grant to move with my command to the crossing on the Blue, on the Kansas City and Hickman Mills road, about four miles from the Kansas State line, which order I complied with, camping on the Blue that night.

The next morning, the 22nd at sunrise I received an order from General Grant informing me that he could not reach me very early in the day with the remainder of his command, on account of necessary delay in issuing arms, and directing me to fall back and join forces at Byron's sic Ford. I accordingly withdrew from the crossing to the prairie, some two miles distant, where I left Lieutenant-Colonel Greene in command, and took twelve men and went down through the timber to Byron's Ford. I went myself because I knew the country well. I found Colonel Jennison with his regiment, the Fifteenth Volunteers, and also the Jefferson County Regiment, K.S.M., and several pieces of artillery. This was about three miles from where I left my command.

I went back immediately to move my command down, but on my arrival I found General Grant with his other forces had come up. I told him what I knew of the country and where our troops were. He said we should remain there for the present.

Very soon a messenger arrived from General Curtis with a dispatch, stating that the enemy was moving in strong column up the Blue, and directing him General Grant to send scouts to Hickman Mills to see if the enemy was moving south on the Pleasant Hill road, and report to him every thirty minutes.

I was asked by General Grant to take the battalion of my own regiment, the Second, and make the reconnoissance. I moved off immediately and met some troops coming from there as I went over, but saw nothing of the enemy.

About one mile south of the Blue, at a point where I could overlook the whole country, I ordered a halt and fed my horses. In a few minutes the General and his staff rode up. Here we were joined immediately by Colonel Lowe, of our brigade, and then by Major Laing, of the Fifteenth Volunteers, with four companies.

A few moments were spent in consultation with Colonel Lowe, and Major Laing moved south and east on the road to look for the enemy.

General Grant directed me to move back to the north side of the Blue, which I did, the General and staff riding in advance.

Soon after crossing the stream we met a messenger who told us that fighting was going on up in the prairie. The General pushed forward rapidly for about a mile, to where he found my artillery, in the lane, unsupported, with the enemy in his front. The battalion of the Third Regiment, Douglas County, under command of Captain Hindman, had fled. The Wyandotte County Battalion and the battalion of the Thirteenth K.S.M., under command of Lieutenant-Colonel Johnson, had been driven from the field.*

General Grant ordered me to form a line of battle, which I did, and as soon as this was done commenced the fight. Captain Burns opened on the enemy at the same time with the battery, and after obtaining the proper range did fearful execution -- opening the enemy's ranks and hurling them back from their horses in great numbers.

Captain Burns is deserving of special praise for coolness and gallantry, standing as he did by his gun until taken prisoner himself and every man in his command either wounded, killed or taken prisoner.

My first line broke when fired on, and some of the men fled in confusion, but with the aid of my brave and gallant officers it was soon restored, and maintained its ground with stubborn and unflinching courage.

We fought Jackman's Brigade of Shelby's Division -- many times our numbers -- for three-quarters of an hour, actually driving at one time his whole center in confusion from our front. But it was soon doubly strengthened and charged upon us in double column, flanking us at the same time both on the right and on the left, forcing us back in disorder to the south side of the Blue, where we found Colonel Lowe and Major Laing, with their commands, who

*Later in his narrative, Colonel Veale claims that his command was sacrificed. Since he had relied on the above-mentioned troops, the offense is enormous and Colonel Veale's accusation appears justified. Rather than dying in vain, however, his regiment administered a check on Price's westward advance. The mistake was General Grant's, says Gage, with "too much scattering and scouting by his entire limited force, with no sufficient reserve behind them to fight the enemy when found." The sacrifice, it will be noted, was unintentional.

should have supported us in the fight, as should also the commands of Johnson, Guilford and Hindman. Had they done so the result would have been different. As it was, my command was sacrificed; being ordered to fight six times my numbers of Price's veterans and bush-whackers. with raw militia.

It is not mine to say upon whom rests the responsibility of scattering our forces in such a manner as to preclude the possibility of concert or unity of action. I can only say that I acted under orders, and my so doing lost twenty-four brave Kansans killed, about the same number wounded and sixty-eight taken prisoners, among them four officers; also one of twenty-four pounder, brass howitzer and one hundred horses.

The enemy's loss in killed and wounded in this engagement was very heavy, as our prisoners, passing over a portion of the field a few moments after the battle, counted forty-three dead rebels.

While my loss is very severe, I have to thank God that the bold stand taken by my brave men gave the enemy an afternoon's job which detained them from marching into Kansas, and the next morning they were confronted by an army that neither yielded them ground nor spared their ammunition, but put them on a hasty retreat southward, and thus Kansas was saved.

On the morning of the 24th we gathered together our dead, our wounded having been already cared for, and took them to Kansas City, where we obtained coffins for them, and on the morning of the 25th we buried them at Wyandotte, on Kansas soil. From there we marched home to meet our mourning friends and tell the sad story of the fallen.

APPENDIX II

DOCTOR A.J. HUNTOON'S NARRATIVE

This private reminiscence was published in the memorial book printed for the unveiling of the Topeka Cemetary monument. G.G. Gage published James W. Steele's The Battle of the Blue of the Second Regiment, K.S.M. about the time of the unveiling. It is second only to Samuel J. Reader's Autobiography in style and information.

After the final general charge had been made, and Veale's men had been driven back in confusion and the gun captured, there was an attempt made to rally the men again at the crossing of the Blue, for the purpose of forming a line. This attempt was useless under the circumstances. Presently, in company with Lieutenant-Colonel Greene, I found that we were surrounded by rebels. I suggested to him that we had better surrender, it being then manifestly impossible to get safely away. We did so, and gave up our arms, and they ordered us to dismount, which he did. There, in my presence they stripped Greene until he had nothing on him but his underclothes, and immediately began shooting at him. He fell forward into the underbrush, and I supposed him killed. Seeing an opportunity at this moment to do so, I threw myself forward on my horse, dug my spurs into his flanks, seized the reins and got away. I rode hard for half a mile or more, but in the end rode into a body of rebels again and was obliged to surrender the second time. A young Confederate, not more than eighteen years old, was my captor. His companions gathered about us and began to insist upon my death. While they were crying "Shoot him" and seemed determined to carry the threat into execution, I handed my purse to the boy and said, "I am your prisoner; you take care of me." He then said to the rest of them that I was his man, and that he was going to take me to headquarters. They then took my horse, blankets and overcoat, and the boy started back with me. We went back over the same ground I had traversed in coming, crossing the Blue at the same point at which we had crossed after the defeat, and as we went up the bank the first object that met my eye was the body of Ben Hughes, the colored driver of one of our wagons. His throat was cut from ear to ear. Beyond that point we traversed the ground of the fight, and went through the lane, past the battery. Beside the gun lay Handley, writhing in muscular spasms which often follow wounds. The lane beyond the gun was a scene of carnage; dead and wounded men and horses; the result of the canister fired by burns and his men at close quarters.

I was taken to General Shelby, and my captor said, "I have here a Federal captain as prisoner." Shelby directed him to take me to Price's headquarters. When we got there several groups of prisoners were already gathered in the yard, but I was taken at once into the house, and to General Price. He immediately began to question me about the

force that had engaged his men that afternoon. I told him it was a battalion of the Kansas militia, and found it difficult to get him to believe my statement. He seemed inclined strongly to the opinion that they were veteran soldiers, and for all I know continued to believe so, and that I had a motive in lying to him. I told him, besides, that the entire militia of the State had been ordered out and that there were about thirty thousand of them. I did not know this to be true, but I knew there were some thirty regiments in the militia organization. Of these not a single company was full, and I knew that, but I also knew they would come near to making them about full if this General ever got into Kansas, and so I named the maximum. I should not be surprised if General Price came to think my statement entirely correct before he reached Arkansas on his retreat south.

General Price talked with me not more than half an hour, and then sent me out to join the other prisoners in the yard, and the number of these was constantly being added to as others were brought in during the evening. After lights were lighted some one came into the yard and asked if there was any one there who had been a surgeon in the Federal army; if there was a doctor among the prisoners. I said I was, and was told that a man who had been taken inside wanted to see me. I found that it was John Branner, a citizen of Topeka, who had been wounded in both arms. One of the arms, with a gunshot wound near the shoulder, they wanted to amputate. After examining the wound I told them there was no necessity for amputation then, and gave them such reasons for my view as appeared to me to be entirely valid, and the arm was not amputated. I dressed it as best I could under the circumstances, they being short of bandages and medical supplies, and stayed there, doing what I could to aid in taking care of the wounded, both ours and theirs. Among others who were brought in during the night was Ross Burns, captain of the battery. I worked there all that night, and among other cases recall John Thompson, of Auburn, wounded in the shoulder, whose injuries I dressed. The place was full of wounded rebels. Some twenty of these died during the night, and in the morning there were at least fifty wounded still remaining.

That morning an orderly came and inquired "if that Federal captain was there." I at once came forward, and was taken out and placed again with the other prisoners. They were ready to move and wanted me. This was just at daybreak. We were placed immediately in the rear of the wagon-train. I had heard the rumbling of moving wagons during most of the night, demonstrating to my mind that Price was preparing to move south. The train was halted on the south side of the Blue, just where I was taken prisoner the first time, and was a long one, stretching away over the hill. While we waited the prisoners were made to sit down on the ground there, and while still there the fighting -- that long running fight down the State line for more than a hundred miles -- began. We were held there while this Sunday morning battle progressed, and it was some two hours before the train was started again. But when the start was made it was in earnest, and we were driven by the cavalry and made to keep up with it, and had to trot along before the horses or be trampled to death. We kept this rapid gait all that day and far into the

night, and the train was galloping or trotting all the time. We halted late that night, and had made at least sixty miles before we stopped, and when we did stop at last it was for only long enough to get forage for their horses, and then we went on again. All that time, except in the night, there was fighting going on along the border-line, and we could see the Federal camps and clouds of dust. They were in the rear also, and the rebels were using every exertion to keep out of the way. During daylight I do not think there was an interval of two hours during which fighting with the pursuing Federals was not going on. While the train moved we had to move with it, and this was all day every day, and far into the night every night, and we started again before daylight every morning. Halting and a little rest came very seldom. All the water we had during the entire march we picked up out of the streams as we went along, and after a thousand horses had passed through them before us. Many of the streams did not have running water in them, for the fall had been a dry one.

I was before that a practising physician, and had been a surgeon in one of our volunteer regiments, and had seen a great deal of service and suffering. During all my practise as a doctor, and all my military service as a surgeon, I never saw altogether as much human agony as I did on that march from want of water alone. On the second night, while we were halted at a place called the Trading Post, some of the prisoners were in a condition bordering on acute mania, caused by intense thirst. Among these was G.G. Gage, who by a kind of instinct of which he was unconscious, began to dig with his hands a hole, or well, and made one two feet deep. We were at the time on the bank of a dry stream. The stop we made there was brief, and the act was one of dazed, semi-conscious desperation. One of the prisoners, a German whose name I cannot recall, became so violent that we had to tie him to keep him from doing harm to himself, and from going across the deadline and being shot. After this all the time he remained a prisoner, we were compelled to lead him with a piece of rope they gave us.

On Tuesday night following the Saturday of the battle we arrived at a stream called the Big Drywood, fifteen miles east of the line, opposite Fort Scott. Up to that time we had been marching south down the State line. But at this point the volunteers came out in such force that when they vigorously attacked the train Price's entire force turned almost due east before them, and did not pause until this creek, Big Drywood, was reached. The prisoners were all suffering such agony here that I asked for an escort to take me to the commanding officer. I had it in my mind to lay the case before him and ask for some relief. But when the place was reached the headquarters had been moved, and there was no one there. Immediately upon getting back to the rest of the prisoners we were set moving again. This was at about two o'clock in the morning. The volunteers had followed the enemy thus far, and there was no hope of pause or rest.

While going and coming in this attempted visit to the commanding officer I saw that the army had again begun to move, that everything was in great confusion, and that every alternate man of the guards was lying down trying to get a little sleep. I then told Gage, Polley and Young, whose intention to escape I knew, that if they intended to escape now was a good opportunity, because in a few minutes we would

all be moving again. A common soldier of the prisoners was not allowed to stand up when not marching. They extended that favor to me, being an officer and somewhat known to them also, perhaps, as a physician. I had therefore seen more, and told Gage and his two companions where the guard was located, and pointed out where the stream was which headed in Kansas near Fort Scott and continued its course through both States to the place where we were, and by following which as a guide I thought they might come out among friends. Then I went over and engaged the guard who was on duty in conversation, with his face toward the fire, and glancing over his shoulder I saw the three men pass silently out into the darkness while I was talking to him. That was the last I saw of those three fellow-unfortunates until I met them in Topeka after we were all once more at home. In a few moments after they escaped we were all on the move again.

There were about seventy-five men of the Second Regiment taken prisoners. Some of these escaped from time to time, as Gage, Polley and Young did. Starting again, as I have mentioned above, on the afternoon of Wednesday we reached the town of Carthage, Mo. Here an incident occurred illustrating the character of the warfare of the border in those times. At this date, while men are still alive who remember it, it is a tale almost incredible. Seven of the prisoners were so exhausted when we reached Carthage that it was manifestly impossible for them to go any farther. So they were left at a vacant house two miles south of the town at about six o'clock that afternoon. I saw General Shelby and protested against their being left there, knowing there was danger of their falling into the hands of Jackman's men and being killed. However, they were so left. I remember the names of four of them: E.B. Williams, William Flanders, a young man named Mozier, and James Greer. The house was the only one left standing in the neighborhood of Carthage, which when I had seen it last a year before, when General [Franz] Siegel had his fight there, was a beautiful place.

That same night, about midnight, some of Jennison's men, members of a Kansas volunteer regiment, came by there. There was a rebel soldier there also; exhausted and left behind as our men were; they took him out and hung him on an apple-tree in the yard.

From Carthage south the retreat was a little more moderate, and we marched on until Saturday, no special incidents occurring. As they began to march more slowly they had time to gather in a few cattle, and we had a little meat. They brought in a quarter, and we had one or two knives, and cut off pieces and held them on sticks to the fire and roasted them, and our guards gave us a little salt. On Saturday we reached Newtonia. During the first three days we marched about one hundred and eighty miles, and in the next three about one hundred miles. The town I speak of, Newtonia, is now a small village in the eastern half of Newton county, Missouri, about twenty miles south of Carthage, and eighty miles as we traveled from the State line at the point where the attack of the volunteers forced our captors to turn east, as stated. During the march General Shelby was accustomed at intervals to ride back beside the prisoners, and always had a cheerful word for them, such as "Gentlemen, you shall be paroled just as soon as I can possibly attend to it," intimating that he had as much as he could do as it was. On other occasions he would say, "Gentlemen, I am

doing the best I can; you are getting just as good fare as my men are."

On this Saturday mentioned, just a week [eight days] from the battle, we were paroled. There were then about ninety of us, not all belonging to the Second, a few other prisoners having been taken during the fighting done at various points before our battle occurred. They were all the afternoon at this task of getting rid of us formally, and until nine o'clock that night. The place was some four miles east of Newtonia. We were halted in a border of timber, and near a spring of fine water which was the first we had tasted that was fit to drink during the entire march. General Shelby was present, with an adjutant and clerks, but the formality was hardly begun when a messenger with information that the Federals were already aligned for battle at Newtonia. The General, without a moments delay, moved his command west to meet them, and was hardly gone when screech of shells over ourheads caused us to be moved about two miles farther, where our paroles were made out, and we were drawn up in line, and, holding up our right hands, swore not to bear arms against the Southern Confederacy, or in any way contend against that government until duly exchanged.

The guard was then withdrawn, and we were left at least to ourselves. But we were weak, hungry, sore, in an unknown place, at night, without blankets, food, or the least of all those things that men must have to live. We were too tired to rejoice. We started back on our way home, but I advised staying where we were until daylight, as there was danger of our being fired into. There was a little snow on the ground, but we all lay down huddled close together to keep warm.

At the earliest dawn we started toward Newtonia, and emerging from the timber put a piece of what was once a white shirt on a pole for a flag of truce to any we might meet. Soon we came to a log house, upon which was floating a hospital flag. Carrying our flag we went there, and found a surgeon of the Confederates, with about forty wounded, dying and dead men of the same army. He was almost destitute of everything necessary for their relief, and I think of it now as one of the loneliest and saddest scenes of suffering I have seen in the course of my life. This surgeon told us that the Federals occupied the battle-field, the Confederates having again retreated south in great confusion.

About two miles farther on we encountered a Federal scouting party. They at first probably took us for rebels, but did not fire on our flag, and when they heard our story they took us to General Blunt's headquarters. I briefly related our experiences, and asked for a cup of coffee as the first and greatest favor it would be possible to bestow upon us. This, and hard-tack, was given us immediately, and with it came a revival of the hopes and intentions common to life. General Blunt immediately sent an ambulance, with food and medical supplies, to the hospital we had told him of, and our next great desire was to go home.

The general gave us the use of the teams and wagons which had been hauling supplies for his troops, and with these we started to Fort Scott on the morning of November 1. When we reached that place General C.W. Blair invited us all to a supper provided by his own

hospitality. I there drew a hundred overcoats for the men, a portion of them being carried to Topeka and given to the men who had escaped. We separated at Fort Scott, General Blair furnishing transportation to our Second Regiment men to Topeka, where we arrived November 13, 1864.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Wyandotte Commercial Gazette. September 24, 1864.
2. Fry W. Giles. Thirty Years in Topeka. Topeka. 1886. (Reprinted by Capper Publications, 1960. pp. 41-42.
3. Giles, p. 42.
- 4.. Milton Tabor. "The Famous Order No. 11." Clippings, This Day in Kansas History. Kansas State Historical Society. Topeka, Ks.
5. Jay Monaghan. Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865. Boston. 1954. p. 104.
6. James W. Steele. The Battle of the Blue of the Second Regiment, K.S.M., October 22, 1864; The Fight; The Captivity; The Escape. Chicago and Topeka. No date available. p. 12.
7. Kansas State Record, August 24, 1864.
8. Albert Castel. A Frontier State at War: Kansas, 1861-1865. Ithaca, N.Y. 1958. p. 203.
9. William Zornow. Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State. Norman, Okla. 1957. p. 115.
10. Elizabeth Reader. Unpublished manuscript. Kansas State Historical Society. Topeka, Ks.
11. Steele, p. 128.

CHAPTER I

12. Robert L. Kerby. Kirby Smith's Confederacy: The Trans-Mississippi South, 1863-1865. New York and London. 1972. p. 333.
13. Kerby, p. 333.
14. Kerby, p. 334.
15. Price and the Second Missouri Mounted Volunteers captured Taos, New Mexico, on January 24, 1847. In July of 1847 he was made brigadier general of volunteers and was later named Military Governor of Chihuahua. On March 16, 1848, he won the Battle of Santa Cruz des Rosales. Mrs. William Shields Clagett. "Biography of General Sterling Price." Kansas State Historical

- Society. Topeka, Ks. Robert E. Shalope. Sterling Price: Portrait of a Southerner. Columbia, Mo. 1971. p. 71-74.
16. While governor of Missouri, Price urged that the salary of his successors be increased. The act passed, "making it operative at once, but he never drew the balance due him." Clagett, "Biography of General Sterling Price."
 17. Shalope, pp. 197-198. Clagett, "Biography of General Sterling Price."
 18. Albert Castel. General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West. Baton Rouge, La. 1968. pp. 18-20.
 19. Paul B. Jenkins. The Battle of Westport. Kansas City. 1906. p. 165.
 20. Letter from Joseph O. Shelby to the Kansas City Journal. November 24, 1881.
 21. Kansas City Journal. November 24, 1881.
 22. Wyandotte Commercial Gazette. October 1, 1864.
 23. Jenkins, p. 34.
 24. Wyandotte Commercial Gazette. October 1, 1864.
 25. Kerby, p. 342.
 26. Kerby, p. 336.
 27. George Bird Grinnell. Two Great Scouts and Their Pawnee Battalion: The Experiences of Frank J. North and Luther H. North. Lincoln, Neb. 1973. p. 73.
 28. Grinnell, p. 73.
 29. Howard N. Monnett. Action Before Westport, 1864. Kansas City. 1964. p. 36.
 30. Monnett, p. 36.
 31. Curtis graduated in the West Point class of 1831 but resigned his commission a year later to become an engineer. He was also a lawyer and a politician, serving in Congress from 1856 to the eve of the war. He was then posted to the Trans-Mississippi West. Here the general won a signal victory at Pea Ridge in March, 1862. But his operations and political involvement incurred the wrath of Missouri governor H.R. Gamble, and Lincoln removed Curtis, since, as the president explained, he had no authority to remove the governor. Dictionary of American Biography. Vol. IV. pp. 619-620.
 32. Monnett, p. 37.

33. Monnett, p. 37.
34. Albert Castel. A Frontier State at War, p. 213.
35. William E. Connelley. Kansas and Kansans. Chicago and New York. 1918. p. 92-95.
36. Howard Monnett, in his Action Before Westport, 1864, states that so far as Carney was concerned this was "just a device on the part of the general to get the militia mobilized and thus keep these Kansas citizen-soldiers away from the polls on election day." Given the dispatches from Rosecrans, which Curtis should have shown the governor if he did not, it was a very real threat with which the Federals were faced. Such accurate information should have set the wheels of mobilization in motion immediately on the part of Carney. Monnett, p. 37.
37. Monnett, p. 38.
38. Monnett, p. 38.
39. D. Alexander Brown. "The Battle of Westport." Civil War Times Illustrated. July, 1966.
40. John T. Margreiter, Jr. "Union Heroism at Pilot Knob Saved St. Louis from Attack." Civil War Times Illustrated. January, 1964.
41. Margreiter, "Union Heroism at Pilot Knob Saved St. Louis from Attack."
42. Brown. "The Battle of Westport."
43. The exaggerated reports of Confederate strength so disgusted the usually level-headed editor of the Liberty, Mo., Tribune that he published the following report of his own: "Shelby with 3,000 in Lafayette. Marmaduke coming up line between Missouri and Kansas with 5,000. Quantrill in Jackson with 3,500. Col. Thas. McCarty on Hanibal R.R. with 26,000. 20,000 troops on way from Illinois to join Quantrill. The main column, 240,000 strong, on way to capture St. Louis." Liberty, Mo., Tribune, July 5, 1864. Albert Castel. William Clarke Quantrill: His Life and Times. New York. 1962. p. 178.
44. Margreiter, "Union Heroism at Pilot Knob Saved St. Louis from Attack."
45. Margreiter, "Union Heroism at Pilot Knob Saved St. Louis from Attack."
46. Confederate Military History. 12 volumes. Atlanta, Ga. 1899. Vol. IX, pp. 215-217.
47. Brown, "The Battle of Westport."
48. Brown, "The Battle of Westport."

49. Although Price had led Confederate forces in Missouri on two previous occasions, he was not a cavalryman and had no concept of the speed and deception essential to the success of a cavalry raid. Shelby grew extremely critical of his superior and foresaw disaster if the Army of Missouri continued its slow, 15-miles, per-day pace. Kerby calls this the "picnic" period of the raid. The added encumbrance of unarmed recruits and 500 wagons hindered Price's campaign even more, though he judged that the supplies his army captured were valuable additions to the Confederate war effort.
50. Due to Rosecrans' dispersal of his cavalry in small groups over the state, Pleasanton's task was major. It was two weeks before the pursuit was in full swing. Brown, "The Battle of Westport."
51. Albert Castel. "Quantrill in Texas." Civil War Times Illustrated. June, 1972.
52. Robert Josiah Hinton. Rebel Invasion of Missouri and Kansas and the Campaign of the Army of the Border Against General Sterling Price in October and November, 1864. Chicago and Leavenworth. 1865. p. 32.
53. Monaghan, p. 323.
54. Confederate Military History, vol. XI, p. 189.

CHAPTER II

55. Hinton, p. 54.
56. Steele, p. 15.
57. Steele, p. 15.
58. J.C. Petheridge. Kansas State Militia, 1864. Kansas City. 1907. p. 7.
59. The regiments were instructed to provide "ample transportation and all the rations possible" for themselves. These provisions came from the men, the state having made no allowance for such provisioning. However, there was to be "no delay on any account" and the general government would "undoubtedly pay all proper charges for such transportation and supplies. . . ." Petheridge, p. 7.
60. Nancy Veale Galloway. "Battle of the Big Blue." Shawnee County Historical Society Bulletin. December, 1958.
61. The outstanding exception to this rule was M.A. Campdoras, of the Indianola company. He was a surgeon in one of Senator Jim Lane's controversial Indian regiments (the Second) before returning to

his private practise at his home north of Topeka. He became an enlisted man in Company D. on October 10, 1864. Topeka Daily Capital, October 22, 1881.

62. Giles, p. 129.
63. Steele, p. 15.
64. Galloway, "Battle of the Big Blue."
65. Giles, p. 128.
66. George A. Root manuscript written from notes taken during a talk with Freeman Sardou, December 4, 1917. George Root collection. Kansas State Historical Society. Topeka, Ks.
67. Kansas State Record. July 3, 1869.
68. The shortage of men in the capital may have been the reason why several of Topeka's braver women caught the spirit of an expected fight, disguising themselves in male attire. Freeman Sardou said their identities were not suspected, "and they served throughout the long night. With the coming of daylight next morning they were recognized." George Root collection.
69. Galloway, "Battle of the Big Blue."
70. First Lieutenant Quartermaster Samuel J. Reader and Lieutenant William Morgan, both of Indianola, "managed to secure" for themselves "two of the best carbines in the lot." Reader went on to say "Our action. . . was no doubt irregular, but it was done at a time when red tape was at a discount, and we found nobody to say us nay." Samuel J. Reader Autobiography. Kansas State Historical Society. Topeka, Ks.
71. Hinton, p. 68.
72. Albert Castel. "War and Politics: The Price Raid of 1864." Kansas Historical Quarterly. Summer, 1958.
73. Castel, "War and Politics."
74. Hinton, pp. 62-63.
75. Hinton, p. 65.
76. Sam Reader left with the regiment. He later painted a watercolor based on a sketch from his diary and captioned it "Second Kansas State Militia Invading Missouri;" it is included on page 41. Samuel J. Reader Autobiography. Giles, p. 129.
77. Brown, "The Battle of Westport."
78. Reader states in a letter to Mr. W. Brown that Companies A and B

were not engaged at the Blue. This is definitely incorrect, for Captain A.J. Huntoon's Company B was a mounted company and Huntoon himself was captured in the fight. Gage says that Companies A and E were not present. This would seem to be substantiated by casualty reports. Company E was recruited in Dover, but there were no casualties from that town. Reader Misc. collections. Kansas State Historical Society. Steele, p. 101-107.

79. Connelley, pp. 258-259; 269-273.
80. Kansas City Star. April 28, 1935.
81. Connelley, p. 273.
82. Brown. "The Battle of Westport."
83. Brown, "The Battle of Westport."
84. Hinton, p. 79. (Hinton himself took charge under orders from Curtis of the movements and organization of blacks.)
85. Monnett, p. 51.
86. Monnett, p. 51-52.
87. Monnett, p. 53.
88. Steele, p. 28.
89. Steele, pp. 25-26.
90. Steele, p. 26.
91. Galloway, "Battle of the Big Blue."
92. Steele, p. 28.
93. Monnett, p. 55.
94. Monnett, p. 55.

CHAPTER III

95. John Newman Edwards, quoted in Daniel O'Flaherty. General Jo Shelby: Undefeated Rebel. Chapel Hill, N.C. 1954. p. 221.
96. O'Flaherty, p. 221.
97. Diary of Brigadier General John F. Philips.
98. Once the Kansas line was breached, however, Price went westward, forcing Rosecrans to revise his plans. Smith was ordered to

Hickman Mills, but by the time he got there Price had disappeared from Westport. O'Flaherty, p. 222.

99. Monnett, p. 57.
100. Letter by James G. Blunt, reprinted in Kansas City Star. June 19, 1932.
101. Letter by James G. Blunt, reprinted in Kansas City Star. June 19, 1932.
102. Blunt had a habit of making excuses or blaming others for failures and taking credit for successes. The action at the Little Blue exemplifies this point; he accused Curtis of "interfering with the disposition of my troops" and the militia of failing to come to his assistance. Blunt's letters written later indicate that he felt he could have blocked Price at the Little Blue until Pleasonton could attack from the rear if only he had been given a free hand on the morning of October 21.
103. Diary of Brigadier General John F. Phillips.
104. R.J. Hinton gives the most detailed account of Boutwell's adventure in Campaign of the Army of the Border, p. 123:

Boutwell started at 7 o'clock, Friday night, and took a skiff on the Missouri river. He had not proceeded far down, however, before his skiff foundered, leaving him to reach the shore as best he could. He crept along through thickets and ravines and over bluffs. At one time he was seen by rebel pickets and fired upon -- at another time he came near being lost in the mud attempting to cross a stream. After many adventures and numerous escapes, he reached Pleasonton's Headquarters sometime after noon. He found Pleasonton moving slowly, for fear of driving the rebels on to our Militia above, before they were prepared to meet them. As soon as he learned the true situation of things, he ordered his troops forward on the double quick.

For other references see Steele, p. 34; Castel, "War and Politics."

105. Steele, p. 29.
106. Steele, p. 30.
107. The phrase "where our boys were killed" refers to the Battle of Blackjack fought between Kansans and Missouri irregulars in 1863. Samuel J. Reader Diary. Kansas State Historical Society.
108. James G. Blunt manuscript account of the Battle of Westport. James G. Blunt. "General Blunt's Account of his Civil War Experiences." Kansas State Historical Quarterly. Spring, 1932.

James G. Blunt manuscript reprinted in Kansas City Star. June 19, 1932.

109. Monnett, p. 72.
110. Monnett, p. 72.
111. Letter from Joseph O. Shelby to Kansas City Journal. November 24, 1881.
112. Monnett, p. 79.
113. Monnett, p. 78.
114. Colonel Veale's entire command was not with him during the battle. The men of the Second Regiment only went on the patrol, leaving the portion of the Douglas County Regiment with the rest of Grant's command. The battalion representing Shawnee County was all that returned with Veale to support the gun.
115. Jeff Thompson quoted in Brown, "The Battle of Westport."
116. Monnett, p. 81.
117. Later in his report Colonel Veale claims that his command was sacrificed. He supposed that the remainder of Grant's brigade had fled when faced by the superior rebel force, leaving the Topeka Battery alone on the road past the Mockabee farm. Of all Grant's command, only the Second provided any resistance at the Battle of the Blue.
118. Who sent this order is not known. Most likely it came from General Curtis when he realized that his army had been flanked and his right flank was threatened with encirclement. This conjecture suggests that messengers simply rode down the line along the Big Blue informing commanders that Byram's Ford was forced and Curtis was falling back.
119. Personal narrative of G.G. Gage.
120. Personal narrative of G.G. Gage.
121. Letter from Joseph O. Shelby to Leavenworth Daily Standard. November 16, 1881.
122. Personal narrative of G.G. Gage.
123. Monnett, p. 82.
124. Monnett, p. 82-83.
125. Monnett, p. 83.
126. These were officers of the regiments making up the remainder

of General Grant's brigade. They remained on the south side of the Blue safe from any immediate danger from Shelby's division. Report to General Deitzler from Colonel Veale, October 30, 1864, reprinted in Steele. Kansas State Adjutant-General's Report, November, 1864.

127. Steele, p. 86. Report to General Deitzler from Colonel Veale.
128. Samuel J. Reader Diary.
129. Burns managed somehow to keep the sight of the gun throughout his captivity. Gage claims in his personal narrative that at the turn of the century the piece was still in the Burns family's possession.
130. Letter from Joseph O. Shelby to Kansas City Star. July 10, 1898.
131. Report to General Deitzler from Colonel Veale. Personal narrative of Dr. A.J. Huntoon. Monnett, p. 83.
132. Steele, p. 68.
133. Personal narrative of Dr. A.J. Huntoon. Steele, pp. 75-76.
134. Personal narrative of Dr. A.J. Huntoon. Steele, p. 76.
135. One other man, David Fults, Company T, Monmouth Township, was killed after the battle, but not by Confederates. His death was attributed to Colonel Moonlight's Eleventh Kansas Volunteers. He was apparently dazed and, as the entire Second was without uniform, he was mistaken for a rebel. Steele wrote: "Fults was, as the most reasonable conclusion now possible, dazed, or confused, and gave such an account of himself as in those times assured his death. But the crime remains a black one nevertheless, without any reasonable justification." Colonel Veale reported that Jennison's men did the deed, but he was in error. Steele, p. 88.
136. Civil War Clippings. Kansas State Historical Society. No paper or date given.
137. Kansas City Star. July 10, 1898.
138. Congregational Record. November, 1864.

CHAPTER IV

139. Confederate Military History. Vol 6, p. 190.
140. Gage told in his account of the battle that all 24 men in the battery were killed or captured during the fight. Gage, along

with Reader and Dr. A.J. Huntoon, was captured and none of their accounts indicate that the men of the battery were shot after surrendering.

142. Personal narrative of G.G. Gage.
143. Personal narrative of G.G. Gage.
144. Brown, "The Battle of Westport." Congregational Record. November, 1864.
145. Personal narrative of Dr. A.J. Huntoon.
146. Personal narrative of G.G. Gage.
147. Personal narrative of Dr. A.J. Huntoon.
148. Samuel J. Reader Autobiography.
149. Samuel J. Reader Diary. Personal narrative of G.G. Gage.
150. Personal narrative of G.G. Gage.
151. This citation is uncertain. The Kansas State Historical Society library's Civil War Clippings cites it as either the Kansas City Times or Star. It is dated October 23, 1907.
152. Samuel J. Reader Autobiography.
153. Samuel J. Reader Autobiography.
154. Samuel J. Reader Autobiography.
155. Samuel J. Reader Autobiography.
156. Personal narrative of Dr. A.J. Huntoon. Personal narrative of G.G. Gage. Steele, pp. 48-49. 57-59.
157. Dr. Huntoon visited Shelby and protested against "their being left there," believing they would fall into the hands of roving bushwhackers. A rebel soldier, also exhausted and left behind with the men of the Second K.S.M., was discovered later that evening by Colonel Jennison's Fifteenth Kansas Volunteers; he was promptly hung in an apple tree. Steele, p. 58-59. Dr. A.J. Huntoon also mentioned this incident in his personal narrative.
158. Brown, "The Battle of Westport."
159. Personal narrative of Dr. A.J. Huntoon.
160. Shelby had a propensity for riding back to the prisoners at intervals. He always had a cheerful word for them, attempting to reassure them. He was apparently the only Confederate for

whom the Kansans held any respect. Nearly every time he addressed them he began with "Gentlemen." His chivalrous attitude encouraged the men he held captive, and he promised to parole them "as soon as I can possibly attend to it," intimating that he had as much as he could do at that time. Steele, p. 60.

161. Personal narrative of Dr. A.J. Huntoon.
162. James Sayre Griffing collection, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Ks.
163. James Sayre Griffing collection.
164. Personal narrative of Dr. A.J. Huntoon.
165. James Sayre Griffing collection.
166. Only two names of those who died that winter are certain. John Keiser and R.W. Hoback, both of Tecumseh, expired before spring. Their deaths were held directly accountable to the week they were held as prisoners.
167. Congregational Record. December, 1864.
168. Monaghan, p. 341. Coulter, p. 359. O'Flaherty, pp. 291-326.
169. Milton Tabor. "Guerillas Didn't Stop Fighting." This Day in Kansas History Clippings. Kansas State Historical Society. Topeka, Ks.
170. George W. Veale papers. Kansas State Historical Society. Topeka, Ks.
171. Distribution of this money, received by Governor Harvey on August 13, 1872, caused impeachment proceedings against State Treasurer Hayes, who finally resigned. Quarrells and fights over the disbursement of funds kept Kansas politics in an uproar for many years. Eventually a large part of the money was used in the erection of the Memorial Building, housing the State Historical Society, in Topeka. Milton Tabor. "Payment of Price Raid Claims." This Day in Kansas History Clippings. Kansas State Historical Society. Topeka, Ks.
172. George W. Veale papers.
173. Galloway, "Battle of the Big Blue."
174. Galloway, "Battle of the Big Blue."
175. The gun was reportedly donated to the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka. Inquiries with museum and archive officials failed to locate the howitzer. It evidently remains in storage, lost among uncataloged museum items. Topeka Daily

Capital. No date given. Kansas City Star. December 23, 1910.
Junction City Times. October 26, 1911.

176. Kansas State Adjutant-General's Report. October, 1864.
177. Steele Mistakenly reports that Branner won the Medal of Honor, but searches by the author and Joseph W. Snell of the Kansas State Historical Society could find no mention of his having won the medal in any available source. Steele, p. 154-155.

CONCLUSION

178. Emory Upton, quoted in Bruce Catton. The Coming Fury. Garden City, N.Y. 1961. p. 120-121.
179. The best example of the use of the post-war Kansas militia is the legislative "war" of 1893. The Populist Party won nearly half the seats of the state legislature in that year and struggled against the Republican statesmen to seat themselves in the statehouse. Fearing that major violence might erupt between factions, Governor Lewelling called out units of the Wichita militia (by that time designated the National Guard). The Topeka contingent was not called upon in this case because their factional preferences might have only spread the already tense situation outside the statehouse grounds. Noble Prentiss. History of Kansas. Kansas City, Mo. 1899. pp. 220-223.
180. During the two World Wars, ironically, the Kansas National Guard and the Missouri National Guard, men of the two states which had been enemies during the saga of the Second K.S.M., were joined together to form a single division, the Thirty-Fifth.

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THEY DESERVED A BETTER FATE
THE CIVIL WAR SERVICE OF THE SECOND KANSAS STATE MILITIA
REGIMENT AND THE BATTLE OF THE BLUE

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Military theorists and historians have argued the pros and the cons of the use of militia in the United States military system since the conception of our nation. Some writers claim that the militia used was all but ineffective whenever it was called upon to serve; others saw that in certain special cases militia units served as efficiently as could be expected considering the limited amount of training and experience they received before going into combat.

The militia was always an established organization on the various American frontiers. It developed a defensive para-military characteristic by protecting pioneers from Indian attacks, or, as in the case of the Kansas State Militia, by serving as virtual vigilance committees against the violent attacks of politically antagonistic neighbors. Most military thinkers observed that an army of volunteers concentrated around a small force of highly skilled and professional regulars proved more efficient than militia in major conflicts. Hence whenever the United States embarked upon a foreign war, the militia was delegated to defend the home front while regulars and volunteers carried out offensive operations.

Kansas during the Civil War was a frontier state. She espoused the Union cause and sent a proportionately large number of volunteers to help coerce the Southern Confederacy back into the fold. Border war between free-state Kansans and Missouri border ruffians had inflamed the eastern portion of Kansas prior to its statehood and continued to do so after the war broke out. The Kansas State Militia drilled in preparation for service throughout the war years but was not called upon until the only serious threat of invasion to the new state occurred in 1864. Confederate General Sterling Price marched across Missouri

that fall while the majority of Federal troops were engaged fighting Lee in Virginia or campaigning in Georgia. Yankee forces in the Trans-Mississippi West had fallen to the barest of minimums, and when Price advanced toward Westport the local Federal commanders -- Samuel R. Curtis and William S. Rosecrans -- were forced to scrape together provisional armies to oppose the rebel general.

Price's army at Westport numbered approximately 10,000 men, opposing Curtis' Army of the Border, totaling about 4,500 troops. Considering his situation desperate, Curtis requested the Kansas governor to call out the militia; he did so reluctantly, but added almost 12,000 men to the Army of the Border. As some professional soldiers might have predicted, many of the Kansas militiamen resisted serving outside the state borders, and political issues further confused the situation. Yet one militia regiment, the Second, from Shawnee County, performed as well as any other other unit of Curtis' army. The Second was strategically located on the wing of the Union army's line when a Confederate brigade numbering nearly 3,500 cavalymen made a flanking movement. The 561 men from Shawnee County met the attack near the Big Blue River south of Kansas City, Missouri, on the second day of the Battle of Westport; held them there for three-quarters of an hour; withstood three devastating Rebel cavalry charges; and saved the retreating Federal army thus preventing an invasion of Kansas.

The untrained Second Kansas State Militia Regiment suffered the heaviest casualties of any unit engaged at the Battle of Westport. The incident along the Big Blue set the scene for the eventual Union victory on the final day of the fight. The Shawnee County militiamen served as valiantly as any volunteer or regular force on the field.

Finally, they proved that under the advantageous conditions of being commanded by fine officers and being composed of loyal and dedicated men the militia was efficient as a defensive element of the United States military establishment. Had military theorists examined this and similar isolated instances, it is possible that they might have re-evaluated the effectiveness of the militia in the United States military tradition.