

THE MISSOURI STATE GUARD:
CULTURE, POLITICS, AND THE CONFEDERACY'S LOSS OF MISSOURI IN 1861

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Abstract

The Civil War history of Missouri is often relegated to the antebellum border war between Missouri “bushwhackers” and Kansas “jayhawkers.” Studies of the wartime events in Missouri often focus on Confederate guerillas like William Quantrill and “Bloody” Bill Anderson whose actions and tactics seem similar to modern conflicts like Vietnam or Afghanistan. What is often forgotten is the first year of standard, legitimate military actions in Missouri when Missouri’s pro-secessionist governor, Claiborne Fox Jackson, attempted to navigate a conditional Unionist-dominated legislature to secure Missouri for the Confederacy. During this time, Union General Nathaniel Lyon successfully cut the state in two, further hampering Jackson’s ability to organize and supply an effective Missouri Confederate force that could resist invasion. In addition, the man Jackson chose to lead his “Missouri State Guard,” Sterling Price, lacked the leadership ability to mount an effective resistance against the Union. Despite the efforts of Governor Jackson, the Missouri State Guard, under the ineffective leadership of Sterling Price, failed to secure Missouri for the Confederacy.

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Introduction

The Trans-Mississippi region is often forgotten by Civil War scholars who find the epic battles of the Eastern and Western Theatres and names like Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant more intriguing than Sterling “Pap” Price or Benjamin McCulloch. Certainly the political atmospheres of the states east of the Mississippi are less confused and events appear more cut black and white. The Civil War history of Missouri is often relegated to the antebellum border war between Missouri “bushwhackers” and Kansas “jayhawkers.” Studies of the wartime events in Missouri often focus on Confederate guerillas like William Quantrill and “Bloody” Bill Anderson whose actions and tactics seem similar to modern conflicts like Vietnam or Afghanistan.¹ What is often forgotten is the first year of standard, legitimate military actions in Missouri when Missouri’s pro-secessionist governor, Claiborne Fox Jackson, attempted to navigate a conditional Unionist-dominated legislature to secure Missouri for the Confederacy. During this time, Union General Nathaniel Lyon successfully cut the state in two, further hampering Jackson’s ability to organize and supply an effective Missouri Confederate force that could resist invasion. In addition, the man Jackson chose to lead his “Missouri State Guard,” Sterling Price, lacked the leadership ability to mount an effective resistance. Despite the efforts of Governor Jackson, the Missouri State Guard (MSG), under the ineffective leadership of Sterling Price, failed to secure Missouri for the Confederacy.²

¹For recent works on the Guerilla Conflict in Missouri, see: Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Edward E. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride: The True Story of William Clarke Quantrill and His Confederate Raiders* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996).

² From henceforth, the Missouri State Guard will be referred to as “MSG.”

The Trans-Mississippi Theater, and the first year's military actions in Missouri specifically, have received little attention from Civil War scholars. Research on Confederate Missouri forces generally focus on guerilla forces of William Quantrill. Perhaps the image of the dashing cavalier guerilla, mounted on his gallant charger, is simply more enticing than the story of the lowly, mud-slogging infantryman. Unfortunately the military force made up of men who risked everything, often travelling through enemy-held territory to join the militia to fight, in their minds, for the security of their home state, has been largely ignored. Many historical monographs on topics specifically related to the first year of war in Missouri and the Missouri volunteers who served in the MSG and later in the First Missouri Battalion were published prior to 1990.³ As new sources have been discovered, more comprehensive works are needed to fill the historical gaps. To date, no book specifically on the MSG and its organization and effectiveness has been published.

In particular, works pertaining strictly to the organization, arming, and training of the MSG are few. *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, a joint effort between Richard Peterson, James McGhee, Kip Lindberg, and Keith Daleen is the most comprehensive examination of the MSG.⁴ The authors provide a brief discussion of the political atmosphere in

³ Works widely used by more recent scholars of the secession movement in Missouri published prior to 1990 include: R.S. Bevier, *History of the First and Second Missouri Confederate Brigades and From Wakarusa to Appomattox, a Military Anagraph* (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand, & Company, 1879); Holcombe and Adams, *The Battle of Wilson's Creek or Oak Hills* (Springfield, MO: Dow and Adams, 1883); Hardy A. Kemp, *About Nathaniel Lyon, Brigadier General, United States Army Volunteers and Wilson's Creek* (Publisher Location and Company not identified, 1978); Robert L. Kerby, *Kirby Smith's Confederacy: The Trans-Mississippi South, 1863-1865* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1972); Jay Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border: 1854-1865* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1955); Harrison Anthony Trexler, *Slavery in Missouri, 1804-1865* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1914).

⁴ Richard C. Peterson, James E. McGhee, Kip A. Lindberg, and Keith I. Daleen, *Sterling Price's Lieutenants: A Guide to the Officers and Organization of the Missouri State Guard; 1861-1865, Revised Edition* (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 2007).

Missouri and the overall effects of Union General Lyon's swift campaign up the Missouri River to strangle the MSG recruiting and organization efforts. The bulk of the book is made up of rosters of each division and brigade and the education of the officers (if available). It provides a solid base for the researcher seeking to know more specifically about the Missouri State Guard as a military force. It does not, however, provide the reader with a picture of the difficulty volunteers faced as they travelled to scattered, haphazard recruiting points. It also does not include an examination of the armaments and supplies the MSG had at their disposal in comparison to their Union pursuers. Finally, *Sterling Price's Lieutenants* does not explain why the MSG, despite a large number of officers trained at military academies, and many with prior military experience, could not hold Missouri for the South as the Army of Northern Virginia held Virginia. Part of the answer to this question comes from an examination of what the overall MSG commander, Sterling Price, did (or did not do) that forced a retreat into northern Arkansas in the late winter of 1861-62.

The most recent work by William Garrett Piston and Richard W. Hatcher III, entitled *Wilson's Creek: The Second Battle of the Civil War and the Men Who Fought It*, is one of the best works to date on Missouri and the battle at Wilson's Creek.⁵ Piston and Hatcher give a brief overview of the events leading up to the battle and the organization of Union forces in and around Missouri as well as the haphazard organization and arming of the Missouri State Guard. This book makes necessary comparisons of the forces that converged on Wilson's Creek as well. As comprehensive as the research is, the analysis of early actions of the MSG specifically is limited. Battles at Booneville and Carthage

⁵ William Garrett Piston and Richard W. Hatcher III, *Wilson's Creek: The Second Battle of the Civil War and the Men Who Fought It* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

are glossed over as events moved towards Wilson's Creek. The MSG was routed at Booneville, but they won a smashing victory at Carthage. Both battles were relatively small in scale, but questions of why Carthage was such a success and an analysis of how this success compares to future MSG engagements are not fully addressed.

Following the Confederate victory at Wilson's Creek on August 10, 1861, Ben McCulloch, commander of the Confederate Army located in northern Arkansas, withdrew from Missouri. According to some sources, McCulloch's withdrawal was due to the fact that he had outdistanced his supply lines by entering southern Missouri. Other sources suggest that it was because Missouri at the time was in a state of limbo, not wholly committed to either the Union or Confederate cause.⁶ As such, there were questions of whether McCulloch had any real authority to enter Missouri and take on Union forces. Others have suggested that McCulloch withdrew due to his disillusionment with the Missouri State Guard Commander, General Sterling Price. Whatever the reason, the effect of Sterling Price's selection as commander of Missouri's pro-secessionist forces needs more examination. Albert Castel, in his book *General*

⁶ Thomas L. Snead, a member of MSG Major General Sterling Price's staff does not address any strained relationship between Price and McCulloch personally. He believed that McCulloch was too timid to remain in Missouri and follow up the victory at Wilson's Creek. Thomas L. Snead, *The Fight for Missouri: From the Election of Lincoln to the Death of Lyon* (1886; repr., Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 1997). William Watson, a member of the Third Louisiana Infantry Regiment that served under McCulloch at Wilson's Creek stated in his memoirs that, not only had McCulloch's force stretched their supply lines, but McCulloch and Price over the days prior to Wilson's Creek developed a personal animosity towards one another that prompted McCulloch to abandon Missouri after the battle was over. William Watson, *Life in the Confederate Army: Being the Observations and Experiences of an Alien in the South During the American Civil War* (1887; repr., Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1995). Missouri Lieutenant Governor Thomas C. Reynolds stated in his memoirs that Price had successfully alienated McCulloch. Thomas C. Reynolds, *General Sterling Price and the Confederacy*, edited by Robert G. Schultz (1904; repr., St. Louis: Missouri History Museum, 2009). Documents between General McCulloch and the Confederate War Department included in the United States War Department's *The Ear of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* indicate several reasons for McCulloch's withdrawal, including overstretched supply lines, animosity between Price and McCulloch, McCulloch's low opinion of the MSG, and the fact that the Confederate War Department did not support an invasion of Missouri, a state that was still within the Union. United State War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Volume III (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881).

Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West, holds “Pap” Price in high regard.⁷ Castel does admit to some validity in the arguments made by Thomas C. Reynolds, Jackson’s Lieutenant Governor (and his successor as Confederate governor of Missouri), who in his memoir-like book, *General Sterling Price and the Confederacy*, wrote that he was less than trustful of Price.⁸ Despite Price’s reputation among scholars, other primary sources appear to back up Reynolds’ opinions.

William Watson, a Scotsman living in Louisiana and a member of the Baton Rouge militia company, served in the Third Louisiana Infantry at Wilson’s Creek. In his memoirs, published in 1887, Watson is highly critical of Price and makes no attempt to suppress his opinion that McCulloch was decidedly distrustful of Price.⁹ Watson makes the case that, ultimately, while the Confederate army under McCulloch had strained its supply lines by moving into Missouri to aid Price, which prompted the abrupt return to Arkansas after Wilson’s Creek, McCulloch’s distaste for Price facilitated it as well.

Admittedly, diaries, memoirs, and letters from volunteers, both North and South, have a tendency to be overly critical of regimental officers if the officer was not from the company’s home town, or overall commanders selected from other regiments. With that in mind, the argument can be made that Watson’s memoir is merely the opinion of a frustrated volunteer keeping pace with other contemporaries. Even so, as new sources have been made accessible, the reputation of Price as wholly loved by his troops comes into question. Dr. John Wiatt, a doctor prior to the war who joined the MSG as a

⁷ Albert Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1968).

⁸ Reynolds, *General Sterling Price and the Confederacy*.

⁹ For more information, see: Watson, *Life in the Confederate Army*.

regimental surgeon, left a diary which has since been edited by Joanne C. Eakin and published by Two Trails Publishing.¹⁰ Dr. Wiatt is less than complimentary of the leadership of Sterling Price. In addition to criticisms of Price's tactical ability, Wiatt's entry for September 4, 1861 brings into question the discipline of MSG troops under Price's command and shows disgust for Price's reluctance to attack Fort Scott, Kansas. On the retreat from the Kansas line, Price's troops were supposed to make twenty or so miles a day on the march. On September 10, Wiatt stated the column made ten miles and the reason given is "Pap got sleepy."¹¹ Wiatt's words do not show the confidence in Price that has been popularly believed.

Despite the range of work that has been done on Civil War topics, there are still areas to explore and new stories to be told. Biographies have centered on officers and political figures. Studies of the military history of the Civil War have generally taken the form of overall views of battles and campaigns, their outcomes, and their subsequent impact on the war. In this realm of study, Louis S. Gerteis, Professor of History at the University of Missouri-St. Louis has added *The Civil War in Missouri: A Military History*, providing an excellent look into the overall movements of troops in Missouri throughout the war.¹² While interesting, important, and informative, Gerteis does not provide an understanding of the experience of war from the lowly private and non-commissioned officers' perspectives.

¹⁰ Dr. John Wiatt, *Diary of a Doctor: Missouri State Guard*, ed. Joanne C. Eakin (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 1999).

¹¹ Wiatt, *Diary of a Doctor*, 22.

¹² Louis S. Gerteis, *The Civil War in Missouri: A Military History* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2012).

The average recruit's opinions of the war, nurtured in large part by the general opinions of where he lived prior to enlisting, affected his personal desire and drive to fight. The equipment he used, rations he was given, and clothes he wore—the soldier's material culture—are vital to understanding the full picture of the war. The perception he had of his mission and his confidence in his officers played vital roles in the success of his army. In recent years, this material culture, bottom-up style of research has gained popularity among Civil War historians, but it is still not fully developed. The best works on the experiences of the average soldier in the Civil War are generally considered to be *The Life of Johnny Reb* and *The Life of Billy Yank* by Bell Irvin Wiley.¹³ While informative, like so much of Civil War scholarship, they focus on theaters of war east of the Mississippi River.

A major step forward is Larry J. Daniel's *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee: A Portrait of Life in the Confederate Army* published in 1991.¹⁴ Daniel examined hundreds of existing personal accounts from soldiers in the Army of Tennessee and provides a fascinating insight into the opinions of soldiers, their arms and equipment, the food they were provided, and the experiences of the average soldier in camp, on the march, and in battle. Included are accounts from members of the Army of Tennessee's First (Cockrell's) Missouri brigade, some of whom saw battle alongside the M.S.G. in the Trans-Mississippi before being transferred to the Army of Tennessee in the western theater of the war.

¹³ Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1971); Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1943).

¹⁴ Larry J. Daniel, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee: A Portrait of Life in the Confederate Army* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

Another work examining the material culture of the average Confederate soldier is Thomas Arliskas' *Cadet Grey and Butternut Brown: Notes on Confederate Uniforms*.¹⁵ This book does not focus on one specific area, but covers the range of styles of Confederate uniforms and the system of supply. Using period photographs, newspaper accounts, personal accounts, and Confederate Army correspondence and legislation, Arliskas provides the most comprehensive, to date, look at the overall picture of Confederate uniform supply. Though the book does not give copious information on Missouri State Guard uniforms; it does provide an excellent look at how the seceded states struggled to supply their troops and how Missouri's confused status fit into the overall picture of Confederate war efforts.

This thesis examines the secession of Missouri as a social movement and shows how the political apathy of the majority of Missourians hampered Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson's ability to mobilize Missouri's populace to secede from the Union and how it affected the arming and equipping of the pro-secessionist MSG. By the time of the Camp Jackson Affair, which should have provided Jackson and his secessionist allies with a Union-perpetrated outrage to use as propaganda for their cause, the time had passed for an effective, state-wide secessionist movement to take off. Before the Missouri State Militia could be effectively reformed into the secessionist Missouri State Guard, Lyon had moved up the Missouri River valley, the heart of Missouri's plantation population, cutting the state in half and seizing vital water and railroad supply lines. Lyon's swift offensive resulted in the pro-Confederate government's flight from the state capital before the M.S.G. could be fully organized, necessary supply depots established,

¹⁵ Thomas M. Arliskas, *Cadet Grey and Butternut Brown: Notes on Confederate Uniforms* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 2006).

and proper military arms procured. Thus, the men of the M.S.G. were left to fend for themselves, many of them arming themselves with inadequate numbers of civilian firearms that provided for a supply nightmare. Clothing and rations were also requisitioned from Missouri civilians. The man placed in command of this ragtag army, General Sterling Price, proved too timid in his actions and lax in discipline to organize the M.S.G. it into an effective fighting force and succeeded in alienating the commander of the only Confederate Army in the region who could come to his aid. As a result, Missouri was secured for the Union, and the Confederate cause left in the hands of guerilla armies.

One reason historians have avoided this topic is the general lack of primary source material. General Price's personal memoirs, for example, though saved by his family, were completely destroyed in a fire in 1885. The remaining source materials—newspaper articles and veterans memoirs—are widely scattered. Thanks in part to the recent spike in interest due to the current sesquicentennial commemorations and the growing need to find new research topics on such a popular topic, new documents and sources are being discovered and sometimes digitized. In addition, Carolyn M. Bartels, who has not only written books pertaining to the Trans-Mississippi theatre but runs her own printing company, Two Trails Publishing, is republishing books previously out of print, and James McGhee, co-author of *Sterling Price's Lieutenants* has edited and published several collections of primary documents, many through Two Trails Publishing.¹⁶

¹⁶ The one book by Carolyn Bartels while researching this thesis was: Carolyn M. Bartels, *The Civil War In Missouri: Day by Day; 1861-1865* (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 1992). Among the primary resource compilations either reprinted or published by Ms. Bartels include: General Assembly of Missouri: *An Act to Provide for the Organization, Government, and Support of the Military*

As the top producer of agricultural products in the Trans-Mississippi Region at the time, Missouri would have been a vital asset for the Confederacy had Governor Jackson been able to secure its secession. In addition, the Missouri State Guard made up the bulk of the Confederate fighting force in the region and participated in the second major battle of the Civil War, Wilson's Creek. To understand the Civil War and the sentiments that tore America apart, there is no better substitute than a micro-study of Missouri. It was a divided state trying to navigate the dangerous waters of civil war with a population that did not wish to be dragged in by either side, preferring the curious position of armed neutrality. Unfortunately, the scheming of the pro-secessionist governor and the fanaticism of Union General Lyon helped tear the state apart.

Forces: State of Missouri Passed at the Called Session of the Twenty-First General Assembly (Jefferson City, MO: I.P. Ament, Public Printer, 1861 (reprint, Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 2001)). Primary source material compiled by James E. McGhee and published through Two Trails Publishing include: *Letter and Order Book: Missouri State Guard: 1861-1862*, James E. McGhee, trans. (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 2001); Adam W. Perkins, *With Jeff Thompson: The Diary of Adam W. Perkins*, James E. McGhee, ed. (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 2005); Gen. M. Jeff Thompson, *General M. Jeff Thompson's Letter Book, July 1861-June 1862*, James E. McGhee, trans. (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, no date given). TwoTrails Publishing has also kept the aforementioned book, *Sterling Price's Lieutenants* in publication. James McGhee is also the editor of the memoirs of MSG Quartermaster General James Harding. James Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard: The Memoir of Brigadier General James Harding*, James E. McGhee, ed. (Springfield, MO: Oak Hills Publishing, 2000).

Chapter I:
Missouri, the Election of 1860, and the Coming of War

Slavery had been an ongoing debate in America since the writing of the Constitution in 1787, when the land that would become the state of Missouri was still in foreign hands prior to the Louisiana Purchase. Admitted as a state on August 10, 1821, within forty years, Missouri became the center of attention in the ongoing slavery debate. The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 pitted pro-slavery Missourians against Kansas free-soilers in a brutal border war that preceded the firing on Fort Sumter, the official start of the Civil War. By the time the war started, Missourians were already accustomed to bloodshed. Despite slavery's role in Missouri's culture, its populace as a whole was a plethora of fence-sitters, willing to fight in defense of slavery against another state, but unwilling to challenge Federal authority. The 1860 presidential election illustrated that point thoroughly, where neither "radical candidates"—Republican Abraham Lincoln nor Southern Democrat John C. Breckinridge—received many votes. Into this muddied situation stepped governor-elect Claiborne Fox Jackson, a Democrat who sought to take Missouri and its resources to the Confederacy. To either side of the coming Civil War, Missouri represented a vast wealth of resources and vital hub of communications, yet, despite economic ties to the North and cultural ties to the South, the population as a whole proved in the election of 1860 to be moderates.

The question of whether Missouri's secessionists could have held the state for the South during the Civil War has been argued for decades. Undoubtedly Missouri held an abundance of resources: geographical, natural, and agricultural. Missouri's natural features included miles of navigable rivers, which proved to be of key strategic

importance later in the war. The Mississippi River, a key point in General Winfield Scott's "Anaconda Plan" made up the entire eastern border of the state. The Missouri River ran through Missouri and met the Mississippi River at St. Louis and other major rivers—the Kansas, Illinois, and Ohio—flowed into the Mississippi at points overlooked by Missouri bluffs upon which fortifications could be placed and artillery made to command the river traffic.¹⁷

Missouri could be considered the "garden" of the trans-Mississippi South, producing more edible agricultural produce like wheat, rye, Indian corn, oats, and buckwheat and non-edible products like tobacco, wool, flax, and hemp than the rest of the southwestern states (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas) put together.¹⁸ Missouri also out-produced both Arkansas and Texas in horses and hogs, vital resources to any army. Military uses for horseflesh varied, from pulling supply wagons to transporting artillery and mounted cavalry. Pork products—from bacon, to ham, to salt pork—made up large portions of the meat rations in both Union and Confederate armies.¹⁹ In addition to agricultural goods, Missouri contained more industrial mines than any other Trans-

¹⁷Winfield Scott's "Anaconda Plan" included a blockade of Confederate ports, strangling the Southern economy to the point where pro-Unionists in the South could reassert themselves and bring the Southern States back into the Union. The plan not only called for a blockade of the Southern Seaports from Virginia's Atlantic coast, down around Florida, and into the Gulf of Mexico, but also the capture and control of the Mississippi River. James M. McPherson and James K. Hogue, *Ordeal By Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 227-228. Peterson, et. Al., *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, 1-2.

¹⁸"Southwest" largely meaning Kansas, Arkansas, Indian Territory, Texas, Louisiana, and to some extent the New Mexico Territory. Robert L. Kerby, *Kirby Smith's Confederacy: The Trans-Mississippi South, 1863-1865* (Columbia University Press: New York, 1972), 8.

¹⁹ Salt pork was made by soaking pork in a thick salt brine and packing it in barrels for preservation. Both armies also supplied their men at times with salted beef, but it was, in general, intensely disliked by the troops who referred to it as "salt horse."

Mississippi state, producing iron ore, coal, lead, copper, and zinc—vital war-time commodities.²⁰

Missouri's agricultural goods were transported by river and by the burgeoning railroad industry. By 1861, Missouri contained more miles of railroad tracks than the rest of the Trans-Mississippi states put together. In 1846, the Missouri state legislature granted charters to six railroads to be built in Missouri. Of these railroads, only two of any length were built by 1861. The Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad ran, exactly as its name suggests, from Hannibal, Missouri on the Mississippi River in the east to St. Joseph, Missouri along the Missouri River in the west. The line ran through the county seats Shelbyville (Shelby County), Linneus (Linn County), Chillacothé (Livingston County), and Gallatin (Daviess County).²¹ One contemporary described it as an, "uneven, unballasted, crooked, 'jerk-water' sort of railroad, but cars could be kept on the track if the speed were low and the engineer diligent."²² Originally intended to run to the Mississippi River where its goods would be offloaded onto river boats and barges and floated down river, Northern interests purchased the line, built a bridge across the Mississippi, and ran the agricultural goods collected by the line straight to Chicago. Northern Missouri thus became inextricably linked to Northern for markets for its agricultural products.

²⁰ Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson, "Inaugural Address, January 3, 1861," pg 328-342 in *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of the State of Missouri* (State Historical Society of Missouri, 1922), 339-340; Kerby, *Kirby Smith's Confederacy*, 8; Peterson, et. al., *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, 2-3.

²¹ Jackson, "Inaugural Address," 340; Kerby, *Kirby Smith's Confederacy*, 8-9; Peterson, et. al. *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, 2-3; "Technology, Modernity, and the US South Before the Civil War: Southern Railroads." *Railroads and the Making of Modern America*. University of Nebraska Lincoln digital history project. http://railroads.unl.edu/views/item/ga_cotton_1860?p=5. Accessed January 12, 2015.

²² E.F. Ware, *The Lyon Campaign in Missouri: Being a History of the First Iowa Infantry* (Topeka, KS: Crane & Company, 1907), 106.

The other main line in Missouri was the optimistically-named Pacific Railroad.²³ Surveys began in 1851, and the first five miles of track were laid on December 23, 1852, beginning in St. Louis, with the eventual destination to be Kansas City, Missouri. By 1855, the line connected St. Louis to Jefferson City, running along the Missouri River. The track quit paralleling the Missouri River just west of Jefferson City, angling off on a more direct route to Kansas City before the war interrupted construction. The railroad did not span across the Mississippi River, but ended in St. Louis, the goal being to offload agricultural products and transfer them to riverboats to ship south to New Orleans.²⁴ The Pacific railroad tracks played a vital role in the plans of pro-secessionist government officials in spring of 1861, but the location of the railroad, rooted in St. Louis, was too vulnerable to Union advancement from Illinois once hostilities began.

While trains proved to be a vital resource for Civil War militaries, the potential importance of these railroads to a Confederate war effort in Missouri is questionable. No Missouri railroad lines ran into Southern states as the railroad tracks were exclusively contained in the northern half of Missouri. The most southerly point reached by a Missouri Railroad was Rolla, reached by a spur line of the Missouri Pacific and still a long way from reaching the southern border of the state. The one use a Confederate

²³ The hope was that the name “Pacific” would entice the Federal Government, already discussing the need and potential of a transcontinental railroad, into funding and expanding the groundwork already laid in Missouri.

²⁴ G.C. Broadhead. “Early Railroads in Missouri,” 149-150 in *Missouri Historical Review*. Volume 7, Issue 3, April 1913. Broadhead was one of the surveyors of the route of the Pacific Railroad. “Technology, Modernity, and the US South Before the Civil War: Southern Railroads.” *Railroads and the Making of Modern America*. University of Nebraska Lincoln digital history project. The opening ceremony of the Pacific Railroad took place on November 1, 1855. While en-route to the ceremonies, a train carrying passengers, including several companies of St. Louis militia, crashed when part of the wooden trestle work of the bridge over the Gasconade River gave out, killing thirty-one people. Douglas A. Harding, “Kelly’s Boys”: *A History of The Washington Blues & Company A, First Regiment Infantry, Sixth Division, Missouri State Guard*. No publisher or date given. Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield Library Vertical Files Collection, 8.

controlled Missouri could have done with the railroads is deprive their use to the North, and with it much of the agricultural products of the Missouri River Valley.

Another feature of Missouri that has been addressed by past scholars is the fact that Missouri was a transportation and communications gateway for the territories of the Western United States.²⁵ Missouri acted as the jumping-off point for both the Oregon and the Santa Fe Trails. The Pony Express route began in St. Joseph, providing the fastest mode of communication to US Territories and California prior to the completion of the transcontinental telegraph in 1861. The transcontinental telegraph also ran through Missouri. Thus, whichever side held Missouri could control transportation and communications to the west, at least until the other side could establish new routes. The authors of *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, also point out that nearly a quarter of the residents living in such far-flung locales were natives of Missouri and thus would support whichever side, Union or Confederate, controlled their home state.²⁶

The assumption that the native Missourians living in the territories would support whichever faction controlled their home state seems logical enough given the tendency of Americans at the time to place their loyalty to their states first and their nation second. Missouri, however, refused to be like the rest of the United States. As the war played out in Missouri, it became apparent that loyalty to one's state was not as important a factor as

²⁵ By this time, exploitation of resources in the Western United States were well under way. California, Oregon, and the western territories of Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado, Idaho, Washington, and Montana contained vast quantities of precious metals.

²⁶ Peterson, et.al, *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, 2-3. Missouri Representative William A. Hall, during the Missouri secession debates in the Missouri Legislature in 1861, prophetically stated that, in addition to Missouri controlling so many miles of river traffic, it also sat as the Union's gateway of communications to the West and thus, would not be allowed to secede, even if the majority of the state's voters supported such measures. Representative Hall's speech is quoted in Thomas L. Snead's, *The Fight for Missouri* (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 1997 (orig. pub. New York: Scribner and Sons, 1886), 62-63.

cultural predispositions. In addition to those Missourians who joined both regular Confederate regiments and guerilla bands, thousands more joined pro-Union home guard units and regular US military regiments. This pre-disposition to one side or the other was a result of the fact that Missouri became a mixing place for two distinct cultures in the United States, mixing southern “butternuts” with northern “Yankees.”

The name “butternut” came from the use of crushed butternut (or walnut) hulls to dye the homespun cloth with which they made their clothes. From the upper South and Pennsylvania, and generally Methodist or Baptist in denomination, the butternuts developed a rural economy based largely on subsistence agriculture, raising corn and hogs and producing whiskey. Yankees, on the other hand, perpetuated a culture rooted in New England’s Puritan past and valued the Protestant work ethic. Yankees generally developed a more diversified economy around commercial agriculture production. As the doctrine of manifest destiny swept the nation, streams of emigrants pushed steadily westward. These two cultures collided in the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, with Yankees controlling the northern portions of the Midwest, and Butternuts the southern regions.²⁷ This progression of immigration continued into Missouri, where immigrants from the Deep South were added into the mix. As the war progressed, many Missourians were found fighting on both sides of the conflict, their decisions based largely on where their ancestors had come from, not necessarily the side their state had chosen.²⁸

Members of this Yankee culture tended to cluster around new transportation networks (like railroads) and seize control of vital economic institutions like banks,

²⁷ James M. McPherson and James K. Hogue, *Ordeal By Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*. 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 23.

²⁸ MacPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 23.

commercial enterprises (like shipping businesses), and railroads. It is not surprising, then that the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad was purchased by Northern interests and run across the Mississippi River and onward to Chicago. Nor was it surprising that Missouri's main economic hub, St. Louis, saw the largest support for the Republican Party in Missouri. Finally, the bulk of Missouri's expanding infrastructure was located in the northern half of the state, while much of the southern portion of the state was left largely undeveloped by 1861, a factor that proved to be detrimental to the Confederate cause there.

Another important resource in Missouri was its already existing—and nominally functioning—militia system and a male population that could be pressed into service. On paper, Missouri's various militia organizations totaled some 118,047 men.²⁹ The reality of how many militia companies were still active at the time of the war is a tougher question to answer.

The first militia law in the Louisiana Territory, passed in 1807, provided for the formation of uniformed companies. Once a governor approved a constitution and bylaws, members of the organization could draw public arms. Members were also exempt from jury duty, and their horses, uniforms, and equipment were free from taxation and civil litigation. Most of the militias able to maintain sufficient membership were largely limited to the St. Louis area. During the War of 1812 and the Blackhawk War of 1832, militia companies emerged, but in times of peace, it was hard to keep a militia organized. The Mexican War again saw militia companies successfully recruit

²⁹ Peterson, et al, *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, 1.

new members, but after the war, in St. Louis, the center of militia organizations, only the St. Louis Grays succeeded in holding together.³⁰

The early 1850s saw a renewed interest in militia activity. The Union Riflemen, organized in St. Louis in 1851 and 1852, saw a dramatic increase in the number of companies.³¹ By September of 1852, due to the popularity of the St. Louis Grays, five new companies formed a battalion with the existing organization, complete with a band. A second regiment consisted of the National Guards, Continental Rangers, St. Louis Light Guard, the two companies of Black Plume Rifles, Missouri Yagers, Missouri Dragoons, and Washington Guards. Most of them disbanded prior to the Civil War. The Native American Rangers and Continental Rangers organizations collapsed in 1856, followed the next year by the Black Plume Cadets, but were replaced by the Emmet Guard under Captain John C. Smith and the Washington Blues under Captain Joseph Kelly arose in 1857.³²

Part of the struggle to keep a militia company operating was the militarily lackadaisical attitude of the members. Some of the men in the militia companies were dedicated citizen soldiers with a genuine interest and determination to learn military drill, but many viewed the militia as a social club in which military drill was part of the price to pay in exchange for the status it offered and the uniform they could wear to social events. Not surprisingly, the uniforms adopted by militias tended to be flashy in appearance rather than convenient for field use. For example, a newspaper described the

³⁰ Harding, "*Kelly's Boys*," 2-5.

³¹ July 1852, the Captain Robert Renick organized the National Guard; W.B. Gaseltine formed the National Guard Band, and the Black Plume Rifles under Captain John W. Crane were formed. Harding, "*Kelly's Boys*," 5.

³² Kelly's Washington Blues soon proved themselves to be arguably the top militia organization in Missouri through the experience of their captain, Joseph Kelly. Harding, "*Kelly's Boys*," 8-9.

Washington Blues in 1858 as wearing a navy blue, single breasted, swallow-tailed coat with light blue facings on the skirt, collar, and cuffs and gold braid trim and epaulets.

The trousers were dark blue with light blue side stripes. Accoutrements were white cross belts for the cartridge box and bayonet and a white waist belt. The bayonet cross belt was bedecked with a polished brass breast plate with a bronze bust of Washington entwined with a silver wreath of shamrocks (Kelly's men were largely recruited from St. Louis' Irish population). A bearskin shako completed the garish appearance.³³

In 1858, US militia companies adopted a more utilitarian field uniform consisting of a dark blue frock coat, light blue trousers for fall, winter, and spring wear, white linen trousers for summer, and white waist and cross belts patent leather cartridge box and knapsack. A simple patent leather shako with a white pompom on top and a gilt wreath encircling the company letter was adopted for headgear. All totaled, the outfit cost approximately seventy-two dollars which the militiaman had to pay back to his company at about \$2.50 per month. It is estimated that the expense for the average private was over one hundred dollars a year, and for an officer, over two hundred. Dues were set at fifty cents a month, and a militiaman was fined for missing drills or other company functions. Extra fees, sometimes up to three dollars, were levied for special events. In addition, members of a company had to pay rent for their muskets and hire a full-time armourer to see to the company's weapons.³⁴ Even with the financing of a uniform, the cost of being part of the militia was too much for the average person, limiting the size and demographics of the militia to wealthier citizens. While the existing Missouri militia seemed like a formidable fighting force, it was not a stable organization.

³³ Harding, "*Kelly's Boys*," 9.

³⁴ Harding, "*Kelly's Boys*," 9-10.

Although the size of the militia was limited by the natural waxing and waning of interest and the cost of being a member, Missouri did possess a large population of potential recruits.³⁵ According to the 1860 census, white males in Missouri, ages fifteen to twenty-nine (the average age of Civil War soldiers was twenty-five) numbered 166,053. If desperate, the male population between the ages of fifteen and fifty-nine numbered 310,421.³⁶

With its wealth of resources, both sides of the coming Civil War looked to Missouri and attempted to discern what side the state would choose. With its history of being at the heart of the slavery debate in America, it certainly seemed Missouri would go with the South. Missouri was placed in the center of the slavery debate in 1820 with the Missouri Compromise. Proposed by Henry Clay, the Missouri Compromise banned slavery in states north of the 36° 30' parallel. In addition, a precedent established that for every state admitted to the Union, a slave state was admitted simultaneously to keep the balance of power in the Senate. This method began with the admittance of Maine as a free state and Missouri as a slave state. To some extent, the compromise appeased Southerners and Northerners, but it did not provide the lasting answer America needed.

Attempting to take over where Clay left off, Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas took up the cause of a peaceful resolution to the slavery issue. A moderate Democrat, Douglas led the way to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. The Kansas-Nebraska Act made slavery an issue of “popular sovereignty,” and allowed each official

³⁵ Few states, North or South, had enough men enrolled in militias to fill out their needed recruitment numbers once the war began. As such, both sides utilized volunteer companies to make up the bulk of their armies.

³⁶ A short examination of the potential for military recruits can be found in *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, 1-2; 1860 Missouri Census Records, University of Virginia Census Browser, Accessed December 1, 2014. <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/php/county.php>.

territory to vote on whether or not slavery would be allowed.³⁷ The Kansas-Nebraska Act negated the Missouri Compromise. Kansas became the focal point of the conflict, as pro-slavery settlers poured into Kansas from Missouri, hoping to vote Kansas in as a slave territory.³⁸ Violence naturally erupted in the border conflict that came to be known as “Bleeding Kansas.”

The already strained relations between Missouri and the growing anti-slavery faction in Kansas and the Northern states increased in 1857 with the infamous case, *Dred Scott v. Sandford*. Scott had been owned by an army surgeon, Dr. John Emerson who, in the course of his duties, had been posted at Fort Armstrong in Illinois, a free state, from December 1833 to May 1836. From Illinois, the doctor was transferred to Fort Snelling in what is now Minnesota until 1838, a territory north of the 36° 30’ line, a free territory according to the Missouri Compromise. While at Fort Snelling, Dr. Emerson allowed Scott to marry a slave owned by Major Lawrence Taliaferro in a formal ceremony conducted by the major himself. Slaver marriages were not recognized legally in the United States. After a series of transfers, Dr. Emerson was posted to Florida during the Seminole War, at which time Scott remained with Emerson’s wife at their home in St. Louis. Scott sued for his freedom in 1847, while still living in Missouri, arguing that residence in a free territory negated his status as a slave. At a trial in the Missouri Supreme Court in June 1848, a jury ruled in Scott’s favor. In 1850, the St. Louis circuit court took up the case and the jury again ruled in Scott’s favor. The case eventually

³⁷ Stephen A. Douglas., “The Kansas Nebraska Bill. Speech in the Senate, March 3, 1854,” 187-217 in Clark E. Carr, *Stephen A. Douglas: His Life, Public Services, Speeches, and Patriotism* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1909).

³⁸ Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 13-14.

made it to the US Supreme Court. The ruling of the Supreme Court in 1857 polarized the nation. Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney, writing for the court, declared that Scott, as a slave, had no right to sue in a US court, but went so far as to say that the Missouri Compromise, which had banned slavery in all US territories north of the 36° 30' line was unconstitutional. Northerners were appalled by the decision, as the Supreme Court not only deemed slavery to be possible in Northern territory, but it also seemed to say that slavery was legal in Northern states provided the slave was purchased in the South.³⁹

The Border War that erupted between Kansas and Missouri after the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, coupled with the polarizing opinion of the Supreme Court in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* put Missouri in the center of the slavery debate. Poor white southerners, especially Missourians, referred to as “pukes” by Northerners, came to embody all that was wrong with the institution of slavery. Despite their largely pro-Union sentiments and the economic ties to the North, many Missourians increasingly identified themselves as Southerners in the late 1850s.⁴⁰ It was largely a defensive mechanism against the criticism placed upon the state and created an “us versus them” mentality. In fact, although Missouri looked like the bastion of pro-slavery extremism on the Western frontier, the institution of slavery in Missouri was not as strong or deeply entrenched as it seemed to many outsiders.

Slavery in Missouri was largely limited by environmental factors. Early settlers into Western Missouri were largely poor, enticed to settle in remote Western Missouri by

³⁹ Paul Finkelman, *Dred Scott v. Sandford: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Marten's Press, 1997), 1,3-4,10, 14-15. A transcript of Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney's, *Opinion of the Court in Dredd Scott, Plaintiff in Error v. John F.A. Sandford*, can be found on pages 55-77 in Finkelman's *Dred Scott*.

⁴⁰ Fellman, *Inside War*, 13-14

the cheapness of land, and lacked the financial resources to own more than a few slaves, generally a family. Most Missouri slaves were not employed in the plantation style of agriculture but the farm style of agriculture. Slaves and their children worked side-by-side in the fields with their owners and their children. No distinction was made between domestic work and field work, as both were done by the slaves as needed. Contemporary sources comment on the general lack of force used on Missouri slaves, and rarely was sale “down the river” used as a threat to keep slaves in check. Missouri is far enough North that the climate was unfavorable for growing cotton. The growing season was short, and for several months of the year, slaves were idle unless employed in domestic chores. The added cost of food, clothing, and shelter during times of little to no productivity made owning slaves in Missouri considerably less profitable. Missouri lacked the huge plantations found in the Southern “cotton belt,” and reaching markets to sell their products was difficult unless their land sat along the Missouri River.⁴¹

From 1835 to 1854, the development of new transportations systems, namely the Hannibal & St. Joseph and Pacific Railroads, made access to markets easier for those

⁴¹ John G. Haskell, “The Passing of Slavery in Western Missouri,” 28-39 in *Transactions of the Kansas State Historical Society*, vol. vii, 32. William Henry Schrader (1844-1921). “Reminiscence.” Historical Manuscript Collection. State Historical Society of Missouri, Jefferson City, MO. Schrader in his reminiscence, says that in the years he lived in Missouri, he rarely saw slaves mistreated and knew of only one instance in which a slave owner used “unusual punishment.” That owner was warned by his slave-holding neighbors to never do it again. Two documents included in Silvana R. Siddali’s *Missouri’s War: The Civil War in Documents* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009) illustrate the duplicity of slavery in Missouri. Reverend Charles Peabody, district secretary for the American Trust Society travelled Missouri in 1846 and described slavery in Lexington, MO: “But here is slavery in its mildness,” 20-21. He discusses in his June 22nd journal entry that slaves around Lexington refer to their masters’ horse as “their” horse, showing a connection between slaves and masters in Missouri as considerably different than in other states. At the same time, however, Siddali included the reminiscence of a slave, “William Wells Brown Remembers his Life as a Slave,” 23-26. Brown, a slave in St. Louis, recalled the brutality of a “Yankee” overseer which caused him to runaway. Upon his capture, Brown was taken to the smoke house, beaten, and then “thoroughly smoked” with burning tobacco leaves as a punishment.

living in western Missouri, making slavery more profitable.⁴² By 1860, however, the bulk of Missouri's slave population was still centered along the Missouri River Valley, which contained the majority of the land suitable for cultivating tobacco and hemp, the main crops labor-intensive enough to justify the expense of owning slaves. This area of rich soil, in the heart of Missouri, was given the nickname "Boon's Lick." The slave-based portion of Missouri's economy was volatile, suffering economic downturns more than their cotton-producing counterparts. This volatility thus weakened the overall value of slavery in Missouri. In St. Louis, the most affluent city in Missouri, slaves were used primarily as domestic servants. This decreased with the influx of Irish and German immigrants as immigrants were cheaper to hire for domestic roles than the cost of slaves.⁴³

Of the total free population of 1,067,081, only 24,320 owned slaves, roughly 2.3 percent of Missouri's population. According to the 1860 census, only four slave owners in Missouri held between one hundred and two hundred slaves. Three of these large slave holders lived in counties along the Missouri River (Jackson, Lafayette, and Saline), the other in New Madrid, in the lowlands of southeast Missouri, along the Mississippi River. The majority of slave owners still held somewhere between one and ten slaves for labor on small family farms or as personal servants. Of the states traditionally considered "border states" during the Civil War—Kentucky, Missouri, and Maryland—Missouri had

⁴² Western Missouri, the stronghold of "border ruffians" that feuded with Kansas during the border war, became an area where slavery was more profitable, and, naturally, those who profited were more resistant to potential advancements of abolitionists in Kansas.

⁴³ Haskell, "The Passing of Slavery in Western Missouri," 32-33. Due to the fickleness of the tobacco market and the weakness of cotton production in Missouri due to its climate, slave owners in Missouri, like their border region counterparts in Virginia and Kentucky had to diversify their cultivation and included raising livestock and cereal grains as well as non-agricultural work of land speculation and law. Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 36-37.

the second highest number of slaves (KY-225,483; MO-114,931; MD-87,189). As a whole, however, Missouri slave-owners owned an average of 4.7 slaves, fewer than any other slave state.⁴⁴

Despite the limitations placed on slavery by climate and access to markets, Missouri was the second largest producer of hemp, behind Kentucky, and the sixth largest producer of tobacco. Unfortunately, the hemp market was tied to the Southern cotton market where hemp cordage was needed to bundle cotton bales. Missouri's most important products were corn and hogs, being the second largest producer of corn in the United States and the fourth largest producer of hogs. With the building of the railroads in the 1850s and the spanning of the Mississippi River by the Northern owners of the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad, Missouri became tied economically to the North.⁴⁵ All of these factors limited the virulence of pro-secessionist sentiments in Missouri.

In spite of the general weakness of the importance and expanse of slavery in Missouri, the slave holders that inhabited the Missouri River Valley dominated politics in Missouri throughout the 1850s. These slave owners viewed Missouri as a Southern state, despite the weakness of slavery and its relative lack of importance in Missouri's agricultural output. To win elections though, the "Boonslick Democrats" had to pander

⁴⁴ Taking the 1860 Census figures for each state, courtesy of the University of Virginia's Historical Census Browser, and taking the number of slaves in each of the fourteen slave states and dividing that figure by the number of slave owners gives the highest concentration of slaves per owner as the highest in South Carolina as 15.07 (402,406 slaves to 26,701 slave owners). Haskell, "The Passing of Slavery in Missouri," 31,33.

⁴⁵ Fellman, *Inside War*, 8-9.

to Missouri's moderates—the majority of the state—and thus presented themselves as Union loyalists and advocates of Jacksonian democracy.⁴⁶

In October 1859, John Brown, an abolitionist from Pennsylvania who had travelled to Kansas to fight in the border war from 1856 to 1859, and a small group of dedicated followers launched an ill-fated raid on the federal armory in Harper's Ferry, Virginia. Brown hoped their action would start a slave rebellion throughout the South. The raid was poorly planned and Brown and his cohorts were captured after a thirty-six hour siege by militia forces.⁴⁷ Brown and his men were swiftly tried and sentenced to death. John Brown's raid polarized US politics. Democrat and potential presidential candidate Stephen Douglas portrayed it as the, "natural, logical, inevitable result of the doctrines and teachings of the Republican Party."⁴⁸ Newspapers proposed similar ideas. The Democrats succeeded, for a time, at putting the Republicans on the defensive, the latter trying to minimize the damage of Brown's actions on their campaign.⁴⁹ It was, however, the Democratic Party that split in 1860.

Stephen Douglas appeared to be the Democratic front-runner, but Southern Democrats refused to accept his nomination unless he included in his platform a plank

⁴⁶ Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerilla Conflict in Missouri During the America Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 5.

⁴⁷ Brown's force captured the Federal arsenal and rifle works, but took no rations with them. He hoped their bold actions would inspire slaves to runaway and join the uprising, but none came. Among the militia forces that captured Brown were a number of future Confederates, including Robert E. Lee and James Ewell Brown (J.E.B.) Stuart. Jay Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border: 1854-1865* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1955), 113-114.

⁴⁸ Transcripts of the original speech by Senator Stephen A. Douglas can be found on the West Virginia Division of Culture and History website: "Speech of Senator S.A. Douglas on the Invasion of States; and His Reply to Mr. Fessenden, Delivered in the Senate of the United States, January 28, 1860," West Virginia Division of Culture and History, www.wvculture.org/history/jbexhibit/bbspr02-0012.html, accessed January 29, 2015.

⁴⁹ James M. McPherson and James K. Hogue, *Ordeal By Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 4th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 126-129.

calling for a federal legal code to guarantee the protection of slavery in all US territories. Douglas, to his credit, refused to abandon the doctrine of popular sovereignty. At the Democratic national convention held in January 1860, delegates from eight southern states led by William Lowndes Yancey walked out of the convention after the pro-slavery platform was defeated by the popular sovereignty platform, 165 votes to 138.⁵⁰

Yancey and his followers met in another hall and adopted a Southern rights platform and waited to see the outcome of the other convention. When Douglas failed to garner the necessary two-thirds majority to seal the nomination, the delegates agreed to meet again in Baltimore six weeks later. At Baltimore, most of the pro-secessionist delegates were refused entry, replaced by Douglas supporters from their respective states. Douglas was subsequently nominated. The pro-secessionists that remained walked out again and elected John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky (President Buchanan's vice president) as their official candidate. The Republicans at their convention in May rallied not behind William Seward, nominating instead Abraham Lincoln.⁵¹ Yet another candidate, John Bell of Tennessee, entered the ring as a Constitutional Unionist.⁵²

The race quickly turned into a two-party race in each section of the country. Lincoln and Douglas squared off in the North and Breckinridge and Bell in the South. The Republican Party did not even bother to put up a ticket in ten Southern states. As the

⁵⁰ McPherson, *Ordeal By Fire*, 129-130.

⁵¹ Lincoln, a former Whig, succeeded in presenting himself as a moderate who condemned slavery but refused to condone radical action against the institution. He defeated Seward for the nomination after a long series of votes. The Platform adopted was far less radical than that of the 1856 Republican platform. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 130-132.

⁵² The Constitutional Party was made up of a coalition of Southern Whigs who considered Republicans to radical. They adopted a platform that endorsed the "Constitution of the Country, the Union of the States, and the enforcement of the laws." Their support was concentrated in the upper south. They had no real chance of winning, but they hoped to draw enough electoral votes away from the Republicans to throw the election into the House of Representatives and secure Douglas's election. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 132.

campaign went on, it became clear to everyone that Lincoln was the front runner. Southerners panicked at the thought of more John Brown-like anti-slavery actions and hysteria swept the South. Newspapers that supported Bell or Douglas accused Breckinridge's campaign of stirring-up panic to get votes. The term "Black Republicans" entered the lexicon of Southern radicals who it to exploit racist sentiments for political advantage.⁵³

In the end, Lincoln won all the electoral votes in the free states except New Jersey (he won four, Douglas three). Lincoln won an absolute majority over his combined three opponents in all but three northern states (California, Oregon, and New Jersey). He won no electoral votes in the slave states and scarcely any popular votes outside of a few urban counties in the border states. Douglas ran second in the North, but won electoral votes only from Missouri plus three in New Jersey.⁵⁴ In this respect, Missouri proved itself to be unique, and its outcome an indicator of the precarious political game that was played in Missouri from November 1860 to May 10, 1861.

The presidential race in the Northern states came down to a contest between Douglas and Lincoln, Breckinridge and Bell fought it out in the South, and the election in Missouri came down to the curious combination of Douglas and Bell. Most Missouri voters had thrown out the two candidates perceived as radicals and made their selection from the two moderate candidates. Even a majority of the counties along the Missouri River, the heart of slavery in Missouri, voted not for Breckinridge, but for Douglas. Out

⁵³ How closely Republicans aligned with abolitionists depended largely on the area in which they were campaigning. In some areas, Republicans shied away from abolitionists, fearing the potentially damaging effects of consorting with radicals. In most parts of the North, though, Republicans and abolitionists got on cordially. Douglas broke with tradition and campaigned on his own behalf, though he had little chance of success. Douglas even went as far as to attempt to campaign in the South, but it was all for naught. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 133-137.

⁵⁴ McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 137.

of 112 counties in Missouri: forty-four voted for Douglas; forty-four for Bell; twenty-two voted for Breckinridge; and only two for Lincoln. The popular vote totaled 59,093 for Douglas; 57,975 for Bell; 31,317 for Breckinridge; and 17,029 for Lincoln.⁵⁵ Most of Lincoln's support was found in St. Louis, where the highest concentration of German immigrants was to be found. When fighting began, the latter group proved to be among the most ardent defenders of Unionism in the state of Missouri.

Ironically, Missouri voters had elected a majority of Breckinridge-aligned politicians for the state legislature in the state elections three months earlier. Breckinridge Democrats had won fifteen seats in the Missouri Senate and forty-five seats in the Missouri House.⁵⁶ The governor elect, Claiborne Fox Jackson, portrayed himself as a moderate during his campaign for governor. Despite presenting himself as a moderate, he was a secret supporter of Breckinridge.⁵⁷

Jackson himself was a product of the politics of the Boon's Lick region of Missouri. Born in Kentucky on April 4, 1806, the second youngest of twelve children, in 1826, Jackson, like so many other Kentuckians, moved to the new frontier of Missouri with three of his brothers and several cousins to pursue a career as a merchant. He settled

⁵⁵ County by county vote counts can be found in "Missouri Election—Official" article from the *Liberty Tribune*, volume XV, December 14, 1860, Missouri Digital Heritage Collection, cdm16795.content.oclc.org, accessed January 28, 2015. Another county by county breakdown of election results for Missouri can be found at "The 1860 Election Results in Missouri," Missouri Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, <http://www.missouridivision-scv.org/election/htm>, accessed January 3, 2015. Minor discrepancies can be found in the results, given the human factor of hand-counting ballots at the time.

⁵⁶ "The Legislature" article published in the *Liberty Tribune*, Volume XV, Page 4, column 2 on December 14, 1860 gives the official results for Missouri State Legislature candidates. In addition to the Breckinridge Democrats, Douglas Democrats won ten seats in the Senate and thirty-six seats in the House. "Opposition" candidates (i.e., John Bell's Constitutional Party) candidates six in the Senate and 38 in the House. Showing the anti-Republican sentiment in Western Missouri's Boon's Lick region, the *Liberty Tribune* listed the Republican party as "Black Republicans" in the results. The Republicans won one seat in the Senate and twelve in the House.

⁵⁷ Christopher Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate: Claiborne Fox Jackson and the Creation of Southern Identity in the Border West* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 225-227.

first in Howard County Missouri, in the heart of the Boon's Lick country where he quickly developed a reputation as a charming salesman. He joined the Howard County militia in several small conflicts with various Native American tribes, eventually rising to the rank of major, a title he used throughout much of his life. He married into the family of the influential Dr. John Sappington, and entered politics in 1836, winning election to the Missouri House of Representatives as a Jacksonian Democrat. He allied himself with Thomas Hart Benton until the latter's support for the expansion of slavery began to wane in the 1840s, completely breaking ties with Benton over the issue of the Mexican War.⁵⁸ The scandal that occurred when Jackson finally broke ranks with Benton in the 1840s drove Jackson out of politics until the 1850s, by which time the question of the expansion of slavery had directed national attention on Missouri.⁵⁹

The year of 1850 proved to be a boom year for Jackson as he sold his agricultural goods for high prices and increased both his land and slave holdings, cementing his bonds with the pro-slavery demographic. As the debates over slavery intensified, and as Missouri took center stage in the debate, Missourians who had proven themselves moderates throughout the prior decades began to see the claims of abolitionists and free soilers as attempts to strong-arm and stifle a minority and therefore silence democracy in America. This shift in public opinion opened the door for Jackson to re-enter politics,

⁵⁸ Benton was largely non-committal on the issue of the war and questioned the politics behind annexing Texas. Jackson was unwaveringly in support of both the Mexican War and expansion of slavery.

⁵⁹ In his lifetime, Jackson married three of Dr. Sappington's daughters, Jane (1831), Louisa (1833), and finally Eliza (1838) after the first two died prematurely. He eventually ran successful mercantile and land speculation businesses in addition to aiding Dr. Sappington in his medication business. He began his political career as a Jacksonian, the ideological decedents of Jeffersonian Democrats. In 1849, Jackson allied himself with William B. Napton and authored the Jackson-Napton Resolutions which unequivocally stated that the Federal Legislature had no authority to regulate slavery in the territories. The Resolutions passed with little debate and placed Jackson in the camp of the radical John C. Calhoun and squarely against Benton. Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 19-22, 53, 60-65, 68-70, 82-91, 102-105, 130-131, 137-138, 149-153.

and he won an election for a seat in the House in 1853. After the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Jackson, along with thousands of other Missourians, crossed the border at the urging of radical pro-slavery advocate David Rice Atchison to vote illegally in the Kansas territorial elections. In 1856, Jackson was selected as the party chairman for the anti-Benton faction of Democrats. By 1859, Missouri sentiments had shifted far enough that Jackson saw his opportunity and announced to a close group of supporters that he would run for governor in 1860.⁶⁰

After a furious debate between factions in the party, Jackson won the Democratic nomination for governor over Waldo P. Johnson after four ballots. Thomas Caute Reynolds, an ardent pro-slavery man, was selected as his lieutenant governor. Jackson began a furious campaign in May of 1860, travelling throughout the Southwestern portion of Missouri, an area generally ignored by Boon's Lick politicians, to garner support. He canvassed the area, speaking in twenty-four different towns in twenty-six days, covering some of the roughest terrain in Missouri via horse and carriage. In St. Louis, Jackson aligned himself with the moderate presidential candidate, Stephen Douglas, in an attempt to win support, but made it abundantly clear to the rural populace that he was pro-slavery and pro-states' rights. The move to align himself with Douglas upset many Breckinridge Democrats who nominated their own candidate, Hancock L. Jackson. Despite the risk and opposition, Jackson's skillfully calculated campaign decisions won him the governor's race.⁶¹

⁶⁰ In the 1858 midterm election, moderate, free-soil Bentonite Democrats Frank Blair and Gratz Brown both lost their reelection bids for the Congress and the Missouri house respectively. Blair and Gratz both were mocked as "Black Republicans. Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 178-179, 188, 190, 193, 201, 215-220, 222, 224.

⁶¹ Jackson won by 7,863 votes, just shy of forty-seven percent of the popular vote. Sample Orr finished second with forty-two percent and candidates Hancock Jackson and James Gardenshire together

Following the elections of 1860, rumors of secession began sweeping the nation as the cotton states reacted to the election of the “Black Republican” Abraham Lincoln. The facts of Lincoln’s victory angered many. In the *Liberty Tribune*, an article, “The Popular Vote for President” was denounced the way in which the Republicans had won with only a third of the popular vote. The tirade denounces the Electoral College system and declared that the two-thirds majority against Lincoln, even if it had been concentrated behind a single candidate, would have been beaten by Lincoln’s one-third. “There is not a particle of Democracy in the system...” the author declared.⁶²

Not all election editorials were as inflammatory, and the bulk of them proved that Missourians, while identifying themselves as Southern, were not secessionists. An article printed in the *Western Journal of Commerce* stated frankly that the South, and especially Missouri, had no legitimate reason to secede, at least for the time being. It also stated that it would be suicidal for the South to attempt to secede, given its general lack of foodstuffs. “All admit that so long as the Constitution is maintained in good faith and its provisions enforced, we can all live together under it.”⁶³ An article in the *St. Louis Republican* (a Democratic newspaper) echoed similar sentiments, declaring there was yet no cause for secession. It stated proudly that the people of Missouri had done their part in attempting to defeat Lincoln by sticking to the regular nominee of the Democratic

only garnered eleven percent of the vote. Phillips, *Missouri’s Confederate*, 224-230. Thomas L. Snead was the editor of the pro-Breckinridge newspaper, *The Bulletin* and stated in his memoirs, *The Fight for Missouri*, that he had openly supported Breckinridge for President and Jackson for governor until Jackson aligned himself with Douglas to pander to the bulk of Missouri voters at which point the Breckinridge camp put forth Hancock Jackson for governor. Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, iii-iv.

⁶² “The Popular Vote for President,” *Liberty Tribune*, volume XV, page 4, column 2, Missouri Digital Heritage collection, cdm.16795.contentdm.oclc.org, accessed January 29, 2015.

⁶³ “What Will Be Done,” *Western Journal of Commerce* (Kansas City, MO), November 2, 1860, pg 42-44 in Siddali, *Missouri’s War*.

Party. "...he [President Lincoln] should be recognized by all good citizens as the President of the Republic."⁶⁴ The latter statement echoed the opinion of most Missourians.

On December 4, 1860 South Carolina seceded from the Union, while other Southern states contemplated the same actions. Despite the fears of Breckenridge Democrats, governor-elect Claiborne Jackson proved himself to be an ardent supporter of slavery and states' rights, a point made abundantly clear at his inaugural address on January 3, 1861. Jackson's speech was a veiled endorsement of secession. Jackson did not directly call for Missouri's secession, but he did what he could to tie Missouri to the Southern cause. He denounced the Emigrant Aid Societies for aiding anti-slavery (and therefore, in his views, anti-Constitutional) emigrants who settled in Kansas, destroying the Missouri Compromise line. These emigrants, Jackson declared, were responsible for "...dissemination of incendiary pamphlets—the rescue of fugitive slaves—and the unparalleled atrocity of the Virginia invasion."⁶⁵ This faction, like that growing in Kansas, he said, were seeking to destroy slavery everywhere in America with the help of a government the Southern people had no voice in creating and a Federal Executive who sought to subvert the Constitutional rights of nearly half of the population.⁶⁶

Jackson also appealed to Missourians' sense of moderation and their stance as the mediators of a potential conflict. He stated that, throughout all of the slave holding states, "a feeling of discontent and alarm has manifested itself," the intensity of that

⁶⁴ St. Louis *Republican*, November 8, 1860, 44-45 in Siddali, *Missouri's War*.

⁶⁵ The "Virginia invasion" Jackson referred to was John Brown's raid.

⁶⁶ Jackson oversimplified the issue, assuming that every resident in the fifteen slave-states out of thirty three total states were wholly supportive of slavery. Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson, "Inaugural Address, January 3, 1861," 328-342 in *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of the State of Missouri* (State Historical Society of Missouri, 1922), 328-331.

feeling dictated by the intensity of the states' economic linkage to slavery and, as such, the cotton-growing states had a "larger and more vital interest" than the border states and thus were "the first to awaken to a sense of insecurity."⁶⁷ He exaggerated Missouri's economic ties to the Southern states and claimed that Missouri's agricultural and manufactured goods were all sent through Southern markets.⁶⁸

Jackson condemned those in the North who proposed to the use of violence to preserve the Union, stating that such actions would not lead to solidarity of the Union, but to despotism. He suggested a convention of slave-holding states. The delegates to the convention would draw up Constitutional amendments guaranteeing the right to own slaves in set locations. The amendments would then be put forth to the Northern states for approval and thus avert civil war.⁶⁹ The proposal of a convention to draw up amendments could only avert conflict if the Northern states agreed to accept them, something that Jackson undoubtedly knew was not going to happen. His inaugural address left Missourians with no doubts that Jackson was an ardent Southerner who was willing to secede if necessary. Unfortunately for him and the Southern cause, Missourians were unwilling to take such a drastic step.

Missouri represented a wealth of resources for either side of the coming war. Beginning with its admittance into the Union, Missouri gradually became the center of

⁶⁷ Jackson, "Inauguration Speech," 331.

⁶⁸ Jackson, "Inauguration Speech," 331. Missouri's products included hemp, wheat, corn, flour, horses, hogs, and mules. By stating that all of their products must go through Southern markets, he overlooked the fact that the Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad was linked directly to the growing city of Chicago. The only Missouri product almost entirely linked to Southern markets was hemp, used mainly in the South to bundle cotton bales. Hemp, incidentally, was the most profitable, slave-produced agricultural good in Missouri at the time, and a cash crop produced by Jackson's increasing slave holdings in the Missouri River Valley.

⁶⁹ Jackson, "Inauguration Speech," 334-339.

the slavery debate. The Kansas-Nebraska Act, the border war, and the infamous *Dred Scott* decision kept Missouri at the heart of the growing conflict. Missourian “border trash” became the villains of abolitionist anti-slavery rhetoric. As a result, many Missourians began to increasingly identify themselves with the South, despite the relative weakness of slavery’s importance in the Missouri economy. Despite their identification with the South, the bulk of Missouri’s populace was unwilling to declare themselves unequivocal supporters of one side or the other. A general denial of the situation upon the country permeated the state’s debates. Into the tense realm of politics stepped Claiborne Fox Jackson, who declared his pro-secessionist sentiments in his inaugural address.

Chapter II: The Arming of Missouri

In the early months of 1861, states both North and South discussed the topic of secession and made preparations for a possible war. This included organizing, arming, equipping, and training existing state militias and newly-recruited volunteer units. For the developing Southern Confederacy, not only did a new government have to be formed, but a new military organization had to be formed as well. Seceded states either requisitioned arsenals and munitions factories or built them from scratch, commissary departments for clothing and food established, as well as medical corps and hospitals. At the time of Jackson's inauguration, Missouri was already organizing a state convention to decide the issue of secession. The newly-installed governor, with his staunchly pro-secessionist leanings, had to find a way to nudge Missouri towards secession. At the same time, Jackson had to arm and equip the existing Missouri militia as well as make preparations for arming and equipping volunteer organizations that would surely form upon Missouri's secession. Ultimately, Governor Jackson and his fellow secessionists were unable to move Missouri's government and citizenry to support secession in time to adequately organize and arm Missouri's defensive forces.

In the interim between his inauguration and the convention elections, Jackson did not remain idle. Jackson tried his best to remind Missourians of their Southern culture and mobilize them behind the idea of Missouri secession. Lieutenant Governor Thomas C. Reynolds conducted a pro-slavery rally in St. Louis under orders from the governor. Attendees at the rally created the Missouri Minute Men, a paramilitary force dedicated to

cooperation with Missouri's sister slave states.⁷⁰ This group also vowed to take such measures as deemed necessary for mutual protection against the encroachment of Northern fanaticism and the coercion of the Federal Government. Their petition stated specifically that a state or states, "aggrieved by the hostile and unconstitutional acts of the Black Republican Party," had the right to withdraw from the Union.⁷¹ On January 18, Jackson received a commissioner from Mississippi, led him around Jefferson City, and formally introduced him to the general assembly.⁷²

On January 5, Jackson introduced bills into the legislature to arm and equip the state militia and hinder the organization and operation of St. Louis's "Wide Awakes," a pro-Union paramilitary organization made up largely of Germans in the city. A week after the creation of the Minute Men, Jackson requisitioned Missouri's quota of arms from the Federal Ordnance Bureau in Washington, which made Federal military arms available to states for militia use.⁷³ The requisition consisted of 410 smoothbore muskets, 302 rifles, forty cavalry sabers, 160 sets of infantry and cavalry accoutrements, and a gun carriage for a six-pound artillery piece.⁷⁴ The carriage, Jackson hoped, could

⁷⁰ Claiborne Fox Jackson, "To the General Assembly, January 18, 1861," 371 in Buel Leopard (compiler and editor), *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of the State of Missouri*, Volume III (No place given: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1922); Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 238.

⁷¹ "Minute Men Petition," in *Missouri's War*, ed. Siddali, 62-63.

⁷² Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 238.

⁷³ The United States' standing army was still small at this time, in keeping with the principles of the Founding Fathers who viewed large standing militaries with suspicion. When the war finally broke out, the bulk of armies, both North and South, were made up of either volunteers or the various state militia organizations already in existence.

⁷⁴ The size of smoothbore artillery at the time was designated by the weight of a solid, cast iron ball cast to the diameter of the bore.

be used as a model from which more could be built for the cannon barrels already in Missouri's possession.⁷⁵

In February, 1861, Governor Jackson appointed James Harding Missouri state quartermaster-general. Harding's duty was to get Missouri's state arms into some semblance of readiness should Missouri secede. The arms in Missouri's possession at the time were stored underneath the state capital building and according to Harding "were in the most wretched condition."⁷⁶ Harding quickly established an armory and had the flintlock muskets converted to percussion. Under Harding's advisement, the armory also experimented with rifling some of the smoothbores but deemed the results unsatisfactory and left the bulk of them as smoothbores capable of using "buck and ball" loads.⁷⁷ "Buck and ball" loads included one lead ball the size of the bore (most likely .69 caliber) and three smaller buckshot (approximately .31 caliber). Firing multiple projectiles compensated for the inaccuracy of smoothbore muskets. Rifling the muskets would have allowed them to fire the recently developed Minié ball, a conical bullet, making them more accurate at long range.

According to an arms inventory report in January 1860, Harding had at his disposal fourteen cannons, only six of which were mounted on carriages and in serviceable condition. Seven of the cannons, all captured during the Mexican War, were

⁷⁵ Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 238.

⁷⁶ Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 7.

⁷⁷ The flintlock mechanism that had been utilized for over 150 years and literally utilized a piece of flint held in the jaws of the hammer and struck a metal frizzen to produce sparks that landed in an exposed pan of gunpowder and, if lucky, set off the main powder charge. The percussion cap, a copper or brass cup filled with fulminate of mercury, revolutionized firearms as it made the ignition system more weather proof (no external powder charge that could get wet) and more reliable.

sent to a foundry in St. Louis to be recast into four six-pound guns.⁷⁸ There were 950, .58 caliber rifle-muskets; 1,043, .69 caliber smoothbore muskets; 312, .50 caliber rifles; sixty carbines; and seventy-five pistols. In addition to the artillery and small arms, there were 175 sabers, twenty-eight swords, and thirty artillery swords. The latter artillery swords, styled after Roman short swords, were almost useless.⁷⁹

The arms requisitioned and arms already in state stores were not going to be enough for Missouri to be able to equip a force large enough to resist Union advances if the convention chose to secede. Jackson was experienced in military matters already, at least on a small scale, having served with the Howard County, Missouri militia in his younger years. Jackson recognized the shortcomings of the military arms requisition from the Ordnance Department and set his sights on a bigger target: the St. Louis Arsenal. The St. Louis Arsenal was the largest Federal arsenal in any slave state containing an estimated sixty thousand muskets, ninety thousand pounds of gunpowder, 1.5 million ball cartridges, and forty pieces of field artillery.⁸⁰ He sent an emissary, Daniel M. Frost to strike a deal with the commander of the arsenal, William H. Bell, on January 24. Frost was one of Missouri's best resources—he was a graduate of West Point, a state senator, and had commanded a force of over six hundred state militiamen in the Southwest Expedition in December, 1860.⁸¹ Frost succeeded in convincing Bell, a

⁷⁸ "Pound" was the standard method used to denote the size of artillery piece, generally smoothbore. The "pound" referred to the weight of a solid, cast iron projectile the size of the bore.

⁷⁹ Quartermaster General Harding stated in his memoirs that the artillery swords were, "not nearly as useful in service as so many bars of soap." Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 8-10.

⁸⁰ Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 238.

⁸¹ The Southwest Expedition was a Missouri militia maneuver against the jayhawkers in Kansas. The expedition was supposed to engage jayhawker forces and at one point even threatened to invade

North Carolinian, not to resist any attempt made by the governor to seize the arsenal in the event of Missouri's secession. It was not Frost's last involvement with the St. Louis Arsenal. On January 29, the state Senate formally adopted a resolution to resist coercion.⁸²

The secessionists failed to take advantage of the deal struck with Bell, a fact that haunted Brigadier General Harding even after the war. He stated in his memoir his belief that, had the arsenal been seized when the secessionists had their chance, the outcome of the subsequent conflict in Missouri might have been much different. Harding blamed the timidity of the people of Missouri for not seizing the arsenal by force or at least purchasing the arms.⁸³

Jackson's preparations throughout January and February proved to be for naught. The convention candidates were not elected along strict party lines. Conservatives in either party vowed to maintain the Union under any circumstances. States' Rights candidates vowed to vote for secession if elected. The largest group was the Conditional Unionists who would remain part of the Union providing the Federal government did not attempt to interfere with states' rights or use coercion to maintain the Union. The elections took place on February 18, 1860 and proved a disappointment to Jackson and the secessionists. When the votes were counted, Unionism prevailed. Of the 140,000 votes cast, 110,000 went to either Conditional or Unconditional Unionists. In keeping with the trend Missouri showed in the national election in 1860, voters ignored radical

Kansas. The Expedition did not garner any measurable results in the border war, but it did give Frost, along with Missouri's militia, experience at campaigning.

⁸² Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 238-239; Snead *The Fight for Missouri*, 50-51.

⁸³ Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 11-12.

candidates from both sides of the debate. Of the ninety-nine representatives elected, only four were avowed Republicans, all from St. Louis. Not a single openly secessionist candidate received election to one of the ninety-nine seats.⁸⁴

As could be imagined, the State Secession convention proved to be a simple reiteration of the same moderate policies already endorsed by most Missourians. The convention first met in Jefferson City on February 30 and elected Sterling Price, a Conditional Unionist, president. The Convention then reconvened in St. Louis on March 4, the same day as Lincoln's inauguration. On March 9, Judge Gamble, chairman of the Committee of Federal Relations, stated succinctly that, based on the present conditions, Missouri had no adequate reason to secede and that the state's grievances were not yet of a magnitude that rendered a peaceful resolution impossible. The resolution stated further that the committee believed that the Southern states would peacefully reenter the Union if the Crittenden Compromise were adopted and suggested that the General Assembly of Missouri take the necessary steps to organize a convention of states to consider the possibility. If, however, the Northern states refused the compromise and the Southern states continued on their course of secession, they recommended that Missouri stand by her sister Southern states. Only twenty-three of the ninety-nine members voted for the proposition.⁸⁵

Representative James H. Moss was unwilling to openly endorse any measure of secession but put forth a resolution suggesting that Missouri refuse to provide men or money to the federal government to aid in any suppression of the Southern states.

⁸⁴ Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, 53.

⁸⁵ Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, 78-81.

William A. Hall replied that such resolution would enrage the North and encourage the South. Moss' resolution was soundly defeated.⁸⁶ The one policy that all members, even Unconditional Unionists, seemed to agree on was the principle that the federal government had no right to coerce a state. The question was how the federal government could react to an insurrection. James O. Broadhead, an Unconditional Unionist from St. Louis, believed the federal government possessed the right to use force to quell an insurrection. In the end, the Convention adopted Gamble's initial report and resolution and adjourned on March 21.⁸⁷ The Convention had done its job—representing the people of Missouri—and reiterated the basic principle shown in the presidential election of 1860: they believed a peaceful resolution could still be found and did not believe Missouri had sufficient cause to part ways with the Union.

Governor Jackson knew he had failed to unite Missourians behind the banner of secession and tried to bide his time, expecting Missouri eventually to secede. Jackson knew he could not amass a force of pro-secessionist militiamen without drawing the ire of the majority of Missourians. So, Jackson quietly made what preparations he could until he had just cause to call for secession.

On April 12, Confederate forces began bombarding Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. Lincoln called for volunteers from each loyal state, giving each state a quota to fill. It became apparent to all that finding a peaceful resolution to the slavery issue had slipped from the grasp of Americans. On April 15, Governor Jackson received a dispatch from the War Office calling for Missouri to furnish four regiments to put down the

⁸⁶ Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, 81-83. Snead states that Moss was so upset by the ardor of the opposition to his resolution that, when the time came for Missourians to decide which side they were on, Moss raised and commanded a regiment of pro-Union volunteers.

⁸⁷ Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, 87.

insurrection. The request placed Jackson in a difficult position, not because of his personal sentiments, but because the resolution adopted by the State Convention delegation in March stated Missouri should resist any attempts by the federal government to coerce the cotton states. At the same time, the convention delegates feared that refusing aid to a government war effort would in turn encourage the Southern states to end any attempts at finding a peaceful resolution and enrage the federal government. Jackson refused the War Department's call for troops.⁸⁸

In an attempt to acquire more arms, Jackson and other pro-secessionists looked to one of the smaller, more vulnerable arsenals in Missouri. The Liberty Arsenal, in Clay County, Missouri contained a modest store of weapons, ammunition, and artillery. On April 20, two hundred Minute Men and pro-secessionists from Clay and surrounding counties converged on the arsenal. General Nathaniel Grant, officer in command of the arsenal, with only two employees present, lacked the means to resist.⁸⁹ The secessionists held the arsenal for about one week, removing the stores at their leisure. According to one military report, the secessionists seized fifteen hundred muskets and a few cannon which were distributed to citizens in Clay County.⁹⁰ Brigadier General Harding stated that four six-pound artillery pieces complete with carriages with limbers and caissons

⁸⁸ Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson, "Special Session Message, May 3, 1861," 343-348 in Buel Leopard, compiler, *The Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of the State of Missouri*, Volume III (No place given: State Historical Society of Missouri, 1922), 345; a transcript of Jackson's telegram refusing to provide troops can be found in James Peckham, *General Nathaniel Lyon and Missouri in 1861* (New York: American News Company, 1866), 102.

⁸⁹ "Report of Nathaniel Grant of the seizure of the US Arsenal at Liberty, Mo." in United States Department of War, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Volume I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880), 649.

⁹⁰ "Report of Benjamin Farrar of the Seizure of the US Arsenal at Liberty, Mo." in *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. I, 649-650.

were seized in addition to “a small lot” of small arms.⁹¹ Another source stated that three six-pound brass cannons, twelve six-pound iron cannons, one three-pounder iron cannon, five caissons, two battery wagons, two forges, several hundred rounds of artillery ammunition were seized. Some 1,180 percussion muskets, 243 percussion rifles, 121 carbines, twenty musketoons, 923 percussion pistols, 419 cavalry sabers, thirty-nine artillery swords were captured. In addition to arms, one thousand pounds of cannon powder and 11,700 pounds of musket and rifle powder were seized along with 400,000 assembled cartridges, plus accouterments.⁹²

The secessionists distributed the bulk of the munitions seized from the Liberty Arsenal to members of Missouri Minute Men organizations in Clay County. Minute Men Colonel Henry L. Routt converted his ice house into a makeshift armory. They distributed the gun powder around the countryside rather than storing it in the ice house armory or sending it to Jefferson City for storage. The temporary custodians of the powder hid it from Federal authorities in a variety of places, from hay stacks to hollow logs.⁹³ To limit logistical problems, it would have made more sense to store the gunpowder in a more secure, centralized location like Jefferson City where Harding was already organizing Missouri’s military stores. Open warfare against the federal government had yet to reach Missouri, but guerilla warfare measures were being used. Missouri’s secessionists seemed to be concerned about their ability to hold a central supply depot.

⁹¹ Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 10.

⁹² *History of Clay and Platte Counties, Missouri, Written and Compiled from the Most Authentic Official and Private Sources Including a History of their Townships, Towns, and Villages* (St. Louis: National Historical Company, 1885), 196-197.

⁹³ *History of Clay and Platte Counties*, 197.

The first act of hostility to the federal government shocked not only Missourians, but the nation. More paramilitary organizations began to form, both “Home Guard” units—those that supported the Union—and pro-secessionist organizations. The General Assembly adopted new resolutions that condemned the actions of President Lincoln for calling for troops and commended Governor Jackson for his reply to the request. Liberty represented a victory for secessionists in the state, but it also indicated to the federal government that Missouri was slipping from its grasp. Representative William A. Hall predicted early in February that the government saw Missouri as too important a state to lose and would never allow its secession.⁹⁴ His words proved correct.

Governor Jackson and his fellow secessionists knew the arms and accoutrements already in state stores and those seized from the Liberty Arsenal were not enough to arm and equip the militia. They turned their sights again towards the St. Louis Arsenal. The unwillingness of both the Missouri General Assembly and the convention delegates to seize the arsenal, for fear of antagonizing the Union, cost secessionists too much time. The federal government replaced Bell with Lieutenant Nathaniel Lyon, a staunchly pro-Union man.

The federal government could not have found a better man for the job than Nathaniel Lyon. Born in Connecticut on July 14, 1818, he entered the military academy at West Point in 1837. He graduated eleventh in his class of sixty two, serving in the Seminole War before gaining valuable experience in the Mexican War, during which he proved his strength as an officer and organizer. Lyon recruited and trained volunteers before his regiment, the Second US Regulars, moved south to join the invasion forces already assembled at Monterrey. Promoted to first lieutenant, he led his company at

⁹⁴ Snead, *Fight for Missouri*, 62-63.

several battles, including Cerro Gordo. Brevetted to Captain on August 20, 1847 for distinguishing himself in the battles of Contreras and Churubusco, he was wounded at the battle of Belen Gate. After the Mexican War, the military posted Lyon to California where he gained further experience in counter-guerilla tactics fighting against Native Americans. In 1854, Lyon transferred to Kansas, just in time for the Kansas-Nebraska conflict. He spent much of his time in command of forts, not out in the field. Already an ardent anti-slavery man, Lyon's time cooped-up at forts frustrated him. The only activities outside of routine drilling were social events with other officers, many of whom were from the South and decidedly pro-slavery.⁹⁵

Lyon arrived in St. Louis on February 7, 1861 and brought with him practical experience in addition to an ardently anti-slavery, pro-Union attitude that made him a natural ally to Francis Preston Blair, Jr. and his "Wide Awakes." General William Harney, commander of the military's Department of the West, headquartered in St. Louis, placed Lyon in command of the combat troops of the St. Louis Arsenal on March 13. Lyon anticipated the intentions of Governor Jackson and posted night guards outside the perimeter of the arsenal to prevent a night attack, a move that drew the ire of the St. Louis Board of Police, sanctioned and overseen by Jackson.⁹⁶ With his past experience, Lyon aided Blair in recruiting more Union men to paramilitary organizations, especially the

⁹⁵ Kemp, Hardy A., *About Nathaniel Lyon, Brigadier General, United States Army Volunteers and Wilson's Creek*, (Publisher location and company not given, 1978), 25, 27-28, 30-33, 43-50; "To Simon Cameron from Frank P. Blair, March 11, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 656; "To Capt. N. Lyon from S. Williams, March 13, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 658; "To Col. L. Thomas from Wm. S. Harney, March 20, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Col. 3, 658.

⁹⁶ Kemp, *Nathaniel Lyon*, 64-66.

German *Turnverine* societies.⁹⁷ These Union paramilitary societies met in secret and were instructed in military drill by Blair, under the watchful eye of Nathaniel Lyon.⁹⁸

The firing on Fort Sumter in South Carolina and the Minute Men's seizure of the Liberty Arsenal gave Lyon and Blair the leverage to secure arms for their growing military force. Prior to these two events, General Harney had been unwilling to arm either side of the conflict. Blair, with help from powerful friends in Washington, succeeded in convincing the War Department to investigate Harney. On April 21, Harney recalled to Washington to give an account of his conduct.⁹⁹ Still without any formal declaration of secession or approval from the General Assembly, in mid-April, Governor Jackson sent a request for aid to the President Jefferson Davis, asking for artillery to breach the walls of the St. Louis Arsenal.¹⁰⁰

While Harney was in Washington, the War Department placed Lyon in charge of St. Louis, and he received orders to arm the "loyal citizens" of Missouri and recruit four regiments of men. Reveling in their success, Lyon and Blair raised five regiments. The next order Lyon received included more details than the first, and allowed him to raise ten thousand men not already enlisted and granted him the authority to declare martial

⁹⁷ *Turnverines* were gymnasiums where many of St. Louis' German population gathered. They provided excellent recruiting grounds for pro-Unionist Germans during the early stages of the war in Missouri.

⁹⁸ Kemp, *Nathaniel Lyon*, 64-66.

⁹⁹ An order from Harney's office to Lyon flatly refused to allow Lyon to arm anyone without his express orders. "To Capt. N. Lyon from S. Williams, Adjutant-General," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 1, 668. The security of the St. Louis Arsenal had been a concern of the War Department since January and Harney was expected to do what whatever was necessary to maintain control of the arsenal, less it should fall into secessionist hands. Harney and continually assured his superiors that the arsenal was secure and refused to arm Blair's men. "Brig. Gen. William S. Harney from L. Thomas, Adjut. Gen., January 26, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 53; "To Lieut. Col. L. Thomas, Assist. Adj. Gen., from Wm. S. Harney, February 19, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 1, 654.

¹⁰⁰ Louis S. Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2001), 93.

law whenever he deemed necessary. The order also authorized him to remove from the arsenal any arms and munitions not immediately needed for his own force and transfer them to Springfield, Illinois for safe keeping. On April 26, all arms not needed by Lyon and Blair's men were removed across the Mississippi River.¹⁰¹ This last order proved disastrous for Missouri's secessionists and essential for Missouri's loyalists.

After learning of the removal of arms from the arsenal, Jackson ordered Harding to St. Louis with instructions to purchase whatever camp equipment, arms, and ammunition he could. Jackson also gave Harding the power to call upon the district's militia if he needed assistance. In two instances, when purchasing gun powder, Harding utilized a force of militia to break open stores of gun powder. He purchased a total of seventy tons of gunpowder, totaling some sixty-five thousand dollars. Harding placed the gunpowder on steam boats and sent it up the Missouri River to Jefferson City under escort of Captain Joseph Kelly and the Washington Blues.¹⁰²

Harding purchased any and all arms available, "principally hunting rifles," the bulk of which were purchased from Child, Pratt, & Fox. From the latter company, Harding also purchased tools and material for the armory being assembled in Jefferson City. Presumably many of the hunting rifles he purchased were still flintlocks, as he states that he also purchased tools and parts from Remington's in New York for converting the arms to percussion ignition. He spent nearly ten thousand dollars on camp

¹⁰¹ Kemp, *Nathaniel Lyon*, 65-67; Peckham, *Lyon and Missouri*, 118-119; "To Capt. N. Lyon from L. Thomas, Adjut. Gen., April 21, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 1, 670.

¹⁰² Of his estimated 65,000 dollars worth of gunpowder purchased, Harding states that some 40,000 dollars were repaid on his certificates and another 10,000 dollars was later awarded by the legislature for repayment. Some 15,000 dollars was left unpaid as of the writing of his memoirs in 1885. Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 12-13.

equipment, including blankets, cloth, and clothes and contracted with a maker in St. Louis for four thousand sets of infantry accouterments.¹⁰³

Hunting guns were not going to be enough to face the expected Union onslaught that would come if Missouri did secede. Hunting rifles required the lead ball (the most common projectile at the time) to fit tightly down the bore of the rifle. Generally wrapped in a piece of thin cloth or leather, the bullet was hard to ram down a clean barrel and after several shots, the black powder fouling often made the weapon difficult to load. The caliber varied as well, from .32 or .36 caliber “squirrel rifles” to .44 caliber, .50 caliber, and larger, making supplying ammunition in the field difficult if not impossible.¹⁰⁴ Hunting shotguns were smoothbore and had the same shortcomings as smoothbore muskets: accuracy and range. Intended for shooting birds on the fly or rabbits and squirrels on the run, shotguns generally used a charge of shot pellets, but could be loaded with a solid lead slug for bigger game like deer. Even using slugs, shotguns were still limited in range. As with rifle calibers, shotgun bore sizes varied, which meant that not every shotgun took the same charge of powder or same diameter of slug, making supplying and army in the field difficult.

Around May 1, Jackson called out the Missouri State Militia around St. Louis to drill. His initial intent, rendered mute by the removal of arms, had been to seize the arsenal. Now, Jackson and Frost determined simply to hold a militia camp as a show of strength. Under the command of General Daniel Frost, the militia established Camp

¹⁰³ Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 13. Accoutrements, vital pieces of military equipment, generally included a waist belt, cartridge box and cartridge box sling, cap box (for storing percussion caps), and possibly a bayonet scabbard.

¹⁰⁴ A good description of the variety of hunting and target rifles in the Trans-Mississippi region at this time can be found in Ware, *Lyon Campaign in Missouri*, 15-16.

Jackson on May 6, some four-and-a-half miles from the arsenal. With Captain Kelly's Washington Blues detached to guard the gunpowder Harding had acquired in St. Louis, some 630 men were left at Camp Jackson.¹⁰⁵ Not all of the Missouri militiamen encamped in Camp Jackson were secessionists; many were Union men already in the militia.

Using the St. Louis police board, Frost and Jackson protested Lyon's posting of guards outside the arsenal on Missouri soil. Lyon refused to remove the guards. During the night of May 8, the steamboat *J.C. Swon* arrived in St. Louis with a number of large crates marked "Tamoroa [marble], care of Greely & Gale, Saint Louis." The "intended" recipients were two well-known Union men. In actuality, the crates contained siege weaponry seized by Confederate forces from the Federal arsenal in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, requested by Jackson a few weeks earlier. The exact arms contained in the crates is disputed, but they included two or three twelve-pound howitzers, one or two thirty-two-pound mortars, five hundred muskets, and a substantial amount of ammunition General Lyon described as being contained in ale barrels.¹⁰⁶

The seizure of the St. Louis Arsenal, feared by the US War Department, Captain Lyon, and Frank Blair since January, seemed to be finally at hand. Lyon debated seizing the *Swon* before it offloaded its cargo but decided against it after consulting with Blair.

¹⁰⁵ "From the Reminiscence and Diary of William Jeffery Bull," Michael E. Banasik, editor, *Missouri Brothers in Gray: The Reminiscences and Letters of William J. Bull and John P. Bull* (Iowa City, IA: Camp Pope Bookshop, 1998), 4-5; William E. Parrish, *Frank Blair: Lincoln's Conservative* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), 100; Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, 162-164.

¹⁰⁶ Parrish, *Frank Blair: Lincoln's Conservative*, 100; a transcript of Jefferson Davis' reply to Jackson's request for siege weapons, dated April 23, stated that the Confederate government would send two twelve-pound howitzers, two thirty-two pound mortars, and "proper ammunition for each" quoted in Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, 168; In his report to the War Office, dated May 11, 1861, Captain Lyon stated his understanding that he *Swon* carried "three 32-pounder guns, one mortar, three mortar beds, and a large supply of shot and shells in ale barrels." "Report of Captain Nathaniel Lyon, Second US Infantry, Saint Louis Arsenal, May 11, 1861," p. 4-5 in *Official Records*, Series I, Volume III.

Allowing the cargo to be delivered to Camp Jackson would give him the evidence of the camp's treasonous intentions.¹⁰⁷ Lyon became determined to seize the camp and its store of weapons.

May 10, 1861 proved a fateful day for Missouri's course in the war. General Frost sent a message to Captain Lyon inquiring about rumors that Lyon and his forces of US regulars and volunteer home guardsmen intended to attack Camp Jackson. Frost reassured Lyon that rumors of an impending attack upon the arsenal by Missouri Militia were false: "as far as I can learn (and I think I am fully informed), of any other part of the State forces, I can say positively that the idea has never been entertained."¹⁰⁸ Frost perhaps did not know that Lyon knew of the arrival of Confederate munitions, or if he did, was desperately trying to avoid a conflict he knew he could not win. Lyon and Blair's forces far exceeded his and were authorized and armed by the federal government.

Lyon's reply was succinct. He regarded Frost's command as "evidently hostile" towards the US government, the majority being avowed secessionists. He also stated his knowledge of Frost's communications with the Confederacy and the arms they just received. Lyon demanded Frost surrender his command with the promise that he and his men would be humanely treated, giving Frost one half hour to comply.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ There is a rumor that on May 9, Lyon personally toured Camp Jackson disguised as a woman. James Peckham, *General Nathaniel Lyon and Missouri in 1861* (New York: American news Company, 1866), 136-140. Peckham states that among the things Lyon saw in the camp were company streets marked with homemade signs which included "Beauregard Avenue" and "Davis Avenue." Others dispute this rumor since Lyon had a full, red beard. Sean McLachlan, *Missouri: An Illustrated History* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 2008), 127-128.

¹⁰⁸ Brigadier General D.M. Frost, "Hdqrs. Camp Jackson, Missouri Militia, May 10, 1861," in Siddali, *Missouri's War*, 66.

¹⁰⁹ Captain N. Lyon, "Headquarters United States Troops, St. Louis, Mo., May 10, 1861" in Siddali, *Missouri's War*, 67-68.

Lyon, spurred on by the imminent return of General Harney and his fear of missing an opportunity to punish suspected secessionists, lost no time in preparing to enforce his demand. Frost failed to comply with Lyon's demand to surrender, and at 3:15pm, Lyon and two regiments of volunteer Home Guard, many of them German immigrants (derogatorily referred to as "Dutch" by "native" Americans) and two companies of US regulars surrounded Camp Jackson. Fifty officers and 639 militiamen were taken prisoner. According to Lyon's account, his forces seized twelve-hundred .58 caliber rifle muskets (cutting-edge muskets for the time), six brass field artillery pieces, twenty-five kegs of gun powder, thirty to forty horses, and several chests of arms that included more rifle muskets. Brigadier General Harding's account of the arms lost differs from Lyon's. Harding stated that the arms lost by Missouri at Camp Jackson were: 560 rifle muskets, 410 muskets, sixty carbines, five cannons, seventy-five pistols, and 135 sabers.¹¹⁰ Some of the discrepancies in numbers can be attributed to Harding's probable lack of knowledge of the exact arms sent from Baton Rouge. In either case, the loss represented a considerable loss to the already suffering supplies of Missouri's State Militia and the burgeoning secessionist cause.

Though a significant number of state arms were lost at Camp Jackson, the events that followed the capture of Frost's command gave Governor Jackson and the secessionists an outrage to exploit in mobilizing Missourians against the federal government. After Frost's men surrendered their arms, Lyon's Home Guard marched

¹¹⁰Frost's men, vastly outnumbered, surrendered peacefully, with no shots fired. "Reminiscence and Diary of Wm. J. Bull," Banasik, *Missouri Brothers in Gray*, 11-12; "The Camp Jackson and Walnut Street Tragedies—Evidence of the Inquest—Verdict in the Camp Jackson Affra" article in the *Daily Missouri Republican* (St. Louis, MO), May 15, 1861, Page 3, Column 5-7. State Historical Society of Missouri Digital Heritage Collection, Accessed February 14, 2015; Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 10; Nathaniel Lyon, "Report of Nathaniel Lyon, Second US Infantry, St. Louis Arsenal, May 11, 1861," in *Official Records*, 4-5; Peckham, *Lyon and Missouri*, 160-161.

them through the streets of St. Louis, back to the arsenal. Along the way, crowds gathered to watch the proceedings. A mob of secessionists began scolding the Union forces, calling them “damned sons of bitches,” “sour-kraut Dutchmen,” and shouts of “Hurrah for Jeff Davis” went up. One witness testified afterwards that a company of the Home Guard attempted to disperse the crowd with a bayonet charge. Some in the crowd began to throw stones. A secessionist fatally shot one of the home guard officers and another officer ordered his men to open fire. Twenty-eight citizens died, two women and a small child among them, with another seventy-five wounded.¹¹¹

On May 3, Governor Jackson addressed the General Assembly, meeting in secret session. He reiterated his opinion on the state of the country and his refusal to supply Missouri’s quota of volunteers to suppress the burgeoning rebellion. He ended his address with the recommendation of an appropriations bill to place Missouri “...in a complete state of defense.”¹¹² Among the items under consideration was a military bill to overhaul the Missouri Militia. To that point, the military bill had made little progress against members who questioned the need of secession, but on receipt of news of Lyon’s capture of Camp Jackson, and rumors that Frank Blair and two regiments of Volunteers were on their way to Jefferson City, the opposition relented and the bill passed both houses of legislature on May 10. Governor Jackson signed the bill into law on May 11,

¹¹¹ “Reminiscence of Wm. J. Bull,” Banasik, *Missouri Brothers in Gray*, 12-13; Some witnesses testified to seeing Home Guard soldiers bayoneting wounded citizens. Quotes of what the crowd said can be found in the testimony of Patrick Connelan in the testimony in “The Camp Jackson and Walnut Street Tragedies,” *Daily Missouri Republican*; Nathaniel Lyon, “Report of Nathaniel Lyon, Second US Infantry, St. Louis Arsenal, May 11, 1861,” in *Official Records*, 4-5; Lyon’s account of the shooting incident can be found in Peckham, *Lyon and Missouri*, 154-155.

¹¹² Governor Jackson, “Special Session Message, May 3, 1861” in *Messages and Proclamations*, 343-348.

1861.¹¹³ The Camp Jackson affair pushed many of Missouri's fence-sitters to finally choose a side.

The Military Bill officially disbanded the Missouri State Militia and reformed it into the Missouri State Guard. The name change is significant as the Missouri State Militia could, and had, been called on by the federal government for national defense. Now, with Missouri sworn to armed neutrality and resistance against coercion by the federal government the force's goal became defense of the state. Governor Jackson and Lieutenant Governor Thomas Cate Reynolds hoped to create a mass insurrection across Missouri, raising local military organizations that could harass and destroy Lyon's forces should Lyon attempt to leave St. Louis to capture Jefferson City. Once the MSG was successfully assembled, they could then draw Lyon's forces out of St. Louis and cut off his supplies. Constantly harassed and lacking supplies, Lyon's army could then be destroyed and the state legislature granted the time to vote for secession.¹¹⁴ Their plan overlooked the vulnerable geographic position of Missouri, surrounded on three sides by Union states—Illinois to the east, Iowa to the north, Kansas to the west, and the Nebraska Territory to the northwest. Though Lyon seemed to be the imminent (and most dangerous) threat, when the invasion came, it came not only from St. Louis in the east, but from Iowa and Kansas as well.

The Military Bill divided Missouri into nine "military districts," the basic level of organization of Missouri State Guard regiments. The government commissioned A.E. Steen, William Y. Slack, Thomas A. Harris, M.M. Parsons, James H. McBride, and John

¹¹³ Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, 172-173.

¹¹⁴ Albert Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 27-28.

B. Clark, James S. Tains, and M. Jeff Thompson as division commanders.¹¹⁵ Section 135 read that the MSG forces could be called out to maintain public tranquility, suppress riots, rebellion, or insurrection, or repel invasion. The sizes of companies of all branches of the military (infantry, cavalry, and artillery) were specifically outlined. Provisions for the acquisition of armaments were drawn out. Once a district commander formed a company of men, he filled out a requisition form for arms and sent it to the quartermaster general, along with a bond to the state equal in price of the arms requested. Should the quartermaster be lacking in arms, he was to file the requisition away and fill them in order of first received as arms were procured. The bill also established uniform guidelines and required they be maintained throughout the unit's service. In addition, thirty thousand dollars were appropriated to Governor Jackson to carry out the provisions.¹¹⁶

The Military Bill and its connotations were a bold move on the part of the Missouri General Assembly, something that the secessionists in Missouri had waited for several months to see. Unfortunately for secessionists, Missouri had lost too much time during which it could have been preparing like the rest of the states. Despite the bold statement made with the Military Bill, Governor Jackson and the secessionists were not confident in their ability to hold Jefferson City. Rumors reached the capital that Lyon and Blair were marching on Jefferson City with three thousand men. Jackson sent detachments to the railroad bridges over the Osage and Gasconade Rivers. Under

¹¹⁵ Steen and Thompson were commissioned after the first choices declined or were removed from service. Harding, *Service With the Missouri State Guard*, 18.

¹¹⁶ General Assembly of Missouri, *An Act to Provide for the Organization, Government, and Support of the Military Forces: State of Missouri Passed at the Called Session of the Twenty-First General Assembly* (Jefferson City, MO: I.P. Ament, Public Printer, 1861), 3-5, 38-42, 44-45, 69, 191; Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, 173.

Jackson's orders, a detachment burned the Osage River bridge and eventually the Gasconade bridge. The stores of gunpowder, stored at the fairgrounds just north of the city, were hurriedly taken from the capital and hidden at a number of remote locations and the state treasury funds hidden away.¹¹⁷

A day or two after the Camp Jackson affair and the passage of the Military Bill, Sterling Price met with Governor Jackson and Lieutenant Governor Reynolds. After making assurances that he was staunchly pro-secessionist, Jackson appointed him overall commander of the Missouri State Guard. Price—attempting to remedy the lack of a proper commissary department, medical corps, camp equipage, or supplies—appointed Richard “Dick” Gains and A.W. Jones as aids. Dr. William N. Snodgrass became surgeon-in-chief and Colonel John Reid of Lexington his chief of commissary. To help the inexperienced Quartermaster Harding, Harry Dwyer served as assistant quartermaster general.¹¹⁸ From his headquarters in Jefferson City, on May 16, Major General Sterling Price released a call to arms for Missouri via telegraph. A copy of the handbill produced from this call to arms, from Polk County, called for each recruit to bring with him a blanket and a good rifle.¹¹⁹ Organization was slowly coming together.

In the days that followed, volunteers arrived in Jefferson City, ready to join the MSG. The first to arrive were five companies commanded by Captain Robert McCulloch

¹¹⁷ C.J. Corwin, “Early War Days in Missouri,” published in the *Missouri Republican*, November 28, 1885 in Michael E. Banasik (editor), *Confederate “Tales of the War” in the Trans Mississippi, Part One: 1861*, (Iowa City, IA: Camp Pope Bookshop, 2010), 17-22; Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 17-18; Peckham, *Lyon and Missouri*, 167-168; Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, 173-174.

¹¹⁸ Dwyer had experience in the US Army Quartermaster department. McGhee, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 20, 22.

¹¹⁹ General Sterling Price, “War, War! War!” Confederate “Call to Arms” from Missouri in 1861 recruitment poster, from the Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield Library Vertical Files Collection.

of Cooper County. One company of Independence Grays, a prewar militia unit, reported in full dress uniform, bringing with them four, six-pound artillery pieces captured from the Liberty Arsenal and subsequently made part of Parson's division. Among the troops gathered were Captain Kelly's Washington Blues, still on assignment to guard the gun powder purchased by General Harding in St. Louis, an assignment that spared them from being present at Camp Jackson. Kelly's men, well uniformed and drilled, became the nucleus of the growing MSG force. Stores began running advertisements for military goods: guns, gun powder, ammunition, and foodstuffs like ham and bacon, and military manuals.¹²⁰

General William Harney returned to St. Louis from his trip to Washington on May 12, 1861 and reported for duty. Upon his return, Harney called Blair to the arsenal and attempted to disband the Home Guard forces. After a lengthy conversation, it became apparent to Harney that he held no control over the Home Guard. Publically, Harney denounced Lyon's actions at Camp Jackson. He assured the people of Missouri that his forces would be used to keep the peace only if absolutely necessary and that only the US Regulars, not the controversial Home Guard, would be used under such circumstances.¹²¹ In a message to General Winfield Scott, however, Harney condoned Lyon's Actions. At the same time, Harney condemned the new Military Bill in a proclamation to the people of Missouri. Harney declared the bill a secessionist ordinance and in direct opposition to the Constitution of the United States.¹²²

¹²⁰ Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 19-20; Examples for such advertisements can be found on Page 4, Columns 2-3 of the *Daily Missouri Republican*, May 15, 1861.

¹²¹ Transcript of Harney's proclamation to the people of Missouri can be found in Peckham, *Lyon and Missouri*, 185-186.

¹²² Kemp, *Lyon and Wilson's Creek*, 80.

Harney used several companies of his regulars, now posted in St. Louis, to search out stores of secessionist arms. Over the course of the week after his arrival, the Safety Committee (a Unionist organization) provided tips on locations of arms stores. A search of the state tobacco warehouse and another building on Chestnut Street produced twelve-hundred rifled muskets, two cannons, and a number of rifles. Secessionists continued to try to secure arms and ammunition in any way possible, concealing them in bales of hay, boxes of soap, even in barrels of molasses. On May 12, Lyon completed the paroling of the prisoners seized at Camp Jackson, returning them to their homes after swearing loyalty to the Union. Only one man, Captain Emmett McDonald refused to be paroled, and remained incarcerated in the arsenal.¹²³

News of outrages perpetrated by secessionists against unionists reached Harney almost daily. Harney, a Tennessean by birth, but a Union man in persuasion, believed that an agreement could be reached that could diffuse the situation in Missouri. Price held a different motive. Price knew that the MSG needed as much time as it could get to organize, arm, train, and gather provisions, and the General Assembly needed time to meet, discuss, and, hopefully, pass an act of secession. On May 21, Generals Harney and Price met at the Planter House in St. Louis and signed the “Price-Harney Truce.” Harney, speaking for the government, agreed to respect the neutrality of the state of Missouri. Price and the Missouri government were to be the main guardians of the peace, though Harney and the US regulars would be available to provide aid if need be. Price

¹²³ Though paroled, the militiamen were required to stay in St. Louis until officially exchanged. William J. Bull said they did not reach Price’s camp until early December. “Reminiscence and Diary of Wm. J. Bull,” Banasik, *Missouri Brothers in Gray*, 12-13; Peckham, *Lyon in Missouri*, 189-190.

agreed not to organize the MSG and subsequently sent them home.¹²⁴ One recruit, R.C. Carter, joined a company from Millersberg, Missouri and his company was officially enrolled in Jefferson City. When they were sent home following the Price-Harney Truce, Governor Jackson told them to drill two or three days a week and stay ready to respond to a call to action that could come at any moment.¹²⁵ Both pro-Union and pro-Secessionist meetings were to be avoided.¹²⁶ Unionists like Lyon and Blair did not agree with Harney's actions and did not believe that Jackson and Price would give up their plans that easily.

Blair believed Harney could be made a solid Union man if surrounded by the right people, but feared that his heritage as a Tennessean threatened to cloud his judgment. To Blair, Harney had proven too much of a risk to the Union cause.¹²⁷ On May 20, Blair received dispatches from Washington, among them a notification of Lyon's promotion to Brigadier-General of Volunteers, signed by Secretary of War, Simon Cameron.¹²⁸ Among the dispatches was Special Order Number 135, relieving Brigadier-General Harney from command of the Department of the West and granting him a leave of absence for the time

¹²⁴ Peckham, *Lyon in Missouri*, 202-203; Transcript of the Price-Harney Truce in Official Records, Series 1, Volume 3, 374-375

¹²⁵ R.C. Carter, "A Short Sketch of My Experiences During the First Stages of the Civil War," State Historical Society of Missouri Historical Manuscripts Collection, 1.

¹²⁶ Peckham, *Lyon in Missouri*, 202-203; Transcript of the Price-Harney Truce in Official Records, Series 1, Volume 3, 374-375.

¹²⁷ A series of communications between Blair, Benjamin Farrar, and Franklin Dick about their distrust of Harney and their belief that Lyon was the best man to command the Military in St. Louis can be found in Peckham, *Lyon in Missouri*, 192-198.

¹²⁸ Parrish, *Frank Blair*, 105; A transcript of Lyon's promotion can be found in Peckham, *Lyon and Missouri*, 209.

being.¹²⁹ A personal letter from President Lincoln to Blair was also included. In the letter, Lincoln stated his knowledge of the inclusion of the order relieving Harney from command, to be “delivered or withheld in your [Blair’s] discretion...I wish you would withhold it, unless in your judgment the necessity to the contrary is very urgent.”¹³⁰ Above all, Lincoln wanted to ensure that an unwavering Unionist commanded the military forces in St. Louis and left it to Blair to make the decision.

On May 29, General Harney sent a dispatch to Lieutenant Colonel E.D. Townshend at Army general headquarters in Washington. He stated that, thanks to his decisions, “Missouri is fast becoming tranquilized.”¹³¹ It proved his ignorance of the situation between he, Blair, Price, Jackson, and Washington. Missouri was anything but tranquil. Though Price had disbanded most of the forces gathered in Jefferson City, the MSG continued preparations. The day after the signing of the Price-Harney Truce, secessionists seized fifteen thousand pounds of lead at Lebanon. Seventeen kegs of powder arrived via the South West Branch mail, delivered to secessionists. A secessionist mob, under command of M. Jeff Thompson, tore down the US flag above the a post office in St. Louis and replaced it with a “State rights flag.” On May 24, Harney sent a letter to Price, inquiring about rumors that arms were arriving from Arkansas (being secured by Lieutenant Governor Reynolds) and a force of Confederates moving into northern Arkansas. Harney asked if Price wished for him to post a regiment on the southern border of Missouri to intercept such shipments and monitor troop movements.

¹²⁹ War Department Adjutant General’s Office, “Special Order No. 135,” *Official Records*, Series 1, Volume 3, 374.

¹³⁰ “To Francis P. Blair, Jr.,” in Abraham Lincoln, *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 373.

¹³¹ “May 29, 1861 letter from Brigadier General William S. Harney to Lieutenant Colonel E.D. Townsend,” in *Official Records*, Series 1, Volume 3, 377.

Price stated that the rumors were false and reassured Harney that the MSG forces already assembled were being dismissed, as per the agreement.¹³² The situation in Missouri slowly spiraled out of control despite Harney's efforts to control the situation.

The Price-Harney Truce, coupled with the continuing news of MSG attempts to organize and equip their forces and Harney's failure to stop them, outraged Missouri Unionists. The situation gave Blair the evidence needed to use Special Order Number 135. St. Louis' Major Benjamin Farrar—one of Blair's most trusted Unionists—delivered the message to Harney on May 30, the day after Harney's hopeful message to Washington. Blair immediately sent a letter to Lincoln informing Lincoln of his decision to remove Harney from command, ascribing much of the blame to the Price-Harney Truce. The newly-promoted Brigadier General Lyon took command of the Department of the West.¹³³

From January to May, 1861, Governor Jackson attempted to convince Missourians that secession was the proper course of action in response to the election of Abraham Lincoln. Missourians continually proved their unwillingness to secede from the Union, at least without more cause. The Missouri State Convention delegation and the General Assembly's unwillingness to support more radical actions, like seizing the St. Louis Arsenal in January, left Missouri woefully unprepared for the coming struggle. They carried out what little preparations they could—forming the Missouri Minute Men, seizing the Liberty Arsenal, taking stock of state armaments, and corresponding with the Confederate government. Missouri's slowness to action allowed the Union to place in St.

¹³²The series of communications between Harney and Price can be found in: *Official Records*, Series I, Vol. 3, 378-380.

¹³³Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon, "General Orders, No. 5, Hdqts. Department of the West," *Official Records*, 381; Parrish, *Frank Blair*, 106-107.

Louis Nathaniel Lyon, a man strictly Unionist and with the aid of Frank Blair, prepare to resist and foil any attempt made by Governor Jackson to seize the vital arms stores in the St. Louis Arsenal. This left Missouri's secessionist army underequipped.

By the time the Camp Jackson affair occurred, the initiative was lost and secessionists had to rush preparations. The passage of the Military Bill gave the governor and newly-appointed General Sterling Price the authorization and funds needed but could not grant them the time to carry it out. The return of General Harney, and the Price-Harney Truce, provided the growing Missouri State Guard forces a temporary reprieve from a potentially imminent attack on Jefferson City. The US War Department's replacement of Harney left Missouri in an uncertain position.

Chapter III: The Fate of Missouri

The War Department's replacement of General William Harney with General Nathaniel Lyon left Missouri's growing secessionist movement—both military and political—in an uncertain position. Throughout the preceding four months, Lyon had proven himself to be a Union zealot and staunch supporter of Frank Blair. After Camp Jackson, the Missouri government feared Lyon and Blair would march up the Missouri River and attack Jefferson City. At that time, Jefferson City was completely unprepared to resist any attack, as for the past four months the Legislature had refused to grant any funds or formally approve the organization of Missouri Militia forces. Only with Harney's return from Washington did Jackson and Price receive time to start organizing the Missouri State Guard. The Price-Harney Agreement, though carried out by Harney with full faith, was used by Price as a way to buy Missouri more time to organize. With Lyon back in command of the Department of the West, Missouri's time to organize became limited. The placement of Sterling Price in command of the poorly-supplied MSG forces, coupled with Lyon's swift attack and the unpreparedness of Missouri, proved disastrous for Missouri and the Confederate cause there.

Sterling Price differed greatly from his Union counterpart, General Nathaniel Lyon, both in experiences and personality. Price was born in Virginia in 1809 to moderately wealthy slave-owners and immigrated with his parents to Missouri around 1830. In 1833, he married and settled down on a small farm in Chariton County, just north of the Missouri River in the influential and prosperous Boon's Lick Region. By 1840, Price owned several dozen slaves and had established himself as a prosperous tobacco planter. That same year, he was elected to the state legislature. In 1842, he

became Speaker of the House, and in 1844 he secured a seat in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. After failing to secure re-nomination, Price resigned his seat in anger in 1846 and returned to Missouri, accepting a commission as a colonel of a Missouri volunteer regiment during the Mexican War.¹³⁴

Price's Mexican War experience differed greatly from Nathaniel Lyon's. In September 1846, Price arrived in Santa Fe and took command of the occupying forces in New Mexico. In early 1847, Price put down two Pueblo Indian insurrections, acting largely on his own initiative and exceeding his orders. During this time, he developed a reputation for lax discipline, a tendency to quarrel with his fellow officers, and a penchant for acting in an independent, often insubordinate, fashion. Lieutenant Governor Reynolds recalled in his memoirs a dinner party he threw in 1860 during which Price discussed his service in the Mexican War. Reynolds described Price as having taken great pride in his insubordinate actions during his time in New Mexico—most likely a reference to his actions during the Pueblo uprisings.¹³⁵ This attitude foreshadowed his future military endeavors.

Price returned from New Mexico with the brevet rank of brigadier general and an enhanced reputation. He became one of the largest land-holders in Missouri, but his taste for lavish-living put him in great debt. The Missouri Democratic Party split in 1849 over the issue of slavery. Price avoided the subject for several years before coming out in support of slavery, alienating his former mentor, Thomas H. Benton, but securing his nomination and election for governor in 1853 after the anti-Benton faction seized control

¹³⁴ Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West*, 1-4.

¹³⁵ Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West*, 4-5; Thomas C. Reynolds, *General Sterling Price and the Confederacy*, edited by Robert G. Schultz (St. Louis: Missouri History Museum, 2009 (orig. pub. 1904), 11, 14.

of the Democratic Party. Price gained a reputation for sagacity, secrecy, and an ability to sense the winning trend and unabashedly acted accordingly, causing his opponents to accuse him of double-dealing.¹³⁶

Price, like Claiborne Jackson, supported the efforts of his fellow slave-holders during the early stages of the border war with Kansas following the passage of the Kansas Nebraska Act in 1854. Though, as governor, he did not actively aid the pro-slavery settlers, he did nothing to curtail the violence. In 1855, he endorsed a resolution declaring that, should Congress refuse Kansas' admittance as a slave state, it would mean the destruction of the Union.¹³⁷

Price left the governorship in 1857 and made a failed attempt at securing a seat in the US Senate. He left politics for a time but returned in 1860 to back Stephen Douglas for president as Chariton County's delegate to the Democratic state convention. Price also wanted to run for governor. Upon hearing of his financial woes, friends convinced him to back Claiborne F. Jackson for governor with the promise that Price would be appointed bank commissioner, the best paying job in Missouri. Jackson won, Price was appointed, and the paychecks arrived in time to save him from financial ruin.¹³⁸

During the Missouri Secession Crisis in early 1861, Price's constituents elected him their delegate to the state convention as a Conditional Unionist. During the convention, he made several "ultra-union" speeches to the astonishment of secessionist friends and constituents. In reality, Price, always the shrewd politician, assessed the

¹³⁶ Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West*, 5-6.

¹³⁷ Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West*, 6; McPherson, *Ordeal By Fire*, 101-104.

¹³⁸ Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West*, 6-7; Reynolds, *General Sterling Price and the Confederacy*, 20-21.

situation and ensured his alignment with the winning side of the debate. The Conditional Unionist majority elected him president of the convention in February, and the records of his subsequent votes at the convention attest to his pro-Union sentiments. He did stray from his unionist stances when he voted for the resolution calling for Missouri's secession should the other border states (Maryland and Kentucky) secede.¹³⁹

After the Camp Jackson Affair, when events and public sentiment seemed to be swinging to the side of the secessionists in Missouri, Price shifted his stance accordingly. After assuring Governor Jackson and Lt. Governor Reynolds of his support for Southern rights, he received his commission as Major General of the Missouri State Guard. In December 1862, just prior to his death, Jackson reportedly admitted to a friend, R.H. Musser, that the "greatest mistake of his life was the appointment of General Price to command the Missouri State Guard: but that he discovered his error too late to remedy it."¹⁴⁰ After the removal of Harney from command, Price found himself in direct opposition to a man vastly different than himself. Where Lyon had learned organizational skills and had proven himself a trustworthy, disciplined subordinate during the Mexican War, Price had showed a love of insubordination. During the Kansas-Missouri border war, Lyon showed himself to be an unwavering abolitionist and Unionist who refused to compromise his beliefs, while Price refused to aid or inhibit the actions of his fellow slave holders.

General Price assumed the Price-Harney Truce to be dissolved with the removal of General Harney from command and the appointment of General Lyon in his place on

¹³⁹ Reynolds, *General Sterling Price and the Confederacy*, 24.

¹⁴⁰ Reynolds, *General Sterling Price and the Confederacy*, 20-31.

May 31. Their time to prepare cut short, the MSG faced over ten thousand men armed men St. Louis. In one last attempt to buy time, Governor Jackson and General Price met with Lyon and Blair at the Planters' House Hotel in St. Louis on June 11. Lyon opened the meeting but insisted Blair was the better man to conduct the proceedings. Lyon's zeal, however, got the better of him and he soon took the role of conductor. After four or five hours of discussion with Jackson and Price, Lyon lost his composure. He bluntly stated that, rather than allow the state of Missouri to dictate demands and place limitations on the US government, he would rather see every man, woman, and child of Missouri dead. Lyon pointed at Jackson and declared, "This means war," and turned and exited the room.¹⁴¹

Jackson had earlier ordered Harding to organize the state armory and laboratory in a permanent location in Boonville, just northwest of Jefferson City, where he and Price believed it would be safest for them to organize their forces. After overseeing the relocation of arms, tools, and workmen, Harding returned to Jefferson City and met the steamer carrying Governor Jackson, General Price, and Captain Kelly's Washington Blues, returning from their ill-fated meeting with General Lyon.¹⁴²

Price and Jackson knew they had to gather as many war materials and men as they could from the rich, slave holding Boon's Lick region before Lyon launched an offensive. On June 12, Governor Jackson issued a proclamation calling for Missouri to assemble fifty thousand men. At the same time, General Price issued orders to the commanders of the nine military districts to assemble their forces for active duty. He

¹⁴¹ William Garrett Piston and Thomas P. Sweeney, "'Don't Yield an Inch': The Missouri State Guard" p. 10-26 in *North and South*, Vol. 2, Number 5, June 1999, copy from the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Library Vertical Files Collection, 16, 20; Snead, *Fight for Missouri*, 199-200.

¹⁴² Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 8-9, 26.

ordered the troops from the third district to form themselves in Boonville. Up to this point, some attempt had been made by the quartermaster department to keep the volunteer companies armed with some semblance of uniformity of weapons, even if those weapons were civilian arms. Now, under imminent threat of attack from Lyon, they abandoned the goal of uniformity in exchange for anything the men could muster. Without any semblance of an organized commissary department and the quartermaster department lacking quantity and quality equipment, the commanders of volunteer companies cleared out the goods of their local country stores, pressing into service anything remotely usable.¹⁴³

With his men already prepared for action in St. Louis, Lyon wasted no time in launching an offensive. Using the river system to his advantage, on June 15, just four days after the disastrous Planters' House meeting, Lyon's forces arrived in Jefferson City by steamer. The Missouri General Assembly, fearing the wrath of Lyon, fled, becoming a "legislature in exile." An ill Sterling Price fled the capital earlier that day on a steamer bound for Lexington, Missouri, leaving Colonel John S. Marmaduke in command of the State Guard forces formed in Boonville. Fortunately for the Missouri State Guard, Jackson used discretion in appointing district commanders, selecting men with military experience.¹⁴⁴ The experience of its military commanders proved to be an important factor in keeping together the MSG in the confusion that followed the seizure of Jefferson City.

¹⁴³ Gerteis, *Civil War Missouri*, 30, 32-33; In his memoirs, Quartermaster Harding says that everything of any real or imaginable use was purchased or requisitioned, from hair oil and cravats to side saddles and women's hose and shoes. McGhee, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 23,25-26.

¹⁴⁴ Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 26; William Garrett Piston and Thomas P. Sweeney, "'Don't Yield an Inch': The Missouri State Guard," 20.

Catching the State Guard in a state of confusion, Union forces cemented their control of St. Louis, the eastern hub of the Pacific railroad and Missouri River traffic. The four cannon barrels Harding had ordered recast in St. Louis were lost, left behind at the workshop in St. Louis when Union forces seized full control of the city. The four thousand sets of infantry accoutrements contracted were never received. The loss of Jefferson City deprived the MSG of the best, central location for organization. With St. Louis and Jefferson City secure, Lyon set his sights on Boonville, the location of the state armory. In Boonville, Colonel Marmaduke commanded a force of less than 650 men. Only a few of the men assembled had any military experience or any benefit of the few days of training given in Jefferson City between the mustering after Camp Jackson and the disbandment after the signing of the Price-Harney Truce. Governor Jackson, with his staff and Captain Kelly's Washington Blues, met Marmaduke in Boonville, bolstered by a force of several hundred men under command of John B. Clark.¹⁴⁵ Of the force of approximately fifteen hundred men assembled in Boonville, Kelly's Washington Blues were the only company of men uniformly armed, equipped, and drilled.

Lyon received Missouri Volunteer (Home Guard) reinforcements which he left to occupy Jefferson City before chasing Jackson to Boonville. Taking a force of fifteen hundred men—Colonel Blair's volunteers, Totten's battery of artillery, and three companies of US infantry—he travelled by steam boat, landing six miles south of Boonville on June 17. He marched his column towards Boonville and engaged the MSG forces there. Unorganized and lacking any artillery, the MSG panicked and fled South,

¹⁴⁵ Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 27; Nathaniel Lyon, "June 17—skirmish at Booneville, Mo." *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 11-12; Snead, *The Fight for Missouri*, 208.

leaving most of the munitions and tools at the newly-organized state armory.¹⁴⁶ The skirmish lasted approximately twenty minutes and the speed with which the MSG forces fled led to both Union and MSG forces to dub it “The Boonville Races.”¹⁴⁷

In his report to General George McClellan, dated June 22, Lyon outlined his plan of attack. In Lyon’s understanding, the troops at Lexington represented the bulk of the MSG forces. Those men broke camp on June 21 to travel south to Springfield to meet Benjamin McCulloch’s Confederate Army moving into northern Arkansas. McCulloch’s forces, Lyon estimated, numbered at least five thousand men. Anticipating the Missouri State Guard’s plan of uniting with McCulloch, Lyon had dispatched a large force under “The Flying Dutchman,” Colonel Franz Sigel to intercept them.¹⁴⁸ Held up in Boonville until he could secure more transportation, Lyon hoped Price’s column could be intercepted by cavalry under Captain Samuel D. Sturgis, and Sigel’s men, already in possession of Springfield, could deal with Jackson’s force. Leaving nothing to chance, Lyon also made a contingency plan for the worst-case scenario. If the MSG columns successfully reached McCulloch, the opposition force would swell to between ten and twelve thousand men. It would be necessary for McClellan to authorize three Illinois regiments to march from the endpoint of the southwestern spur of the Pacific Railroad (Rolla, Missouri) to reinforce Lyon.¹⁴⁹ General Lyon showed his value as a leader.

¹⁴⁶ Lyon, “Skirmish at Boonveville,” *Official Records*, 11-12; Harding, *Service with the Missouri State Guard*, 30-31.

¹⁴⁷ McLachlan, *Missouri*, 131.

¹⁴⁸ Sigel’s energetic and excitable personality earned him the nickname, “The Flying Dutchman.” McLachlan, *Missouri*, 131.

¹⁴⁹ Lyon, “Skirmish at Boonveville,” *Official Records*, 11-12; Lyon was right in his estimation that Price and Jackson sought to unite the MSG with McCulloch’s Confederate Army. In early June, when Jackson learned of McCulloch’s presence in Northern Arkansas, sent McCulloch a dispatch and requested

Within a week, he had succeeded in throwing the secessionists into complete disarray, captured the state capital, put the pro-secessionist government on the run, captured the state's armory, and laid a clever trap to keep the Missouri State Guard from uniting with McCulloch's Confederate Army.

Lyon's swift movement in capturing Jefferson City and Boonville meant that several of the provisions established by the Military Bill were made virtually impossible to fulfill. Among the provisions, a board of advisers was to meet and devise a uniform for the soldiers. Volunteers from pre-existing militia companies were allowed to retain their uniforms but once those wore out, they would be required to replace them with the prescribed Missouri State Guard uniform. Unable to secure an official act of secession, Missourians did not qualify for uniform supplies from the Confederate government. The speed of events cut short the plan, and the men were forced to bring what they could from home and rely on donations from sympathizers (or requisitions) from citizens. Even General Price lacked a proper uniform and wore civilian clothes, including a conspicuous white linen duster. The only properly uniformed companies currently documented were pre-war militia units like the Washington Blues and Independence Grays. While some volunteer organizations wore uniforms of home manufacture, the bulk of the forces were clad in civilian clothing.¹⁵⁰ The Union blue versus Confederate grey color distinction had

that McCulloch march his army into Missouri to embolden the pro-secessionists to unite. Snead, *Fight for Missouri*, 230-231.

¹⁵⁰ Piston and Sweeney, "'Don't Yield an Inch,'" 17; There were some uniformed companies from Carroll, Clay, Howard, and Jackson county pre-war militias. James E. McGhee, "Pleasing One's Own Taste and Fancy": Uniforms of the Missouri State Guard, Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Library Vertical Files Collection; William Watson, a soldier in the 3rd Louisiana Infantry, part of General Benjamin McCulloch's forces at Wilson's Creek, described Price as a "stout, farmer-looking old gentleman dressed in a suit of white linen clothes, not over clean" and mistook him for a local farmer, not the commander of the Missouri soldiers. William Watson, *Life in the Confederate Army: Being the Observations and*

not yet been made, but being able to distinguish friendly forces from the enemy, even if only by the cut and style of a uniform on a smoke-obscured, crowded battlefield could often mean the difference between life and death. In addition, uniformity created a united sense of identity as a company or regiment and fostered a sense of pride within a unit.

In addition to uniforms, the Missouri State Guard needed food, proper arms and equipment, and a safe place to organize their forces and drill. Lyon's movement up the Missouri River Valley also cut through Boon's Lick, the heart of Missouri's slave population and economy. Missouri's vulnerable position began to hinder the secessionist movement as a three-prong assault took place. Iowa volunteers, organized at Keokuk, Iowa, began marching south to join with Lyon's force, while Kansas volunteers formed to the west. The Missouri State Guard volunteers, in addition to finding proper materials for war, now had the added trouble of simply finding one of the two columns marching south. Between the skirmish at Boonville on June 17 and the Battle of Wilson's Creek (referred to by Confederates as Oak Hills) on August 10, approximately twenty skirmishes took place across Missouri. Some were between the MSG and pro-Union Home Guard while others included elements of Union Volunteers posted to protect railroads and strategic cities.¹⁵¹

Of the few primary source materials available for the State Guard, several demonstrate that one of the biggest issues facing the MSG was the inexperience and naiveté of the volunteers. Recruiting parties headed out with whatever they could muster for weapons. In many cases, the men carried family heirloom hunting rifles and shotguns or other civilian arms purchased or requisitioned from their local hardware stores in the

Experiences of an Alien in the South During the American Civil War (1887; repr., Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 195-196.

¹⁵¹ *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 1-2.

days following Camp Jackson. Absalom Grimes, a Mississippi River pilot living near Hannibal Missouri, joined a recruiting party that included his friend, Samuel Clemens. Their party consisted of ten men, none of whom knew exactly what to do. Confederate sympathizers provided mounts for those without one. No uniformity of clothing or equipment existed. Grimes carried a shotgun, Clemens an old Kentucky rifle. After being sworn into service by Colonel John Ralls at his home, they meandered west and met with another party of recruits. After watching that unit line up and answer to roll call, instead of combining forces, Grimes' group decided they needed to have their own officers. They proceeded to elect a captain, lieutenant, sergeant, and orderly sergeant, leaving them with four privates for duty.¹⁵²

Grimes' experience with electing too many officers was not unique.

Quartermaster records for Parson's division of the MSG indicate that supplies were distributed to no less than thirty-five different companies each commanded by a captain. The above situation was not unusual for standard size companies, but their records from Wilson's Creek indicate that they were able to field somewhere between 523 and 601 men, making the average size of each company fifteen to seventeen men, far smaller than standard.¹⁵³

¹⁵²Captain Amry Marshall Curry stated in his memoirs that, "everyone took his gun that had one at home..." and they acquired rifles, single-barrel and double-barrel shotguns, and some old, Mexican War-era muskets. Captain Amry Marshall Curry, *Memoirs*, Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Library Vertical Files Collection; Grimes, like many Missourians, was a Kentuckian by birth and immigrated to Missouri with his parents. By 1852, he was a river boat pilot on the Mississippi River, licensed for the stretch of Mississippi River between Keokuk, Iowa and St. Louis Missouri. He, Clemens, and a friend, all river pilots, were actually approached by Union forces in early June to pilot river boats then scheduled to take Union troops from St. Louis to Boonville. Upon returning home from their meeting in St. Louis, they set out to join the MSG. Absalom Grimes, *Confederate Mail Runner*, edited by M.M. Quaife (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), 5-7.

¹⁵³ Piston and Hatcher, *Wilson's Creek*, 82.

Volunteers further south in Missouri experienced a similar level of hasty organization and confusion. John James Sitton of Oregon County, Missouri, in the seventh military district described his experience. They formed a company of infantry on July 4, electing a captain, three lieutenants, an orderly sergeant, and several NCOs. Many of the men, “had left their homes hurriedly,” some with only two hours notice and brought with them mostly shotguns or rifles previously used for hunting.¹⁵⁴ His company united with several more from Texas, Dent, Phelps, and Shannon counties and became the First Regiment, Seventh Division, Missouri State Guard.¹⁵⁵

The lack of proper equipment contributed to further troubles. The MSG volunteers, as their Union counterparts, did not believe the conflict would last long. That belief, coupled with the haste with which many of them had left their homes, resulted in a force that lacked basic necessities. Sitton says many of the men in his unit left home with the expectation that they would be home in a day or two. As a result, most had little clothing other than what they were wearing at the time. Some took one blanket, others none. Grimes’ unit, being mounted, took with them more encumbrances. Clemens is described as carrying a valise, carpet sack, quilt, and frying pan. Neither group had tents, Grimes stating that at times they used some sticks and made a makeshift tent from an extra blanket or two.¹⁵⁶

The lack of food plagued MSG forces as well. Early on and in more prosperous country, troops could forage for food from locals and procure hams, bacon, cornmeal,

¹⁵⁴ John James Sitton, 1842(?)–1915, *Civil War Memoir, 1861*, State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection, 1.

¹⁵⁵ Sitton, *Memoir*, 1–2.

¹⁵⁶ Grimes, *Confederate Mail Runner*, 6, 9; Sitton, *Memoir*, 1.

and vegetables. Grimes' group in northeast Missouri in mid-June procured cornmeal, fat meat, and sorghum. As the summer progressed, and the Union and Confederate forces travelled further and further into the undeveloped country of southwest Missouri, food became increasingly scarce. The ruggedness of the region and the lack of waterways meant a shortage of commercial agriculture. The inhabitants, many of them transplants from the Appalachian hill country in Tennessee and Kentucky survived on subsistence agriculture. A handful of livestock (mainly pigs and chickens) and a small family garden supplied what little they needed. Many were northern sympathizers and unwilling to provide food to MSG foraging parties. Sitton described his company after Wilson's Creek as subsisting on dried peaches and molasses. Randolph Harrison Dyer, writing to his sister on August 12, stated that he and his comrades were, "nearly naked, barefoot, without sugar or coffee," subsisting on nothing but beef (most likely from stock rounded up along their route of march) and half rations of bread. McCulloch's Confederate Army around the same time, even with more formal organization than the Missouri troops, fared little better, relying on green corn and roasting ears for much of their diet.¹⁵⁷

The MSG proved to be an exceedingly fluid force. Recruits en route to the main columns often lost interest and went home to take their chances or joined other companies that seemed more appealing. Samuel Clemens, after a few weeks with a recruiting party, during which time the group failed to reach any larger force, left

¹⁵⁷ Dyer, Randolph Harrison "Harry," letter to his sister Anne, August 12, 1861, copy courtesy of the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Library Vertical Files Collection; Grimes, *Confederate Mail Runner*, 9; Sitton, *Memoir*, 4; First Iowa Volunteer, E.F. Ware, stated that Lyon's column rounded up every beef cow they could south of the Missouri River, driving the cattle along with the army for meat on the hoof. The beef supply eventually ran out and they took to shooting wild pigs, when they could get them, for a meat ration to break the monotony of corn meal mush, which seems to have been universal for armies campaigning in southern Missouri and northern Arkansas. Ware, *The Lyon Campaign in Missouri*, 231-232, 238-239.

Missouri for Keokuk and from there travelled west.¹⁵⁸ Dr. John Wiatt joined one company, was elected lieutenant, and in his own words, “got tired of them and left,” joining a unit under Colonel (later General) M. Jeff Thompson. He then complied with a request from a friend to join another brigade as their surgeon. He had been part of three different units in the span of six weeks.¹⁵⁹ In general, the MSG lacked the *esprit de corps* that united other units, both North and South. That lack of unity, coupled with the simple fact that they were still operating in their home state, made it easy for MSG recruits to call it quits and return to their families, farms, and businesses.

The Union forces chasing the MSG were, at the outset, generally better uniformed and, if not better armed, at least more uniformly armed in addition to having had more time to organize and train. Lyon’s force included the Second US Infantry, Second US Artillery (Totten’s battery), and another two hundred unassigned regular army troops, all uniformed and equipped.¹⁶⁰ Lyon’s Missouri Volunteers—the First and Second Missouri—and Colonel Franz Sigel’s force on the way to Springfield, were armed with weapons from the St. Louis arsenal.

The First Iowa Infantry which joined Lyon at Boonville had been fortunate enough to receive uniforms and flags made by the women of their communities if they did not already have uniforms from pre-war militia service. These uniforms ranged in color and cut from dark blue to light grey-blue.¹⁶¹ Though many of the uniforms fell apart by the time they reached Springfield, the ceremonies which often accompanied the

¹⁵⁸ Grimes, *Confederate Mail Runner*, 17-18.

¹⁵⁹ Wiatt, *Diary of a Doctor*, 1-2.

¹⁶⁰ Ware, *History of the First Iowa Infantry*, 157.

¹⁶¹ Two companies were outfitted with frocks made from black and white tweed. Company ‘E’ wore azure-blue hunting frocks similar to those worn by pioneers like Daniel Boone, trimmed in bright red.

presentation of uniforms and colors fostered an *esprit de corps* that much of the Missouri State Guard lacked. When the First Iowa regiment's three-month enlistments ran out, they continued on despite the poor rations they received and were still with Lyon for the Battle of Wilson's Creek. The First Iowa received 1829 muskets converted to percussion lock.¹⁶²

The First and Second Kansas troops that joined Lyon's column en route to Springfield had little in the way of uniforms. The US government supplied them with some shoes and blue blouses (most likely four button sack coats). Many of the men were armed with old flintlock, .69 caliber muskets converted to percussion. Some of the more fortunate appear to have been armed with more modern 1842 smoothbore muskets.¹⁶³ Though many of the muskets of the Iowa and Kansas units were not in the best condition, they all used the same .69 caliber ammunition, making supplying ammunition much easier than trying to match ammunition to the plethora of weapons carried by the MSG.

The Union forces in the trans-Mississippi did struggle to acquire new items of clothing in between supply shipments. Volunteer units purchased what clothing and shoes they could from stores and citizens along the route. At other times, they captured make-shift supply depots put together for the MSG and took what they could. They were, however, able to utilize the steam ships on the Missouri River and existing railroad lines. Prior to moving out of Boonville, Lyon's forces received supply ships. More supplies arrived from St. Louis along the southwest spur line of the Pacific Railroad to

¹⁶² Kip Lindberg, "Uniforms and Equipment Descriptions of the Units at Wilson's Creek," from the Wilson's Creek National Military Park Library Vertical Files Collection; 1st Iowa Veteran E.F. Ware itemized the equipment he and his regiment carried and each piece of equipment's weight as: musket (9 lbs), cartridge box, cap pouch, belt, bayonet, and scabbard (6 lbs), one day's rations in a haversack (3.5 lbs), blanket (3 lbs), full canteen (3.5 lbs) for a total of 25 lbs of equipment per man. Ware, *History of the First Iowa Infantry*, 78-80. 85-86.

¹⁶³ Lindberg, "Uniforms and Equipment."

Rolla, Missouri. From Rolla, they were sent via wagons to the Union forces amassed at Springfield. The Union held the advantage of transportation, and accounts from Union soldiers bear out that they never lacked for ammunition during the campaign. In addition, they successfully gathered every head of cattle they could along the route.¹⁶⁴

Despite their disorganization and lack of uniforms, adequate weapons, and supplies, the Missouri State Guard executed a number of successful battles throughout the rest of 1861 at places like Carthage, Oak Hills (Wilson's Creek), and Dry Wood Creek. Lyon's forces waited in Boonville for supplies and an adequate quantity of wagons with which to carry their baggage. Lyon thus left it to General Thomas Sweeney's and Colonel Sigel's force to stop the State Guard from reaching McCulloch's Confederates.

Sigel's column had left St. Louis at the same time Lyon headed up the Missouri River. They reached Springfield in late June and took the town with little resistance. General Sweeney met him there after establishing the supply depot in Rolla. From there, Sweeney dispatched Sigel and his eleven hundred men to Carthage, Missouri to cut off the Missouri State Guard. Governor Jackson and Brigadier General James S. Rains and marched their force to confront Sigel. At ten o'clock on the morning of July 5, the two forces squared off ten miles north of Carthage. After an exchange of artillery fire, the MSG pushed forward, engaging in a running fight that reached the edge of Carthage. Jackson posted his unarmed men to the right of his battle line, marching and drilling. Sigel saw the force on his left flank and, unaware they were unarmed, ordered a retreat,

¹⁶⁴ Captain Thomas W. Sweeney, Second US Infantry left St. Louis on June 23 with three hundred men and established a supply depot in Rolla at the terminus of the Southwest Branch of the Pacific Railroad. General Thomas Sweeney, "Headquarters Southwest Expedition, Springfield, Mo. , July 12, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 15; Ware, *Lyon Campaign in Missouri*, 157-158

fearing Jackson might launch an overwhelming flanking maneuver. Sigel executed a successful rear-guard action that kept him from being overwhelmed and withdrew under the cover of darkness. Sigel reported thirteen men killed and thirty-one wounded, while MSG commander Rains reported forty-four killed or wounded. Sweeney, hearing of the defeat of Sigel, rushed to his aid only to realize that their twenty-six hundred men were greatly outnumbered. Sweeney's force had overextended their supply line and lacked ammunition for the .69 caliber rifled-muskets with which the bulk of his force was armed.¹⁶⁵

General Price's column had yet to be in a fight. Retreating from Lexington, Price intended to march his column to Fort Smith and meet with Benjamin McCulloch and persuade him to enter Missouri. The column, now reinforced by several other companies and squads that managed to find his column, numbered approximately twelve hundred men. Many of the recruits were unarmed. They halted at Cowskin Prairie, about twelve miles from Maysville in the extreme southwest corner of Missouri, safe from the Union advancement, and drilled. On July 1, Price learned of the presence of Brigadier General

¹⁶⁵ The unit-by-unit breakdown of the Missouri State Guard forces engaged at Carthage, under command of Brigadier General James S. Rains (under Gov. Jackson's supervision) illustrates the disjointed organization of the MSG forces. In his report, Rains states his force consisted of Captain Hiram Bledsoe's company of artillery (one 12-lbs gun and two 6-lbs guns manned by forty men) along with a detachment of infantry under Captain McKinney (16 men); Colonel Graves' independent regiment of infantry, 271 men; Colonel Hurst's Third Regiment Infantry, 521 men, and Lieutenant-Colonel O'Kane's battalion of infantry, 350 men, making the total of artillerymen and infantry to 1,204 men. In addition, the MSG fielded cavalry: Companies A, B, and part of H of the Third Cavalry totaling 115 men under Colonel Peyton. Attached to Peyton's command was the First Battalion of Independent Cavalry (250 men), Fourth Cavalry Battalion (two hundred men), Captain Joseph O. Shelby's company of Rangers (43 men). Cavalry totaled 1,812 men.¹⁶⁵ Brigadier General James S. Rains, "Hdqs. Second Division Missouri State Guard, July 20, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 20-22; Brigadier General James S. Rains, commanding 2nd Division of the Missouri State Guard letter to Claiborne F. Jackson, published in the *Semi-Weekly Equal Rights Gazette*, Vol. 1, Number 44, Springfield, MO, August 28, 1861, copy courtesy of the Wilson's Creek National Military Park Library Vertical Files Collection; Sigel's official report of the Battle of Carthage can be found in Colonel Franz Sigel, "Headquarters, Colonel Sigel's Command, Springfield, Mo. July 11, 1861" *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 16-19; Sweeney had also successfully raised a large force of Missouri Home Guard from the area around Springfield, but they suffered greatly from want of proper arms. Sweeney, "Report, July 12, 1861," *Official Records*, 15

N.B. Pearce's thousand-man brigade of Arkansas militia near Maysville, having been sent by McCulloch to guard against a Union invasion of Arkansas. Price met with Pearce and learned that McCulloch was already en route to Maysville and would arrive in a few days. In addition, Pearce loaned Price's men 615 muskets.¹⁶⁶

On July 4, Price, Pearce, and McCulloch united forces and set out to aid Jackson's column having learned that Lyon and Sturgis were pressing him from the north. Upon receipt of information that Sigel had moved to cut Jackson off, McCulloch and Price set out with a force of cavalry, leaving the infantry behind, but did not reach Jackson until after the victory at Carthage. Their actions were not completely in vain as they captured a company of ninety-six Union men in Neosho, Missouri. They quickly paroled the company after making them swear an oath to not bear arms against the Confederate States of America.¹⁶⁷ Neosho, in the southwest corner of Missouri, for the time being, became the headquarters of the Missouri legislature-in-exile.

On July 6, Jackson and Price united, and McCulloch returned with his force to Maysville. Now in command of the full force of Missouri State Guardsmen, General Price marched to Cowskin Prairie to drill and prepare for field service. Without any proper supply depot, the force subsisted on lean beef. Quartermaster Harding and the Colonel John Reid, chief Commissary officer, travelled to Arkansas in an unsuccessful attempt to secure supplies. The men, without a proper arsenal, set about manufacturing their own ammunition. They procured lead from the nearby Granby lead mines, and Jackson's column successfully transported a sufficient supply of gun powder. Rough

¹⁶⁶ Snead, *Fight for Missouri*, 235-236.

¹⁶⁷ Sigel, "Springfield, Mo. July 11, 1861" *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3,19; Snead, *Fight for Missouri*, 236-237.

bullet molds were hewn from trees. Similar make-shift arrangements were used by pockets of MSG across Missouri, as one veteran described using a thimble as a mold to make slugs for his shotgun which their group used to shoot at cars on the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad.¹⁶⁸

The reinforcements Lyon received from Kansas and Iowa were not the disciplined troops that he had expected. The Kansans and Iowans pillaged and looted homes of Missourians whom they perceived to all be slave holders, leading to more volunteers for MSG forces. Even some former Union sympathizers joined the MSG. While Price's column prepared at Cowskin Prairie, pockets of MSG resistance across Missouri took the opportunity to harass Union forces. Colonel Martin Green rallied troops and attacked Union forces in northeastern Missouri. M. Jeff Thompson, commander of the first military district, took advantage of the fresh anti-Union sentiments and launched successful guerilla raids on Union forces in the swamplands of southeastern Missouri. Thompson, even after Price's force entered Confederate service, continued to act independently for the rest of the war.¹⁶⁹ Though these actions were small, they prevented Lyon from being able to call more reinforcements to Springfield before the Battle of Wilson's Creek on August 10.

Wilson's Creek provided General Price and the MSG with their most famous victory before being forced out of Missouri, although Price was not in full command. Benjamin McCulloch's 7,400-man Confederate Army reentered Missouri in early August, and on August 4, Price issued General Order 16, placing himself and the MSG

¹⁶⁸John Colby Griggs, *Diary of the Civil War* (Fort Reno, Dakota Territory, January 15, 1866) Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Library Vertical Files Collection; Grimes, *Confederate Mail Runner*, 21; Snead, *Fight for Missouri*, 241.

¹⁶⁹*Official Records*, Series 1, Volume 4, 1-5; Peterson, *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, 6-7.

under McCulloch's command. On August 10, General Lyon surprised the combined forces of Price and McCulloch near Wilson's creek, southwest of Springfield. The State Guard, marching at the head of the Confederate column, rallied and halted Lyon's main force, allowing McCulloch's forces to deploy, destroy the German brigade under Franz Sigel, and join the main battle. During the battle, Confederate forces killed Lyon, causing panic in the Union ranks. Low on ammunition and having lost nearly a quarter of their strength, the Union forces retreated. McCulloch, having lost ten percent of his own force, out of range of his supply lines, and uneasy about having entered Missouri without Confederate government orders, did not pursue the fleeing federals.¹⁷⁰

Wilson's Creek, though a great victory, was not achieved solely by an underequipped and ill-trained Missouri State Guard. In addition to outnumbering Lyon's federals, the combined MSG-Confederate force had been under the command of Benjamin McCulloch, an experienced leader.¹⁷¹ Archeology records from Wilson's Creek National Battlefield show that the bulk of the arms used during the fight were either .69 caliber or .58 caliber muskets, a uniformity in arms achieved by the procurement of arms from Arkansas in addition to the arms already held by members of previous state militias. Still, the MSG had some hunting rifles in the ranks as the

¹⁷⁰ James E. McGhee, transcriber, "General Order 16," *Letter and Order Book: Missouri State Guard, 1861-1862* (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 2001), 22; Phillips, *The Battle of Wilson's Creek*, 31, 47, 53; Shea, *The Campaign for Pea Ridge*, 4-5.

¹⁷¹ Benjamin McCulloch was born in Tennessee on November 11, 1811 and was educated in wood craft by David Crockett. He drifted west into Missouri looking to enter the fur trade in 1836 before venturing down to New Orleans where his old mentor, Davy Crockett, convinced him to travel to Texas. He served in Sam Huston's Texas army at the Battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. In 1838, he joined a company of Texas Rangers fighting Comanches and by 1860 had gained a reputation as a rough and tumble Texas Ranger. Influenced by Crockett's distrust of the military academy at West Point (Crockett believed it to be too elitist an institution and the sons of the wealthy that went there too delicate to rough it in the army), McCulloch never received a formal military education. For more information, see: Thomas W. Cutrer, *Ben McCulloch and the Frontier Military Tradition* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

archeology report includes a number of approximately .36 and .44 caliber balls with patch marks on them, which would indicate being fired by a civilian-style arm, not a military revolver.¹⁷²

Wilson's Creek provided the secessionists with a political tool. On August 20, Governor Jackson outlined the grievances felt by Missouri and the South as a whole and declared the actions of the federal government unconstitutional.¹⁷³ The document ended with the bold declaration of Missouri as a "sovereign, free, and independent republic," with "...full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce and to do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do."¹⁷⁴ With the declaration, Jackson sought to reaffirm that Missouri wanted no part in the war, while

¹⁷² Though more uniformly armed than sometimes believed, the MSG forces still maintained a number of civilian arms in their ranks at the time. Brigadier General Parson's, commander of the 6th Division, M.S.G. noted in his official report of the battle that "10 or 15 gallant young soldiers rushed for some large oaks...and from behind the trees, with their common hunting rifles," engaged the oncoming enemy. *Report of Brigadier General Parsons, Headquarters, 6th Division, M.S.G. to Maj. Gen. Sterling Price*, Springfield, MO, August 14, 1861. Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Library Vertical Files Collection. The archeology report from Wilson's Creek indicates that .69 caliber musket balls could be fired from 12 gauge shotguns and a number were found with intentional facets hammed into them, possibly to make them fit a 16 gauge shotgun bore. A .42 caliber ball was also found, possibly indicating a civilian hunting rifle in that caliber. The archeology report from Pea Ridge National Battlefield includes similar quantities and styles of projectiles in use at the battle, and included the finding of a .32 caliber rifle ball which would be consistent with the description by 3rd Louisiana veteran, William Watson's description of a Missourian he saw at Wilson's Creek reloading his rifle, "...he proceeded to ram a ball down into a rifle barrel nearly as thick as his arm with a bore that would scarcely admit a pea." William Watson, *Life in the Confederate Army: Being the Observations and Experiences of an Alien in the South During the American Civil War* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1887 (reprint, Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 194; Douglas D. Scott, Harold Rocker, and Carl G. Carlson-Drexler, "*The Fire Upon Us was Terrific*": *The Battlefield Archeology of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, Missouri*, Midwest Archeology Center Technical Report No. 19, www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/wicr/battlefield_archeology.pdf; Carl G. Carlson-Drexler, Douglas D. Scott, and Harold Roeker, "*The Battle Raged...With Terrible Fury*": *Battlefield Archeology of Pea Ridge National Military Park*, Midwest Archeology Center Technical Report No. 112, www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/peri/battle_raged.pdf.

¹⁷³ Wiatt, *Diary of a Doctor: Missouri State Guard*, ed. Joanne C. Eakin (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 1999), 13; Arthur Roy Kirkpatrick, "The Admission of Missouri into the Confederacy," 366-386, *Missouri Historical Review* (LV (July, 1961), 374.

¹⁷⁴ Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson, "Declaration of Independence of the Sovereign State of Missouri," *The Semi-Weekly Equal Rights Gazette*, Vo. I, number 44, Springfield, MO, August 28, 1861, courtesy of the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Library Vertical Files Collection.

at the same time legitimizing the actions of the MSG in combating federal troops and opened the war for annexation by the Confederacy.

After Wilson's Creek, McCulloch withdrew to northern Arkansas and left Price to carry on in Missouri. The relations between the two generals had already been strained. McCulloch and many of his men viewed Price as nothing more than a shrewd politician. McCulloch tried to rely on Price for intelligence-gathering in the days leading up to the battle, as Price supposedly carried great weight with Missouri's citizens. What McCulloch found was intelligence that was unreliable and continually wrong.¹⁷⁵ Part of this intelligence problem was that the citizens around Springfield, many of them Unionists, did not trust Boon's Lick politicians.

As a politician, Price held little integrity in the eyes of McCulloch, and the two grew to distrust one another. William Watson believed the tensions between Price and McCulloch crippled the rebel cause west of the Mississippi, and it was for this reason the Confederate government abandoned the area.¹⁷⁶ Lieutenant Governor, Thomas C. Reynolds, in negotiations with the Confederate government in Richmond at the time,

¹⁷⁵ MSG veteran J.P. [maybe F.] Bell believed that if McCulloch would have stayed with Price, they could have captured Lyon's supply wagons, but believed McCulloch was reluctant to give chase because of some "hoodoo" that hung around him. This "hoodoo" was probably his trepidations about entering Missouri following the orders from the C.S.A. War department that discouraged him from entering Missouri. John P. [F.] Bell, Article about the Battle of Wilson's Creek printed in *Confederate Veteran*, Volume XXII, 1914 (Harrisburg, PA: National Historical Society), 416, copy courtesy of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Library. Benjamin McCulloch stated in a letter to General Hardee that the Missouri troops were little better than a mob, wholly unable to face Union forces in their present condition and could not be made ready by their current commanders (i.e. Price). In the same letter, he states that he had extended himself and his supply lines too far, requiring him to return to Arkansas. "Ben McCulloch to General Hardee, August 24, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. III, 672; On the other hand, in a later letter, McCulloch specifically noted the bravery with which Price and his infantry and artillery fought at Wilson's Creek, though he discussed to some extent the unreliability of some elements of the Missouri troops. "Ben. McCulloch to J.P. Benjamin, Sec. of War [C.S.A.], December 22, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 742-749; Dr. Wiatt, noted in his diary on August 1st, "Hard quarrels of Gov. Jackson, and Gen'l McCulloch and Price." Wiatt, *Diary of a Doctor*, 2. Watson, *Life in the Confederate Army*, 199.

¹⁷⁶ Watson, *Life in the Confederate Army*, 199.

stated that the general opinion of Price in Richmond was less than favorable. According to Reynolds, the Price-Harney Truce, coupled with Price's absences from the Battle of Booneville, "obscured his military reputation."¹⁷⁷ The eventual withdrawal of Price into northern Arkansas in early 1862 did not aid in the recovery of his reputation.

Price reorganized his forces at Springfield and started north with ten thousand men. He first set his sights on Fort Scott in Kansas, seeking to end the interference of Jim Lane's Kansas brigade. Price engaged and defeated Kansas troops at the Battle of Dry Wood Creek, driving them back past Fort Scott on September 1-2. Despite the victory, his troops were losing faith in their commander. Dr. Wiatt wrote in his diary that the men were convinced they could defeat the federal forces at Fort Scott, but the relative inactivity both before and after Wilson's Creek created an uneasy restlessness that shook their faith in their general. On September 4, they received orders that the invasion of Kansas had been called off. They turned north and went to Lexington, Missouri, hoping to seize the Missouri River and draw recruits from northern Missouri.¹⁷⁸

While en route, Price gained more recruits as he entered the Missouri River-adjacent counties. Arriving in Warrensburg, Missouri on September 10, the citizens of the town fed the starving Guardsmen. Little had been procured for food since their flight from Booneville and Lexington in June, the men surviving on what they could forage along the way. Most of the men had not eaten in the last thirty-six hours.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ Reynolds, *General Sterling Price and the Confederacy*, 31-32.

¹⁷⁸ Wiatt, *Diary of a Doctor*, 19-20.

¹⁷⁹ "Report of Maj. General Sterling Price, commanding Missouri State Guard (confederate), of operations, September 10-20, *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 185, 186; Sitton, *Memoirs*, 4; Larry Wood, *The Siege of Lexington, Missouri: The Battle of the Hemp Bales* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2014), 35-36.

Price and his force of fifteen to twenty thousand men arrived on the outskirts of Lexington on September 12. Colonel James Mulligan commanded a force of approximately twenty-seven hundred men in defense of the city.¹⁸⁰ Mulligan had at his command his own Twenty-third Illinois Volunteer Infantry, the First Illinois Cavalry, 350 Home Guard, two companies of Major Robert T. Van Horn's Missouri Battalion, and Colonel Everett Peabody's Thirteenth Missouri. Van Horn's and Peabody's men arrived the day before via steamboats from Kansas City. One MSG soldier recalled how Price rode forth at the head of his force, disregarding his safety, which endeared him to the men. Another, however, recalled that Price took unnecessary risks, lacked leadership ability, was too lax on discipline, and felt that their force was nothing more than an effective mob. Price, showing the same lack of aggressiveness that kept him from assaulting Fort Scott, decided to wait for supplies a few miles south of Lexington. For several days, he did nothing. One captured MSG officer stated to his captors that he believed Price had only expected home guard, not disciplined Federal volunteers. On September 17, Dr. Wiatt, frustrated over the lack of a real fight, wrote in his diary, "60 or 70 loads of baled hemp came in today, suppose we will attack tomorrow if Gen. Price

¹⁸⁰ Union reports estimated the MSG forces to be between 15,000 and 20,000 men. Another Union correspondence estimated Price's force to be 35,000 men strong. The variance might be accountable by the continued reports that streams of recruits continually joined Price both en route to and camped south of Lexington. Some sources placed it as low as 2,000 men, while MSG Dr. Wiatt stated in his diary that they captured 3,500 and John Sitton placed it at 3,300. Mulligan himself put the figure at 2,700 men. "To W.E. Prince, Captain, First Infantry, from General James H. Lane," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 181-182; "To Acting Brig. Gen. Jefferson C. Davis from J.C. Fremont, September 20, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 179; Isaac Hockaday letters to his mother, Mrs. Emily Mills Hockaday, "Letters from the Battle of Lexington," 53-58, *Missouri Historical Review* LVI (October, 1961), 54; "To General James H. Lane from Captain W.E. Prince, Sept. 23, 1861," *Official Records*, 184; The exact size of the force under Mulligan's command varies. Some sources placed it as low as 2,000 men, while MSG Dr. Wiatt stated in his diary that they captured 3,500 and John Sitton placed it at 3,300. Mulligan himself put the figure at 2,700 men.

wakes up in time...God give us success, we have no leaders.”¹⁸¹ Wiatt held little faith in Price.

Price eventually proved his worth. While his men sat in camp, eager for a fight and frustrated at the inactivity, Price finalized his plan. Early on the morning of September 18, Price sent his men to assault the Union breastworks. On September 20, using the hemp bales delivered to camp the day before as moving fortifications, the MSG closed in on the Union lines.¹⁸² Mulligan’s force, with their food and ammunition depleted, were forced to surrender. Even the critical Dr. Wiatt admitted in his diary that Price’s tactics had proven to be successful, and a direct charge on the Union positions would have been suicide. Price paroled most of the approximately three thousand soldiers, keeping officers for a couple of weeks and using them for exchange. Price exchanged Colonel Mulligan for Captain Frost, still held captive since Camp Jackson. In addition, Price’s force captured some five pieces of artillery, two mortars, and over three thousand stands of infantry arms, and a large number of sabers, 750 horses, “many sets of cavalry equipments, wagons, teams, and ammunition,” and one hundred thousand dollars worth of commissary stores. They also obtained the Missouri state seal, public records,

¹⁸¹ “Report of Maj. Gen. Price,” *Official Records*, 185-186; Wood, *Siege of Lexington*, 26-28, 44-45, 52; Wiatt, *Diary of a Doctor*, 27.

¹⁸² Both J.F. [P.] Bell and R.C. Carter, MSG veterans, recalled in their memoirs that they soaked the hemp bales in the river prior to using them as fortifications to make them more bullet proof. J.F. [P.] Bell, “Recalling the Battle of Lexington,” printed in the *Confederate Veteran*, Volume XXII, 1914 (Harrisburg, PA: National Historical Society), 416, copy courtesy of Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield Library; R.C. Carter, “A Short Sketch of My Experiences During the First Stages of the Civil War,” State Historical Society of Missouri Historical Manuscripts Collection, 3-4.

and nine hundred thousand dollars the Union occupiers of Lexington had removed from the bank.¹⁸³

The successes of the Missouri State Guard at Wilson's Creek, Dry Wood Creek, and Lexington placed the Missouri State Guard in control of a sizable portion of southwestern Missouri. In addition to the actions of Price's main force, outlying columns and small bands engaged Union and/or Home Guard forces across the state throughout September, October, and November.¹⁸⁴ The small skirmishes disrupted Union forces and supply lines, delaying the Union's ability to amass forces to send against Price.¹⁸⁵ The Union's superior numbers, however, meant that they could eventually transfer enough soldiers to Missouri to engage the smaller bands of MSG and protect the rail lines and supply depots while amassing a force to challenge Price.

Lexington proved to be the greatest, and one of the last, of Price's victories before Union forces forced the MSG out of Missouri. After the fall of Lexington, Major General John C. Fremont marched south from Jefferson City with forty-thousand men to force

¹⁸³ Wiatt, *Diary of a Doctor*, 27-29; "Report of Maj. Gen. Price," *Official Records*, 186-188; Sitton Memoirs, 6-7; For more information on the Battle of Lexington, see Wood, *Siege of Lexington*.

¹⁸⁴ For a complete list of the skirmishes and engagements in Missouri in September, October, and November, 1861 and reports and correspondence, see: *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3 and *Official Records*, Series 1, Volume 8 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883). Skirmish at Hunter's Farm: "Report of US Grant, US Army, Headquarters District of Southeast Missouri, Cairo, September 26, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 197 and "Report of Col. R.J. Oglesby, Eighth Illinois Infantry, Headquarters, Norfolk, MO, September 26, 1861," *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 197-198; Skirmish at Norfolk: "Report of Col. R.J. Oglesby, Eighth Illinois Infantry, September 28, 1861," 198; The skirmishes at Hunter's Farm and Norfolk were engagements between MSG General M. Jeff Thompson and Union forces in southeast Missouri. Thompson's goal at the time was to disrupt Union movements and destroy sections of the Cairo and Fulton Railroad. "To Colonel W.G. Phelan, Commanding Second [Infantry] Regiment from J.R. Purvis, Assistant Adjutant General [to M. Jeff Thompson], September 28, 1861," James E. McGhee, transcriber, *General M. Jeff Thompson's Letter Book, July 1861-June 1862* (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, no date given), 51.

¹⁸⁵ It could be argued that these small skirmishes by small bands of MSG forces to delay the Union military in Missouri set the precedence for the brutal guerilla war that engulfed Missouri after Price was forced to withdraw to Arkansas.

Price out of Missouri. Fremont's overzealous attitude prompted the War Department to replace him with Major General David Hunter on October 24. Price made a leisurely retreat to Neosho, the temporary meeting place of the government-in-exile, and after a brief, successful skirmish at Springfield on October 25, he again turned his force north.¹⁸⁶

With Lyon disposed of and the Union forces scrambling to drive Price's force from the state, the Missouri government-in-exile voted on October 31, 1861 to secede and sent word to Richmond. The Confederate Congress formally voted to admit Missouri to the Confederacy on November 28, 1861.¹⁸⁷ Formal admittance into the Confederacy did not alleviate the supply shortage the Missouri State Guard still faced. Though they had captured a considerable number of arms at Lexington, they were still in need of additional firearms.¹⁸⁸ They were short of food, clothing, and camp equipment. Authorities in Richmond, the Confederate capital, received news of the actions of Price's column. Discipline in the ranks was low and plundering and lawlessness ensued. The quartermaster and commissary departments, seeking to attenuate the supply shortage, requisitioned supplies from citizens for scrip—loose certificates of indebtedness—an action which angered many Missouri residents.¹⁸⁹ With winter coming on, no supplies from the Confederate government coming, and with the Missouri Confederate

¹⁸⁶ Shea, *Campaign for Pea Ridge*, 6. Sitton Memoirs, 8; *Official Records*, Series 1, Vol. 3, 3.

¹⁸⁷ "General Orders No 109, December 2nd 1861" James E. McGhee, transcriber, *Letter and Order Book: Missouri State Guard; 1861-1862* (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 2001), 86-87; Peterson, *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, 9; Wayne Schnetzer, *Missouri's State Guard: Their Officers and Men Tried Soldiers, Full of Zeal for the Cause: A Brief History of the Missouri State Guard After Pea Ridge: March 9, 1862-Spring of 1865* (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 2011), 10.

¹⁸⁸ On December 7, 1861, Price issued order number 120, which outlined parameters for a soldier being mustered out (many enlistments contracts expired in December) to sell his privately-owned revolver, shotgun or rifle to his division ordnance officer. "General Order No. 120, Dec 7, 1861," McGhee, *Letter and Order Book*, 94.

¹⁸⁹ Reynolds, *General Sterling Price and the Confederacy*, 42.

government displaced and unable to provide for them, the men of the Missouri State Guard plundered for survival.¹⁹⁰

Price's force went into winter camp at Springfield on December 1, 1861, building log shacks for shelter. On December 2, General Price, with the prospects of a Confederate commission and a promise from the Confederate government for proper uniforms for volunteers, began converting his MSG troops into Missouri Confederate Volunteers while in camp at Osceola, Missouri. Despite the reservations of his men, Price quickly had a twenty-five hundred-man brigade of Confederate Volunteers. Price's recruitment of Confederate volunteers resulted in the fragmentation of his main force, as volunteers were placed in separate camps. Price also contended with the problem that a number of the men had enlistments that were about to expire. Despite the triumphs over the last few months, many of them were not interested in continuing the fight. Many stayed with Price, unsure of what to do and afraid to go home but did not reenlist. Others chanced the journey.¹⁹¹

In addition to those who left Price's column to return home, Price sent many home to gather new clothes and blankets for the interim between enlistment and receipt of the promised supplies from the Confederate government. Two thousand troops were

¹⁹⁰ The Confederate Government was having trouble supplying larger forces deemed more important, like the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of Tennessee. Trans-Mississippi States were left largely to on their own during the early stages of the war before the Confederate Department System was established to make uniforms and accoutrements. For more information on the uniform and supply troubles of the Confederate Army, see: Tom Arliskas, *Cadet Grey and Butternut Brown: Notes on Confederate Uniforms* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 2006); Larry J. Daniel, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee: A Portrait of Life in the Confederate Army* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1991); and Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1943 (reprint with new forward, 2008)).

¹⁹¹ R.C. Carter stated in his memoir that, of those that risked the journey home, "some got through, some got killed and most of them were imprisoned. Carter, "Brief Sketch," 5-6; Sitton memoirs, 9-1; Griggs, *Diary of the Civil War*.

sent into Arkansas to retrieve arms, artillery, and uniforms. Of those who went home with the intentions of returning to Springfield, many were cut off from returning or captured. More Union troops flowed into the state from Illinois, Kansas, Iowa, and Nebraska Territory. The First Nebraska, encamped at near Sedalia, Missouri (the furthest point west on the Pacific Railroad) in early December, 1861 encountered disjointed, desperate elements of the Missouri State Guard. On December 8, twenty-five secessionists surrounded an unarmed foraging party, taking their overcoats, boots, hats, and seized the four wagons of corn.¹⁹² On the night of December 16 and into the morning of the 17, Union forces south of Lexington skirmished with a group of recruits heading south to join Price. Most of the secessionists escaped, but the Union forces did capture eighty prisoners. On the morning of December 19, word reached the First Nebraska's camp that a party of thirteen-hundred MSG recruits (possibly a foraging party) was heading south to meet Price. Union forces gave chase, capturing nine hundred men and most of their supplies.¹⁹³

Both Price and his Missouri State Guard, and many of the Union soldiers in Missouri, believed that December meant going into winter quarters; it was uncommon at the time for armies to fight in the harsh winter months. That belief allowed Price to break up his army for the purpose of organizing Confederate regiments and to send men home.

¹⁹² James E. Potter, *Standing Firmly by the Flag: Nebraska Territory and the Civil War, 1861-1867* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 37, 40; "Nat Letter," dated December 9, 1861 published in the *Platte Valley Herald* (Plattsmouth, NE), December 19, 1861, Nebraska State Historical Society Microfilm Collection.

¹⁹³ The group chased down on December 19 came from the Lexington area. While it is possible that a few small pockets of recruits from that region were attempting to get to Price, it is more likely that a force of this size was one of Price's foraging parties as most recruits from that region had already found their way to Price, either in June or during the siege in September. The MSG men gave up after firing two rounds at their pursuers. William Pollock letter, printed in the *Nebraska Advertiser*, January 9, 1862, Nebraska State Historical Society Microfilm Collection.

Catching Price unawares, fourteen thousand Union troops under command of Brigadier General Samuel Curtis moved to strike Price. Price sent an urgent plea to McCulloch in Arkansas, requesting aid. McCulloch had not yet returned from Richmond and McCulloch's subordinates were unwilling to act without his approval, especially since the situation concerned Price. Facing Curtis' organized and overwhelming force, Price made the decision to retreat from Springfield in mid-January, 1862, uniting with McCulloch's forces in northern Arkansas' Boston Mountains.¹⁹⁴ With Price's removal, Missouri was secured for the Union.

Price's decision to retreat into Arkansas did not endear him to many of his men. Volunteers like R.C. Carter had joined the MSG to guard Missouri and saw the unit as a state militia, believing they were not supposed to fight beyond the boundaries of their state. McCulloch and Price's combined force confronted Curtis at the Battle of Elkhorn Tavern, March 6-8, 1862. Price and the Missourians were placed under command of newly-appointed General Earl Van Dorn, who eventually called a retreat. R.C. Carter stated in his memoirs that he believed they could have completely defeated Curtis' force had Van Dorn not called the retreat. Carter believed the situation had been carefully organized by the Confederate government to force Missourians into the Confederate army by allowing Missouri to be completely overrun.¹⁹⁵

Price's retreat from Missouri did not impress men in McCulloch's army either. Sergeant William Watson of the 3rd Louisiana stated General Price's "masterpiece in military tactics was his retreating...there were few generals in the service who could

¹⁹⁴ "More Again" letter, January 15, 1862, *Nebraska Advertiser*, page 2, columns 3-4, January 30, 1862; Peterson, *Sterling Price's Lieutenants*, 9-10, Shea, *The Campaign for Pea Ridge*, 11-12.

¹⁹⁵ Carter, "A Short Sketch," 6-9.

better conduct a retrograde movement and fall back in better order.”¹⁹⁶ Watson saw Price in early February ride past McCulloch’s army, dressed in full uniform complete with cocked hat and feathers. No one cheered.¹⁹⁷

The rapid advance of General Nathaniel Lyon’s troops in early June, 1861 caught the Missouri State Guard in the midst of trying to arm, equip, and organize after having lost critical time in the late winter and early spring of 1861. Lyon’s swift drive deprived the Missouri State Guard of their natural organization point, Jefferson City, and cut off groups of recruits from the main MSG column. General Sterling Price did not prove to be the great commander initially hoped for. The victory at Wilson’s Creek came largely thanks to the presence of Benjamin McCulloch’s organized army which gave the Confederate forces the advantage in numbers. Alone after Wilson’s Creek, Price gave Missouri’s secessionists a limited victory at Dry Wood Creek but failed to follow up the victory with an assault on Fort Scott. His victory at Lexington was facilitated by his overwhelming numbers. When confronted by the superior numbers of General John C. Fremont, Price refused to stand and fight. By December, his own ambitions for a commission, coupled with supply problems and the waning interests of many of the men, meant that his force was fractured and unable to resist the advance of General Curtis. Forced to withdraw to Arkansas and the relative safety afforded by McCulloch’s Army, Price and the Missouri State Guard lost Missouri and its resources to the Union, a major blow for the Confederate cause in the Trans-Mississippi Theater.

¹⁹⁶ Watson, *Life in the Confederate Army*, 272.

¹⁹⁷ Watson stated that the men of McCulloch’s army were still angry over the holes in the intelligence Price had gathered prior to the Battle of Wilson’s Creek. Watson, *Life in the Confederate Army*, 273-275.

Conclusion:
Orphans and Guerillas

Missouri sat at the center of the slavery debate from its admittance into the Union in 1820. Missouri became the target for anti-slavery debates throughout the 1840s and 1850s. When the border war erupted after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, the image of the Missouri “border ruffian” came to embody everything deemed wrong with the institution of slavery, whether or not that image applied to every Missourian. Under intense criticism, many Missourians increasingly considered themselves Southerners. Despite the popular image of Missouri as Southern, Missouri’s reliance on slavery was limited due to climate. Large sections of southern Missouri were from the “butternut” culture of the upper South. They relied on subsistence agriculture to survive and held almost no slaves. Many of them proved to be pro-Union in their sentiments. In addition, northern Missouri became economically linked to the North via the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad. All of these factors limited the strength of a secessionist movement.

By the time of the Camp Jackson affair and the shooting of civilians in St. Louis, Missouri had lost too much time to organize an effective secessionist force. Jackson and Price received a temporary delay with the return of General Harney and the MSG continued to make preparations, but the Union’s replacement of Harney with General Lyon cut short their time. Lyon’s rapid offensive up the Missouri River and his seizure of the existing railroad infrastructure impeded the supply and organization of the MSG.

The placement of Sterling Price in command of the Missouri State Guard hampered the overall success of the organization. The most iconic victory of the MSG over Union forces in Missouri, Wilson’s Creek, was executed with the aid of General

McCulloch and his Confederate army. Price's political ambitions created a rift between he and General McCulloch, and their inability to work with one another destroyed what chance the Confederacy had to control Missouri. After McCulloch left, Price proved his unwillingness to engage an enemy force unless he vastly outnumbered them. Ultimately, the supply and armament problems the State Guard faced throughout 1861 and early 1862 forced Price to break up his army to find supplies for winter. Price also struggled to inspire his men to continue the fight when their enlistments expired, and many of them chose to chance the journey home rather than reenlist. In addition to supply and morale problems, Price's own ambitions for a Confederate commission prompted him to reorganize his army to form a Missouri Confederate Brigade. As a result, Price could not muster a force able to oppose the Union's winter offensive, and he was forced to leave Missouri.

After leaving Missouri, the MSG united with McCulloch's army in the Boston Mountains of northern Arkansas. The Confederate sympathizers which made up Missouri's government-in-exile were forced to flee to Arkansas as well. On March 6-8, 1862, McCulloch and Price engaged Union forces near Elk Horn Tavern (also known as Pea Ridge). McCulloch himself, riding too close to the front lines, was killed, depriving his army—and the Confederacy—of one of its most beloved and effective commanders in the region. During the fighting at Pea Ridge, the Missourians were placed under the command of General Earl Van Dorn, newly appointed commander of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi district. The Confederate government appointed him over McCulloch and Price with the hope that he would be able to temper the feud between the two generals.

General Van Dorn, seeing the futility of continuing the fight at Pea Ridge, called a retreat, angering many of the Missourians. From that point forward, the newly-organized Missouri Battalion became an “orphan brigade,” unable to return home until the end of the war. Price remained under command of Van Dorn during the defeats at Iuka and Corinth, Mississippi in 1862. Price became obsessed with returning to Missouri. Like many of his men, Price believed that their purpose was to defend their home state, and he repeatedly sent letters to the Confederate government pleading to be sent back to Missouri. Price eventually achieved his wish in late 1862, but the bulk of his men who had fought under him at Wilson’s Creek and Lexington were left in Mississippi, the Confederate army there unwilling to spare them. Price took command of the newly-formed Army of Missouri, made up of new recruits from Missouri and Arkansas, and fought limited actions in Arkansas before he launched one final raid into Missouri in 1864. His men destroyed as much Union infrastructure in western Missouri and eastern Kansas as they could, and reached as far north as Kansas City, before they were forced to retreat into Arkansas.¹⁹⁸

The First Missouri Battalion, often described as being barely better than an armed mob and unable to be turned into proper soldiers, became one of the most well regarded brigades in the western Confederate armies. They saw service at Vicksburg before being sent further east, serving in the Army of Tennessee for the rest of the war.¹⁹⁹ Governor Jackson did not live long enough to see the successes of the men he had recruited. Sent

¹⁹⁸ Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West*, 130-134. For more information, see: Bevier, *History of the First and Second Missouri Confederate Brigades*; Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West*; Reynolds, *General Sterling Price and the Confederacy*.

¹⁹⁹ For more information on the First Missouri Battalion’s service in the Army of Tennessee, see: Daniel, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee*.

into exile in Arkansas along with the other pro-secessionists in the Missouri government, Jackson died of cancer on December 7, 1862.²⁰⁰

For many historians, the guerilla war that engulfed Missouri for the rest of the war became the center of attention, as men like Quantrill and “Bloody Bill” Anderson have dominated the Missouri Civil War mystique. The inability of Missouri’s secessionists to convince Missourians to take the bold step of secession resulted in a limited secessionist movement in Missouri that laid the foundation for the bitter guerilla war that followed the exit of Price from Missouri. With Lyon’s rapid advance up the Missouri River in early June, 1861 and his posting of Union forces across Missouri, effectively disrupted the organization of the Missouri State Guard.

The disruption of the organization of the MSG left small pockets of Missouri Confederates scattered across the state, unable to reach the main force. These bands of men found their natural role to be the disruption of Union supplies and troop movements throughout Missouri, with the hope of allowing the main Missouri Confederate force time to organize, arm, train, and launch a successful counteroffensive. Once Union forces pushed Price’s force from the state, the small roving bands remained, unable to resume life as usual for fear of being caught, tried, and imprisoned or worse. Their situation made them angry and aggressive, and they struck back against the Union, committing bloody atrocities that shocked the nation.

With its victory in Missouri, the Union kept control of a vital lynchpin in their overall war strategy and played a key role in the Union victory. The Union maintained control of miles of waterways key General Winfield Scott’s “Anaconda Plan” and control of the vital communications and overland routes to the western territories and their

²⁰⁰ Phillips, *Missouri’s Confederate*, 272-273.

wealth of mineral resources. In 1863, using their advantage on the upper Mississippi River, Union forces succeeded in capturing Vicksburg, Mississippi and, with it, complete control of the Mississippi River, cutting off Arkansas, Texas, and Louisiana from the rest of the Confederacy. They could then turn their attention toward the eastern theater of war. In 1864, with General Ulysses S. Grant overseeing the Union offensive in Virginia and General William Tecumseh Sherman's infamous "March to the Sea," the Union strangled the Confederacy. On April 9, 1865, Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox and the war came to a close.

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