

## **CHAPTER TWELVE**

### **CIVIL WAR**

The history of Maries County during the Civil War has so many facets that it is very doubtful if anyone can now write a connected account of that period. Every family of any size had members on both sides of the conflict. Sometimes there were regularly enlisted soldiers in uniform; sometimes they were only outspoken in their opinions; sometimes they were members of bushwhacking bands whose spoken reasons for their being was in favor of one side or the other; sometimes they were just plain thieves and murderers.

Almost without exception the Virginians and their descendants were Confederates, while the Tennesseans were divided somewhere near half and half; this resulted in more than half of the men actually in uniform from here being in the Southern Army. There was no Confederate

organization among the men who stayed at home, of course. But this group furnished recruits for the Home Guards, Enrolled Militia, Provisional Militia, and others of different names, but all for the same purpose; they acted as state police and, after a fashion, kept the state quiet while the regular troops were engaged elsewhere. Counting in these organizations the Union cause had a greater number of men on the payroll than did the Confederate.

The situation was even further complicated by the variety of opinions held by the people, even after the conflict began. The sober, solid thinkers were opposed to war, and at the same time even a fair-sized part of the slaveowners realized that slavery was an unsound economic practice, and that sooner or later the slaves must be freed or disposed of otherwise. This class regarded war as a silly method of settling the question and trusted to time and an earnest effort to work out a suitable plan.

The next class were hotheads who firmly believed their side to be right and that a war was the only way to settled any difference. This class furnished most of the uniformed men on both sides at the beginning of the war. Still another class was the demagogues (and some even classed as high as politicians) who fanned the passions and prejudices already aroused over the question of slavery into flames for their own advancement, and agitated until war started. This class was responsible for the war, but felt very little of its horrors, being busily engaged in upholding the Union by holding office and lining their own nests. The remaining, and much larger, class most nearly approached in thought those who opposed slavery and the war to end it.

These four classes of belief made up the main body of the people at the outbreak of the war, but all four classes were divided among themselves over the question of the state's right to secede from the union, and

in the year preceding and following the outbreak of hostilities this question was larger in the peoples' thought than the slavery question. This resulted in the anomaly of some men being strictly loyal in word and deed, and at the same time being strong believers in states rights and strongly pro-slavery.

Upon the outbreak of hostilities the situation was further complicated by the appointment of some men of these lines of thought to office, and of their election as officers by the volunteer companies and regiments. In striving to maintain order their actions were naturally influenced by their beliefs, and the outcry at once arose that they were southern sympathizers. Others who were anti-slavery and strongly for the union over the state had charges of oppression filed against them, and these charges were sometimes true. It was officially charged that two-thirds of the horses in some commands were stolen or seized from civilians without compensation.

This confusion of charges, counter-charges, lying, and plain thievery in which hostilities started did not clear up as it progressed, but grew worse. Except for the Battle of Wilsons Creek and a few affairs in 1861, the actual scene of war was far from our borders; one Union Army held the line of St. Louis-Rolla-Springfield; another held the Missouri River from St. Louis to Jefferson City, between which lines there were no organized Confederate forces. Rolla was strongly held by several brigades of volunteer troops, as was Jefferson City, and both places were fortified. Vienna and similar small places were policed by the militia, strictly a state organization, although part of them were enrolled in the national army.

Maries County has no Civil War history in the sense of battles fought or acts of war within her boundaries. One lone skirmish, the Battle of Bloomington, in which the only casualty, Louis G. Wussler, was an innocent bystander, marks the extent of actual military operations

in the county, but the number of men contributed by her to both armies far exceeds the number taken in World War I.

The Federal forces at Bloomington were commanded by Dr. Curtis, and the Confederate by Myscal Johnson; although there was only one death on the field, several of the wounded died later and a number were maimed for life. The date of the battle is fixed as July 24, 1861, by the filing of a claim by Francis M. Johnson, merchant of Bloomington, for \$2491.00 for 'goods, wares, and merchandise taken from him by Federal troops, and used by them.' Needless to say the bill was never paid.

The southern army received the first enlistments from this county, mostly in membership in the Missouri State Guard, the state troops of that time, of which General Price was commander. They were strictly state troops and so remained until long after Wilsons Creek, almost a year from the war's start, in fact, until they were mustered into the Confederate service in a body. Many remained with Price's command to the end; some were scattered all over the Confederate service. So varied were their services that on July 4, 1863, when Smith Henderson and Reverend T. P. Hill were swimming the Mississippi to avoid surrendering at Vicksburg, three of their former comrades were charging up the shot-scarred side of Little Round Hill at Gettysburg under Pickett. Robert Cowan, father of Judge Elmer Cowan, was among those in the Union Army taking pot shots at Henderson and Hill, and Thomas Edwards was on the union reception committee awaiting the southerners at Gettysburg. Scarcely one important engagement in the Civil War failed to have men from this county in both armies, their number being not far from equal. But no record of service was preserved at the time, and it is impossible to compile one of accuracy now.

The service rendered by our men was almost entirely outside the state after 1861. During that year fifty-nine

engagements, ranging from skirmishes to pitched battles, were carried on in the state, but after December, 1860, no engagements were fought in this state (sic) until Price's Raid in 1864. Between these dates the war was strictly political in Missouri. Since there were no feats of arms within the county to record, it may not be amiss to here set down some of the local conditions under which the war was fought in this state.

I think it is now plain to any thinking man that the Civil War was entirely unnecessary, and that more than likely the prompt hanging of a dozen loud-mouthed jackasses on both sides would have prevented it. But they were not hung, so the war was fought. At the outbreak, Claiborne F. Jackson was the governor, and the Missouri State Guard was its armed force, with Shelby, Cockrell, and Cockerill as Division Commanders. They fought and won the Battle of Wilsons Creek and drove the Federal troops back to Rolla, where preparations were made to retreat to St. Louis. Had Price's advice been followed, Rolla and possibly St. Louis would have been captured by the Confederates and the course of the war changed. However, General McCullough, commanding the Arkansas troops, refused his assistance, and Price's men were too few to undertake it alone, so the battle was barren of lasting results. By fall Rolla had been strongly reinforced and Springfield reoccupied, from which time Maries County was north of the Union lines from these cities to St. Louis. By that time most of the men from this county who saw actual service were in one or the other of the regular armies.

Union troops from St. Louis having occupied Jefferson City, a State Convention was called which met there in the summer of 1861. It was for the duration of the war the governing body of the state, its acts being called Ordinances. The first of these was to declare Governor Jackson deposed for treason, and to appoint Hamilton R. Gamble Provisional Governor. He held office until his death in 1864. Several other state officers

were also superseded.

An early Ordinance under which Governor Gamble acted on August 24, 1861, provided for a force of forty-two thousand six-months volunteers to 'preserve order and peace in the community.' Ten thousand were to be cavalry and thirty-two thousand infantry, and six-thousand were to be recruited from each of the seven congressional districts in the state. The Radical union men promptly charged the governor with raising this force to insure the election of Conservative (Confederate) officers at the election in November, 1861 (this election was later called off and officials who had taken the oath of loyalty continued in office by the Convention). The six-months volunteers were disbanded in January 1862, after only six thousand had been recruited. They were paid in defense warrants issued by the state, which caused much dissatisfaction, because they were only cashable at a large discount.

The Missouri State Militia, authorized under Ordinance of October 17, 1861, was 'for the purpose of putting down marauders and defend ing the peaceful citizens of the state.' All free, white, able-bodied males between eighteen and forty-five were eligible. Delays were encountered while arrangements were being made with the United States to feed and clothe the troops. But once these difficulties were ironed out, until when the enrollment had reached 12,000 men, Congress limited the number to be paid to 10,000. The justification for this force was that they released an equal number of regular federal troops for service elsewhere. The same charges of oppressing Radicals and oppressing Conservatives were made against this organization from its start, which is proof that Governor Gamble continued his policy of fairness to both sides. One of the main arguments concerning the militia was whether or not they should be used to catch runaway slaves, which were property. The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, failed to settle the question, since it applied only

to states that had seceded, which Missouri had not.

Under another early Ordinance of the Convention southern sympathizers were placed under civil bonds of from one to five thousand dollars, and up, conditioned on their not committing or countenancing any disloyal acts. Williamson Mosby, father of Joseph and Samuel, was the first man bonded in Osage County, the figure being set at ten thousand dollars, which indicated their opinion of his loyalty. Under Ordinance made effective in 1862 a system of 'assessments' was in effect. 'Rebels and rebel sympathizers in the vicinity of a place where the act is committed' were assessed five thousand dollars for every union soldier or citizen killed, from one to five thousand for every wounded, and full value of all property taken or destroyed. A board of three in each county listed disloyal citizens, made assessments, and collected damages for acts committed. This order was approved by the Convention at its 1862 session, but the militia was ordered to take no hand in enforcing it. Its operation was suspended in 1863.

By order of July 22, 1862, every able-bodied male subject to military duty was ordered to go to the nearest military post and report for duty to the commanding officer, bringing, he he had them, arms and a horse. All arms not in the hands of loyal men were to be confiscated and used in the public defense. An explanatory order of July 27th states that the purpose of this order was to enable the people to 'at once and forever put down robbery, plunder, and guerilla warfare.' A supplementary order of July 28th permitted exemptions from service in the militia for a period of one year on payment of ten dollars and one-tenth of one per cent of the tangible property of the person exempted. This was later raised to thirty dollars and one percent.

Another supplement dated August 4th commanded all disloyal persons to enroll and surrender their arms, and, a still later one, on August 29th, notified the troops that the Quartermaster General would supply them with hard bread, coffee, sugar, and salt, and that 'subsistence required in addition to these articles were to be taken from disloyal persons.' From this date a man's loyalty was in some degree measured by a militiaman's appetite. Members of this force were not allowed to enlist in the Federal services, nor were they subject to the draft. Some seventy regiments were organized under this order, and most of the army service in the state, outside the regular armies, was in this organization. A company was organized in Vienna of which Dr. Latham, and later William Beesley, was Captain, Their duties were largely as local guards and on local scouting service and at no time were they far from home. They were later reenforced and partly superceded here by a company of which J. L. Dennis was Captain and T. J. Ellis, Lieutenant, which remained here until the close of the war.

This organization was the Enrolled Missouri Militia, and from it men were from time to time drafted for continuous service. These men were organized into Provisional Regiments. The remainder of the men in this organization served from time to time as called, but spent most of their time on furlough. They were placed under command of the Federal Department Commander 'until further orders' by order of Governor Gamble, but their status as being Federal or state troops remained a bone of contention during the entire war. Actually, none of the Missouri troops were ever more than constructively in Federal service, although their status was something like Beckman's spotted cow, 'sometimes a white cow and sometimes a black cow.' The Radicals denounced the whole Enrolled Missouri Militia as illegal, but it remained the largest armed force in the state until the close of the war.

No Negroes were enlisted in the various state troop organizations, but a few were enlisted directly into the Federal service under a War Department order of October 13, 1864, authorizing this in the states of Maryland, Kentucky, and Missouri, and which was later extended to include Delaware. This gave countenance to the contention that the Emancipation Proclamation did not apply to Missouri by providing that colored men enlisting under the order 'shall thereafter be free.' It also provided that slaves belonging to owners who had not countenanced the rebellion might enlist with the consent of their owners, who would be compensated in a sum not to exceed three hundred dollars each. The order further provided that if a sufficient number were not obtained in thirty days, that slaves might be enlisted without the consent of their owners, but with the compensation retained.

The Home Guards were almost entirely a St. Louis organization, largely German. It consisted of several regiments organized in that city by Union sympathizers when war appeared inevitable, but before its actual outbreak. They composed most of the Union Army at Wilsons Creek, but were soon enrolled directly into Federal service and thereafter performed little actual duty in the state, operating mostly in Tennessee and farther south. The Paw Paw Militia was a reorganization of the Enrolled Militia in the northwestern part of the state.

The foregoing is the official setup of the Civil War in Missouri, but the bald statements here made can in no way describe the actual situation. By the time hostilities actually began the minds of most people were already inflamed by several years of agitation. Every neighborhood had its quarrels and divisions, and no sooner had hostilities actually begun than these neighborhood quarrels developed into feuds of varying intensity. Accusations of disloyalty were made by both sides, the majority mostly untrue, and as the conflict gained

force abroad those remaining at home resorted more and more to violence, always in the guise of enforcing the law, but almost always in settlement of personal dislikes and feuds. Livestock was killed and barns burned (five in one week in the west end of the county) and it was not long until people began to kill each other, sometimes from ambush and sometimes in raids by bands called bushwhackers. No matter what the alleged cause of the killing was, it usually had a robbery motive connected with it because most of the avowed southern men had long since entered the army. These excesses were committed in part by Radical Unionists, but mostly by plain thieves who actually had no preference of sides in the main conflict. More than a hundred outright murders were committed in this county.

The Emancipation Ordinance as passed by the Convention July 1, 1863, ordered that slavery should cease in Missouri on July 4, 1870, but that all slaves should remain under the control of their former owners for the following periods; all those over forty years old for the balance of their lives; all those under twelve until they reached the age of twenty-three; all others until July 4, 1876. The former owners' authority over the freedman was to remain in effect until the above dates, except that they were not to be sold, nor were they to be assessed for tax purposes. The Ordinance was in line with the recommendation for gradual emancipation made to the Convention by President Lincoln in 1862, and still earlier in 1860 by the outgoing Governor Stewart. From the vantage point of seventy-five years later, this plan appears to have been much better than the one finally adopted.

One of the sidelights of the war is a record found among the proceedings of the Convention in 1864, copying a petition sent in by several ladies from St. Louis and vicinity, asking it to pass an Ordinance permitting a man to have more than one wife at a time.

No action was taken by the governor without bitter opposition of the Radical element, and charges flew thick and fast at the slightest excuse. Both sides carried their troubles to President Lincoln at every opportunity until he expressed himself as tormented beyond endurance by their quarrel and that he firmly believed that 'either faction would rather see the defeat of their adversary than of Jefferson Davis.'

As it was said in the beginning of this chapter, no acts of war were performed in this county aside from the skirmish at Bloomington. The only military movements even close to this county were the operations around Rolla at the beginning of the war, and Price's Raid near its close.

The City of Rolla, then some four years old, started out by being violently southern. Meetings were held and many speeches were made from the time Fort Sumter was captured until the early summer of 1861. It began to look like the quickest way to end the conflict was to feed the speech-makers raw meat a few days and then 'give 'em room accordin' to their strenth.' This happy situation was sadly changed about the middle of June, 1861, by the appearance of Colonel Franz Sigel and some twelve hundred Union troops who didn't want to talk, but gave every indication of wanting to fight. This column had been brought on the newly-completed Frisco Railroad to Dillon Station, from which point they marched into Rolla, meeting no opposition. Other troops arrived shortly, and thereafter Rolla was a Federal garrison from which many operations were directed south and west, and so remained during the war. As robberies and murders became frequent in the unoccupied sections of the state, more and more families, including great numbers from this county, refugeed there. Many of the men were employed as teamsters in huge wagon-trains in which supplies for the Federal forces were hauled a hundred and twenty-five miles to Springfield and even beyond. Many others were engaged as blacksmiths, wagon

and harness makers, and all the trades necessary to keep an army ranging in size up to fourteen thousand men ready for action.

Price's Raid, the reason for which has been hotly disputed, was made in the fall of 1864. His army entered southeast Missouri from Arkansas early in September of that year, moving north through the lowlands in the general direction of St. Louis. Some assert that there was an understanding with the Knights of the Golden Circle, a secret political organization with southern sympathies, by which its members would join his column as it passed into the state, and that their combined forces would move on St. Louis. If any such arrangement ever existed, nothing came of it, and the army gained few recruits during its march. T. C. Reynolds, accompanied the army with the intention of occupying the Governor's chair in case Jefferson City were captured, Jackson having died.

By the latter part of September Price had driven off small forces opposing him at Fort Davidson, near Ironton, and occupied Pacific, cutting both the Missouri Pacific and Frisco railroads. He turned west between the rail lines, definitely abandoning any idea of capturing St. Louis which had been strongly reenforced. His army moved in three columns; Shelby on the south passing through Owensville, and Marmaduke along the Missouri River, the Arkansas column being between them.

As soon as Price's rearguard cleared Pacific the Frisco was hastily repaired and some six thousand union troops sent to reenforce the Rolla garrison. As soon as they arrived General McNeil with some 3,500 cavalry started from Rolla and Cuba, moving through this county by various roads to the Castle Rock Road and then to the fords of the Osage and Jefferson City. This column crossed the Osage just ahead of Price, and in combination with the troops already there made Jefferson City too strong to be captured.

Price crossed the Osage behind the union forces and continued his western way through southern Cole County, laying a heavy hand on the pigpens and hen roosts as he went. One of his command likely required considerable medical attention, having commandeered an old German's horse down on the Osage-Maries County line, his wife advising the owner to let him go in the interest of peace. When the soldier tried to make off with one of her blankets too, she clapped a pan of scalding water over his head and nearly killed him.

The two armies played tag with each other clear across the state until a month later, when the battle of the Big Blue was fought in Jackson County in which Price was badly defeated. From Pacific to the Big Blue the opposing armies were never over twenty-five miles apart and generally less, and no reason has been recorded why they could not have fought much sooner. Indeed, after a passage of more than seventy-five years, and from an admitted un-military viewpoint, it looks like neither army thought much about fighting until there was nothing left to steal.

A recent issue of the Hermann Advertiser reported the finding of an old cannon ball on a hill east of town, which fitted into the muzzle of the old cannon on the courthouse lawn in that city. The item brought an interesting letter from Dr. George W. Tainter Senior, long a resident of Hermann and Linn and well known to the older persons in this county, in which he revealed that the shot was fired at Marmaduke's column as it appeared on the hill east of town by the sturdy union sympathizers of Hermann. They had sent their women and children and all their boats out to Graf's Island in the Missouri River, and thought that they might as well annoy the invaders a little. They had two cannon balls and a little powder, so when the hill was fairly covered with federal soldiers, they put in half their powder and one of the cannon balls and let drive in the general direction of the east. The shot did little damage, but it gave Marmaduke

the idea he had a fight on his hands, and he sent for reinforcements.

While Marmaduke thus hesitated the local citizens found another location for their gun that they liked better. So they moved it over and when Marmaduke sent out a reconnoitering party they let drive at it, too, with their last cannon ball. Again the only effect was mental; having been fired on from two positions, Marmaduke was sure he was facing a battery, which of course would have troops in support. The upshot of the whole matter was that he delayed occupying the town two days in getting ready to capture it, and these two days gave McNell's cavalry time to get to Jefferson City ahead of him. So it may very well have been that the two cannon balls fired fifty miles away that went nowhere and hit nothing saved the state capital from capture.