



THE BORDER STAR

A Publication of the CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE of
WESTERN MISSOURI 1209 Skyline Dr. Liberty, MO 64068

BLUNT AND QUANTRILL AT BAXTER SPRINGS

by Ed Harris

It was the fall of 1863. General James Blunt, Commander of The Department of the Frontier, had decided to move his headquarters from Fort Scott, Kansas, to Fort Smith Arkansas. Blunt had captured Fort Smith without a fight on September 1 and was anxious to move his headquarters closer to the expected action.

Charles Quantrill and his guerrillas had raided Lawrence on August 21, killing about 150 men and boys, burning and plundering the town. The guerrillas made good their escape, scattering and vanishing into the Missouri countryside.

Outraged at the attack on Lawrence, General Thomas Ewing, Commander of the Border District of Missouri, issued his infamous Order #11 expelling all citizens, loyal and unloyal, from the border counties of Missouri. Quantrill and his men had depended on the "secesh" citizens in Missouri to provide supplies and shelter. Denied this support and, with the onset of the fall, Quantrill and his men headed south to winter in Texas.

In May of 1863, Blunt had been replaced as Commander of the Department of Kansas. Happy at being rid of the responsibility for the troublesome Kansas-Missouri border, Blunt wrote, *"While I did not admire the motive that prompted this change, yet so far as the change itself was concerned, I was well satisfied, for the reason that I desired and intended, in any event to take to the field to operate against the enemy south of the Arkansas river; and to be relieved of the responsibility of protecting the border, liable to rebel raids from Missouri, when I could not be there to personally direct*

affairs, was to me certainly most satisfactory."

On October 4, Blunt, with his staff, regimental band, and escort, set off to Fort Smith from Fort Scott. Blunt wrote, *On the 6th we met with a party of Guerrillas, numbering 650, under Quantrill, in the vicinity of Baxter Springs. As they were dressed in blue uniform and carried our flag, they were at first supposed to be federal troops, but a doubt arising as to whether they were friends or enemies, I approached their line, alone, to ascertain their true character, and when within 300 yards of them, they opened fire on me. When, upon turning to my escort to signal them to return the fire and charge their line, I discovered that the entire escort (who were new recruits) had broken at the first fire of the enemy, and were flying in disorder over the prairie."*

"In vain I endeavored to halt and rally any portion of them until they had continued their stampede for a distance of two miles, when I succeeded in halting a squad of 15 men, with which I checked the advance of the enemy, and followed them back over the field that was strewn with our dead. Sending six of the 15 men with Lieut. Tappen of my staff back to Fort Scott for other troops, with the remaining nine I hovered close to the enemy, creating in their mind the impression that I had a large force coming up, which induced them to rapidly move off. In this affair 87 men, including escort, clerks, teamsters, servants, and musicians were killed. All who fell wounded or taken prisoners were inhumanely murdered...Had the escort stood their ground, as they should have done, instead of becoming panic stricken,
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all would have been well, and the horrible massacre would not have occurred."

This was a remarkable version of the events at Baxter Springs. Most accounts tell a strikingly different story.

Blunt's party approached Baxter Springs, a post established to graze army livestock. The post was garrisoned to about 100 men, mostly colored troops. An advance detachment of Quantrill's force, under Dave Pool, rode into the post yelling and shooting. Quantrill's force was still northeast of the post. Quantrill saw the approach of Blunt, coming down the road with about 100 men, a band wagon, commissary, and an ambulance train. He formed his company along the road and waited. Blunt had not heard the shooting, and supposing the men, dressed in blue, were a welcoming committee, he turned off the road and marched in file parallel to it, planning a left face for a grand salute. When the federals closed with Quantrill's men, the rebels opened fire at point blank range. The union troops fled in panic. Blunt and his second in command, Major Curtis, vainly tried to rally the troops. Unsuccessful, Blunt, Curtis, and the wife of an officer in Fort Smith, fled on their horses. Curtis was shot down and killed. The bandwagon was surrounded and the unarmed musicians gunned down. The guerrillas chased down the other scattered soldiers, shooting 60 or 70 men. Blunt escaped across the prairie.

Quantrill, satisfied with the results of his attack, called off the pursuit. His men looted the supplies and headed south to the Indian Territories. Quantrill boasted, "By God, Shelby could not whip Blunt; neither could Marmaduke, but I whipped him." Blunt, chagrined at the disaster at Baxter Springs, returned to Fort Scott and assembled a force of 1500 men and a supply train of 700 wagons and left for Fort Smith again. Blunt had never suffered such a defeat and was replaced as Commander of the Army of the Frontier.

Sources used for this article:

Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865, Jay Monaghan, University of Nebraska Press, 1955.
Gen. Blunt's Account of His Civil War Experiences, The Kansas Historical Quarterly, May 1932.

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S TRIVIA

- (1) Diarrhea
- (2) General William S. Rosecrans
- (3) A fence rail, which was used as punishment by being made to sit on it for hours at a time.
- (4) Missouri never formally seceded from the Union. The rebel legislature passed (10-31-1861) "an act declaring the political ties heretofore existing between the State of Missouri and the United States of America dissolved", (11-02-1861) "An act ratifying the Constitution of the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of America", and (10-31-1861) "Convention between the Confederate States of America and the State of Missouri". Governor Claiborne Jackson signed these acts on November 3, 1861. He wrote Jefferson Davis on 11-5-1861, "...It is proper that I should state that the act would have at once have been submitted to a vote of the people but for the reason that the state is now invaded by the Federal army to such an extent as to preclude the possibility of holding an election at the present time..." The rebel legislature lacked a quorum when they passed the above measures. A vote of the people of Missouri on these acts was never made.

THIS MONTH'S TRIVIA

- (1) What Confederate General was fatally shot at the Wilderness by a confederate soldier, near the place and in much the same way as "Stonewall" Jackson?
 - (2) What did the following generals have in common? L.A. Armistead, E.J. Farnsworth, J.F. Reynolds, P.J. Semmes, S. Vincent, S.K. Zook.
 - (3) Can you match these generals with their horses?
- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1) Meade | a) Richmond |
| 2) G.H. Thomas | b) Sam |
| 3) U.S. Grant | c) moscow |
| 4) R.E. Lee | d) Baldy |
| 5) McClellan | e) Fire Eater |
| 6) W. Sherman | f) Billy |
| 7) T.J. Jackson | g) Rlenzi |
| 8) P. Sheridan | h) Cincinnati |
| 9) A.S. Johnston | i) Daniel Webster |
| 10) P. Kearney | j) Virginia |
| 11) Jeb Stuart | k) Old Sorrel |

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Total Membership - 881
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THE PRESIDENTS CORNER

by Sonny Wells

I guess it is time to say adieu to some of you. For those who have not paid your 1994 dues, this will be your last newsletter. Can you imagine not getting a chance to work another of Ed's crossword puzzles or answer those very unique trivia questions? Getting your 1994 dues check to Fred will eliminate this hypertensive turmoil. Personally, I have found the front page historic items very enlightening. Ed's ability to dig these stories out of the old files and put them into readable articles is a real talent and adds much to our historic knowledge.

The need for a logo to put on name tags, letterheads, t-shirts, etc. has become a frequent subject of discussion. The board has decided to have a contest to choose a new logo. (see announcement on page 4, ed.)

Last week I made contact with a Civil War buff in Cedar Rapids, Iowa about a Civil War M.O.H. winner buried at Cascade, Iowa. He knew my name because he had a copy of our newsletter he had seen at Ottumwa, Ia. I have since heard from two other CWRT groups in Iowa. Their comments were mostly about how good it was to make contact with other CWRT's and they really enjoyed our newsletter. It seems that there are more CWRT's in Iowa than there are in Missouri, and we have five times the population! I invited the Iowa groups to join us on our tour of the Albany battlefield on May 14. (see announcement on this page about the tour) Ottumwa has already accepted.

THE FEBRUARY MEETING WILL BE WEDNESDAY, FEB. 9, at 7:00 pm at the Truman High School Library, 3301 S. Noland Road. The meeting will feature a program called "Ladies of the 1860's night" You will note the emphasis on "ladies." The Platte Purchase Players of Weston have each adopted a woman from 1860 Weston. Each woman was researched as to dress, community involvement, family heritage, and lifestyle. Included in their presentation is "the language of the fan", showing how women conveyed their thoughts without speaking.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

March - Tom Goodrich, noted Quantrill researcher and author of "Bloody Dawn" will speak on the Lawrence "raid" and give us insights on how he researched his book.

April - Steve Janssen, curator of the Elizabeth Watkins museum in Lawrence will talk about the Lawrence "massacre." After the break there will be an open forum on the question, "Was Quantrill justified in "sacking" Lawrence?"

May - Bloody Bill Anderson and the battle of Albany. We will have a tour of the battlefield the following Saturday. (more details later)

RECEIPE FOR PERSIMMON PUDDING

1/2 gal. persimmons, whole (run through
collander) about 2 C pulp
4 C milk
2 C sugar
1/2 C butter or shortening
2 C flour
4 eggs
1 t each, cloves, cocoa, allspice, & nutmeg
1 t soda
1/4 t salt
Cream sugar, butter then add eggs and
beat. Add persimmon mixture and beat.
Add milk and stir well. Add balance of
ingredients, then bake 1 hour at 350
degrees. Turn down temp. to 325 deg. and
bake until done. Test with toothpick or
table knife in middle. Serve with whipped
cream.

Recipe provided by Mr. and Mrs.
McCorkendale

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS	DOWN
1) Pleasonton	1) gloves
2) Shelby	2) Davis
3) Anderson	3) ton
4) Price	4) Rosecrans
5) Jennison	5) grey
6) Custer	6) Chase
7) Lyon	7) Benteen
8) Grant	8) Youngers
9) James	9) Eads
10) ass	10) Lee
11) Reed	11) sit
12) Curtis	(If you liked the puzzle and
13) boat	want more, let me know. Ed)

**SPECIAL ORDERS # 37, Headquarters,
Central District of Missouri - Jefferson City,
November 17, 1862.**

The sum of \$15,000 is hereby levied upon the
disloyal inhabitants of Jackson County, whereof the
sum of \$7,500 will be applied to subslst the Enrolled
Militia...and the remaining \$7,500 is appropriated to
the relief of the destitute families of the soldiers en-
gaged in actual service and to relieve temporarily
destitute refugees who have been driven from their
homes by rebels or guerrillas...

By order of Brig. Gen. Benjamin Loan.

SONNY & KAREN'S SOUTHERN/NORTHERN SLUSH

2-12 oz cans concentrated orange juice
(unsweetened)
1-12 oz can concentrated lemonade
2 cups strong tea
1&1/2 cups sugar
7 cups water
1 bottle (5th) Vodka

Mix the first four ingredients together, add
the water and then the vodka. Put in a
container that you can cover and put in the
freezer. Freeze for approx. 48 hours before
serving. To serve, put a couple of scoops
of slush in a glass, fill glass with Squirt

(regular or diet), stir and ENJOY!

ANNOUNCEMENT

**The Civil War Round Table of Western
Missouri is having a contest to design a
new logo for the group.**

The rules are simple:

- 1) contest is limited to 1994 dues paid
members or someone who is sponsored by
a dues paid member.
- 2) design must have name of group
incorporated into logo.
- 3) design must have a Civil War theme.
- 4) design must focus on local area
(western Missouri and eastern Kansas).
- 5) both sides of conflict must be portrayed
in design.
- 6) design should be simple and easily
reproduced in black and white.
(If you have a good idea but don't feel
able to draw it, contact a member of the
board)

**THE WINNER WILL RECEIVE THE FIRST
T-SHIRT PRINTED WITH THE NEW LOGO**
An independent panel will pick the best
three entries. The membership will vote for
the best of the three at the April meeting.
**THE DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS
MARCH 9, 1994. (MARCH MEETING)**
**THE WINNING ENTRY WILL BECOME
THE PROPERTY OF THE CWRTWM (The**
artist will be required to sign a release to
the group) The winning design will be
copyrighted.