



MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE JACKSON PURCHASE AREA OF KENTUCKY, 1862 - 1865

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INTRODUCTION

THIS PAPER IS INTENDED to be the continuation of an earlier article, "Military and Naval Activity Between Cairo and Columbus," which appeared in the April, 1963, *Register*. That article emphasized naval and coordinate land operations along the portion of the Mississippi River which forms the extreme western boundary of Kentucky. It also treated concurrent land operations in the interior of the Purchase region, and along its eastern border, the Tennessee River. That article, in its account of events, commenced with the initial chess-like moves and countermoves of the Union and Rebel forces in the late summer of 1861 to seize strategic positions along the Mississippi River where it bordered Kentucky, and in the vicinity of its confluence with the Ohio River. Perhaps the point of crux in that narrative was its account of the Battle of Belmont. It concluded with the later evacuation of Columbus by Confederate forces.

This article, beginning at that point of time in the War Between the States, continues the narrative of military events in the Purchase region of Kentucky. In a sense, it is anti-climactic. For, with the abandonment of Columbus, the Confederate "Gibraltar of the West" which effectively blocked for six months any Yankee penetration of the Mississippi River route into the South, Western Kentucky and especially the Purchase would never again occupy the center of the stage. But its role, greatly diminished, even to the point of relative insignificance as the momentum of the war in the West moved to other areas, would be an interesting one.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Purchase was a portion of a loyal state, to Federal occupation authorities it represented hostile territory. Its citizenry were predominately southern in their way of life, sympathy, and support. Its young men were more inclined to fight for states' rights than for the preservation of the Union. Its leaders had once contemplated, and even taken an abortive

first step, in company with their contemporaries in the Tennessee portion of the Jackson Purchase, to secede from their respective states and form a new state for admission in the Southern Nation.

In its interior, Rebel guerrillas would come to roam freely. Union occupation forces generally stayed concentrated in a few heavily fortified strongpoints, and, for control purposes, had to resort to intensive patrolling with sizable troop detachments. In those instances when large scale regular Confederate operations reached the area, Southern troops moved at will. For one period of almost a month, Rebel units, for all effects and purposes, occupied and controlled this area, then far behind Federal lines.

Thus, without dwelling further upon generalities, it can be said that the story of military events in the Jackson Purchase area from 1862 to the end of the war, although strategically insignificant much like the rest of Kentucky, was interesting. Particularly fascinating was the picture of the development of irregular troop activities.

1862

Like so many lambs, the last Confederates had peacefully departed from Columbus on the first day of March, 1862. On the next day, Sunday, as if a providential cover for the Rebel evacuation, the heavens unleashed a thunderstorm.¹ March, but not the Yankees, had come in like a lion.

All day, there was thunder and lightning and rain. In the empty trenches, the water gathered in pools. Crumpled letters, old hats, discarded shoes, and last week's division directives—the left-behind debris of armies from time immemorial—lay about in the mud puddles.

The "Gibraltar of the West" was deserted. But the Yankee intelligence system was not at its best that weekend. So, for one whole day, the towering bluffs of Columbus stood in arrogance and aloofness, but impotent, waiting for the Yankee land legions and river fleets which did not appear. The only movement was that of the brown water of the river, 200 feet below the heights, which rippled by, silent and empty.

Columbus' conquering force, ridiculously small as it was, did not arrive until the next afternoon. A battalion of blue clad horsemen of the 2nd Illinois Cavalry slowly approached the vaunted

¹ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 130 volumes (Washington, 1880-1901), Series 1, VII, 677. (Hereinafter cited as *O.R.*)

fortress.² Deserted though it seemed, they rode cautiously, and at the ready. Men of war, since they are still men of ordinary prudence, are extremely wary when they advance into what has been, and what could still be the jaws of death. And when they are, as these cavalymen were, soldiers on a reconnaissance mission, they are under orders to place discretion before valor. With all of those disciplined reflexes of men trained to hunt men, there was the heavy, pressing feeling which the soldier experiences when he is the first of his army to tread upon the ground of the enemy, to smell the same air the enemy breathed, and to see the personal things, yet undisturbed, which the enemy, human like himself, left behind.

Finding the fort deserted and comprehending the significance of the discovery, Lt. Col. Hogg, officer-in-charge, with brash but commendable initiative, altered his mission to one of "seize and hold." He decided to stay. In the initial excitement following his accomplishment, Hogg apparently neglected one incidental responsibility, namely that of keeping higher headquarters properly abreast of his situation. Or maybe it was not fully the fault of the colonel—perhaps it was simply some flaw in the communications system. But the word did not get back.

The next day, some 2000 Federal battle-ready troops advanced on Columbus. The mission of this force, led by one William Tecumseh Sherman, was to seize the fortress. Involved were the 27th Illinois, part of the 54th Ohio, and the 55th Illinois Regiments. These blue columns were already deploying in assault formations when a United States flag was sighted flying over the ramparts of Columbus. The tense infantrymen were ordered by their officers to stand fast. The halted troops watched a party from the 27th Illinois move forward to reconnoiter the strange situation. The bastions of the late Confederate fort were found to be defended by the stalwart horse soldiers of Col. Hogg.³

² *Ibid.*, 682-83; *The Soldier in Our Civil War*, Edited by Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, 2 volumes (New York, 1890), I, 243.

³ *The Soldier in Our Civil War*, Edited by Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, *op. cit.*, I, 243. Another version of Sherman's advance upon Columbus is that he came by river from Cairo with the 27th and 42nd Illinois and battalions from the 55th Illinois, 54th Ohio Zouaves, and the 71st Ohio Regiments. The troops watched from boats as the General and a small party landed. *The Story of the Fifty-Fifth Regiment, Illinois Volunteer In-*

But the drama of denouement was yet incomplete. The U.S. Navy was not to be deprived of the pleasurable disappointment registered when one who expects to be shot at is not. From Cairo a task force steamed down the river. Although those aboard had heard scuttlebutt to the effect that Columbus had been evacuated, they could not believe that such a stronghold would be given up without a fight. And they were approaching Columbus from the side which had already burnt them once (during the Battle of Belmont). Momentarily, as they steamed into range, they expected the all too familiar puffs of smoke from the big cannon of the formidable tiers of batteries on the water side of the fort. Among those embarked, there was no chagrin when the stars and stripes were finally sighted.⁴

As is the frequent bent of new tenants, those at Columbus inspected their just-acquired quarters, both as to quality and as an introspect into the nature of the former possessors. The professional military officers were impressed with the "great strength" of the works.⁵ A war correspondent, more interested in personalities, surmised that the Confederate troops must have been "extremely jocose" because of the great number of humorous Valentines left behind which the men had sent each other. This same commentator noted, from his examination of various letters and documents, that the Rebels, though quite amply endowed with a religious spirit, suffered under the delusion that Providence was on their side against the wicked Yankees. Neither was he favorably impressed with the numerous stuffed figures which he found of Lincoln, McClellan, Horace Greeley, and others represented in grotesque form. These figurines were always associated in some way with gallows and with negroes, had bottles in their hands, and invariably had ascribed to them some "ultra-Abolitionist" sentiment.⁶

The departing Confederates had destroyed most of their troop shelters and huts. They left behind some guns, rendered useless however, and carriages. There was abandoned shot, shell, and

fantry, in the Civil War, by a Committee of the Regiment (Clinton, Mass., 1887), pp. 55-56. Thus, both versions agree that Sherman did not expect to find Columbus already occupied by Federal troops.

⁴ Junius Henri Browne, *Four Years in Secessia* (Hartford, etc., 1865), pp. 87-88.

⁵ O.R., Ser. 1, VII, 437; John Fiske, *The Mississippi Valley in the Civil War* (Cambridge, 1901), p. 436.

⁶ Junius Henri Browne, *Four Years in Secessia*, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

ammunition which was salvageable. A remnant of the chain which had lately stretched across the river was in evidence.⁷ Perhaps a hundred torpedoes (to be called "mines" in a later age) with accompanying buoys and anchors were piled along the river bank. A great many pikes were found. (Although quite obsolete from the standpoint of the well equipped Yankee troops, the latter found them very serviceable as aids in climbing the steep banks of Columbus.) Here and there were those "murderous-looking knives" which Union troops frequently found on battlefields and in evacuated Confederate positions.⁸

But what of the dispossessed occupants of Columbus? A portion of them had marched overland to Union City, Tennessee. Others had gone by river to Island #10 and New Madrid, Missouri. Apparently most of their fixed-type heavy cannon and related ordnance stores had been moved to the island stronghold, and the remainder to the island's supporting defensive positions at Watson's Landing in Fulton County, Kentucky, and other points along the river shore.⁹

Once the fortunes of the Confederacy began to falter in this theater of the war, they sank swiftly. After artillery duels and infantry contacts, indecisive but prophetic (to the Rebels), New Madrid was abandoned on 13 March. The members of the garrison there were unwilling to become victims of siege. Most of the troops went to Island #10. The withdrawal took place in the middle of the night, and under the cover of a violent thunderstorm.¹⁰ Jeff Thompson, however, escaped landward with his small band. He and his irregulars would for the rest of the war continue to be an illusive and damaging thorn to the Yankees in

⁷ John Fiske, *The Mississippi Valley in the Civil War*, *op. cit.*, p. 436.

⁸ Junius Henri Browne, *Four Years in Secessia*, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

⁹ John Fiske, *The Mississippi Valley in the Civil War*, *op. cit.*, p. 437; *The Soldier in Our Civil War*, Edited by Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, *op. cit.*, I, 256. See O.R., Ser. 1, VII, 915, 918, 920; VIII, 79, 146-52.

¹⁰ O.R., Ser. 1, VIII, 126-30. *The Soldier in Our Civil War*, Edited by Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, *op. cit.*, I, 253-54. High water in the Mississippi River bottoms had prevented Gen. Pope from bringing his heavy artillery up to New Madrid. Some six or seven Confederate gunboats in the river in front of New Madrid were an obstacle to his taking the town by assault. His fear that the gunboats could drive him out produced the impasse between the armies before the Rebels abandoned the town. Marshall P. Thatcher, *A Hundred Battles in the West* (Detroit, 1884), p. 35.

this area.¹¹ And he would be one of the last Confederate generals to surrender a potent command.

At about the same time New Madrid was evacuated, a Federal naval force under Commodore Foote had taken possession of an abandoned Hickman.¹² All of the Kentucky Purchase Area, with the exception of the toe hold at Watson's Landing, was thus written off the books by the Southern Confederacy. It was a military necessity resulting from the fall of Fts. Henry and Donelson. At about the time, 20 February, that the decision to evacuate Columbus was made known, Camp Beauregard in Graves County had already been fired and abandoned. Bridges in the area had been destroyed, and an effort had been made to put the railroads out of commission. All rolling stock at Fulton Station had been destroyed, and provisions stored there were moved south.¹³ Shortly thereafter, the troops in Hickman and Moscow fell back into Tennessee.

On 16 March, the bombardment of Island #10 commenced.¹⁴ By 7 April, the Federals had slipped the Gunboats, *Carondelet* (the first to run the gauntlet, and at night amid the flash of lightning and the boom of thunder) and *Pittsburg*, past the fortifications of

¹¹ Hall Allen, *Center of Conflict* (Paducah, 1961), p. 120. See also *The Soldier in Our Civil War*, Edited by Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, *op. cit.*, I, 253.

¹² *The Soldier in Our Civil War*, Edited by Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, *op. cit.*, I, 256. Only a small body of troops were initially left at Hickman. Reinforcements landed here on 30 March, went overland, and early the next day attacked the Confederates occupying Union City, Tennessee. The latter were driven away with great loss in equipment and supplies. *O.R.*, Ser. 1, VIII, 116-18.

¹³ *O.R.*, Ser. 1, VII, 897-98. For a very complete and fascinating account of Camp Beauregard, see Phillip M. Shelton, *Camp Beauregard, Graves County, Kentucky*, article in *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, LXI (April, 1963), 148-57. Although never the scene of a battle, Beauregard was probed by Yankee patrols on occasion. It was not known to have been used by the Yankees after the Rebels left. It has been largely forgotten, perhaps because of the tragedy and unpleasantness associated with it by its occupants. Recruits at Camp Beauregard in the winter of 1861-62, poorly fed, clothed, and quartered under the most adverse winter conditions died by the hundreds from epidemics of spinal meningitis and typhoid fever and from pneumonia. According to Mr. Shelton, there are no records specifying the total deaths, but some 350 to 400 graves can still be located in the general area today.

¹⁴ *The Soldier in Our Civil War*, Edited by Paul F. Mottelay, and T. Campbell-Copeland, *op. cit.*, I, 257.

the island. (On this same day, down at Shiloh, the Confederate Army was relinquishing under pressure the battlefield won the previous day.)¹⁵ The river strongpoint thereby became untenable.

The Confederate garrison had the river to the front, Yankees on both flanks, and swamps to the rear. A belated evacuation was begun, but too late. At Tiptonville, Tennessee, Federal Gen. Pope received the surrender of the bulk of the Island #10 forces. Lost by the Confederacy in this latest of Western Theater fiascos were some 7000 troops, and as many as 123 heavy guns and 35 field pieces—and 3 generals.¹⁶ The generals were perhaps more expendable than were the troops and artillery.

The surrender of Island #10 marked the end of major military operations in the Purchase, with the exception of the three raids by Forrest's forces in 1864. Two of those raids, and their attendant circumstances, would actually constitute little short of a *de facto* Rebel occupation of the Purchase for some three weeks in March and April of 1864. On two other major occasions, December of 1862 and November of 1864, regular Confederate troops, also of Forrest's command, would enter the Purchase on overt military missions.

But that is not to say that the Federal occupation forces were, with the noted exceptions, to enjoy the routines of garrison duty. A new phase of combat would begin—guerrilla warfare. Or, more technically, and from the standpoint of the legally constituted government in power—"counter-insurgency operations."

Once Confederate regular forces were expelled from the area of Kentucky west of the Tennessee River, the region became a part of a Union military district which was separate, until the latter half of 1864, from the rest of Kentucky. The occupation troops were initially located at three principal points—Paducah in McCracken County, Columbus in Hickman County, and Ft. Heiman in Calloway County. At intervals, there were apparently efforts made to place small detachments of troops in fortified positions at strategic points on the lines of communication and supply in the area. An early example of this was a manned block house at Moscow in Hickman County to protect railroad trestling over the

¹⁵ Hall Allen, *Center of Conflict*, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

¹⁶ *The Soldier in Our Civil War*, Edited by Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, *op. cit.*, I, 257. A very excellent account of the Island #10 action, from beginning to end, may be found in *The Southern Bivouac*, II (October, 1882), 54-62.

numerous streams in the area. This system, though, was to prove infeasible because of the condition to which guerrilla activity in the area developed. On other occasions, key towns such as Clinton, Hickman, Mayfield, Benton, and Murray were temporarily garrisoned.

Although the whole of Kentucky would be infested with guerrillas before the war ended, the extreme western portion, especially the Purchase, was most particularly ripe for the fertilization of partisan activity. As one writer has said it, "The Purchase was Kentucky's South Carolina."¹⁷ Its leaders contemplated and even took one step, a meeting in Mayfield in May of 1861, to secede from Kentucky and form a state along with their impatient contemporaries in the Tennessee portion of the Jackson Purchase who were planning secession from their state.¹⁸ (Tennessee was still

¹⁷ Hall Allen, *Center of Conflict*, (Paducah, 1961), p. 7. And, as E. Merton Coulter noted in *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill, 1926), this portion of Kentucky, in sharp contrast with the rest of the state, was treated as disloyal from the very beginning. The treatment was probably not unmerited.

¹⁸ In a speech delivered in 1907, Judge Herbert Carr of Fulton said: "I will relate here an incident that I am satisfied is known only to a few of you. In May, 1861, a convention was held in the City of Mayfield, Ky., and attended by delegates from the Jackson Purchase, many settlers of which had always been dissatisfied with being a part of Kentucky and Tennessee, and in this convention a resolution was introduced, voted upon and adopted that the people of the Purchase secede from their respective states and form a new state of their own." Manuscript of speech now in possession of the Weaks Family of Fulton.

The Jackson Purchase secession convention is a little known fact of Kentucky history. One reason is that definite documentary proof of it has not always been generally available to historians. Specific reference to it may be found among those papers of Abraham Lincoln which were removed from the White House after his death by his son, Robert, and were at Robert's directions not to be made available to anyone until twenty-one years after his, Robert's, death. They became accessible on 26 July 1947. On page 625 of volume II of *The Lincoln Papers* by David C. Mearns, 2 volumes (Garden City, N.Y., 1948), there appears the following reference to the meeting in correspondence dated 30 May 1861, of Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan (then at the Cincinnati Headquarters of the Department of the Ohio) to President Lincoln:

"A very delicate question is arising as to Western Ky—that portion west of the Tenna. River; Lieut. Nelson will explain to you that a convention is now being held at Mayfield which may declare the Jackson position separate from Ky., its annexation to Penna, & that this will be followed by an advance of Tenna. troops upon Columbus and Paducah." (Editor's note: "position" must have meant "purchase", and "Penna" was no doubt intended to be

on the fence then—presumably, when Tennessee did secede in June, the plans for uniting the area and joining the Confederacy came to an end. The Kentuckians then had to be content with representation in the provisional Confederate Kentucky government.)

The area was, and still is, to some extent, an extremity of the Southern cotton belt. On a crop map, it would appear as a finger extending north, and the tip of which was the vicinity of Cairo, Illinois. Even in southern Illinois, locally known as Little Egypt, much Confederate sentiment could be found—but that is not difficult to comprehend when it is realized that the lower end of Illinois was and is economically, geographically, and socially more southern than much of Kentucky. Federal authorities were to have their difficulties there—and Confederate recruiters were to enjoy no little success in that region of a Yankee state.

These were the things which contributed to the paradoxical situation in which the Union forces initially found themselves in the Kentucky Purchase, and for that matter, many of the counties immediately eastward along the Cumberland River, as well as the Missouri counties across the Mississippi River. Although theoretically holding friendly territory, part of a loyal state, which had been wrested from an enemy, in fact they were occupying country inhabited by a hostile people. This would be the ultimate drift in Kentucky as a whole, but in the Purchase it was a disconcerting fact from the very beginning. However disconcerting though it may have been, it was no doubt anticipated. In the June, 1861, congressional elections, Union candidates were successful in every district except the extreme western First District of Kentucky. That district was swung to the secessionists by the vote of the three Mississippi River counties, Ballard, Hickman, and Fulton. There, the Union candidate got less than twenty-five percent of the votes cast, the poorest Union showing anywhere in the state.¹⁹

“Tenna.”) There is a patent variation in the two versions of the convention. As to accuracy of detail perhaps Judge Carr’s version should be given the greater weight. It seems more plausible under the circumstances.

¹⁹ Edward Conrad Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War* (New York, 1927), pp. 283-86. See also W. H. Perrin, J. H. Battle, G. C. Kniffen, *Kentucky—A History of the State* (Louisville, etc., 1887), Fourth Edition, p. 353; E. Merton Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky*, *op. cit.*, pp. 216, 220; by the middle of 1863, only 4 counties out of the 14 comprising the 1st Congressional District had furnished over 100 U.S. soldiers each, and out of the remaining 10 counties, Hickman had furnished 9, “and Fulton still

Southern guerrilla activity could only thrive under such conditions—friendly population, rural areas in which to operate, etc. The Federal reaction to the attitude of the population was what could be expected, and what was legally their prerogative. They drastically and emphatically dealt with public displays of disloyalty, which represented to them nothing less than treason. Of course, such action on the part of Federal occupation authorities had its equal and opposite reaction on the part of the civilian population. It hardened the attitude of the people to the Lincoln government. And thus, the vicious circle of events could only be accelerated.

On 13 May 1862, a detachment of soldiers from Paducah marched into the middle of a session of Circuit Court being held in Marion, Crittenden County, on the general eastern periphery of the Purchase. One Capt. Stacey, U.S. Army, summarily ordered Judge Wiley P. Fowler of Smithland to insure that all court officers, and all jurors before being impaneled, take an oath to support the Constitution. The judge, perhaps somewhat injudiciously, declined to yield to military dictation in regard to the discharge of his duties as presiding officer of the court. Thereupon, he and four members of the bar were arrested and put under bond to appear at Paducah.²⁰

By the summer of 1862, following the succession of Confederate reverses in the western theater, and the corresponding movement southward of Federal forces, guerrilla activity behind Union lines increased in tempo. The western-most portions of Kentucky and Tennessee (lumped into the same military district) became a region very aptly described as "a land where the civilian was as

boasted of the proud record of none." See also Thomas Speed, *The Union Cause in Kentucky* (New York, 1907). At intervals throughout this work, the author vigorously disputes the popular conception that Kentucky as a state was more southern than northern in its sympathies and that its contributions of Confederate troops came from the richer soils (e. g., the Bluegrass) and its Federal troops from the poorer soils (e. g., Eastern Kentucky, etc.). In a rather convincing manner, he undertakes to prove that the entire state was predominately Unionist, including the Bluegrass, "excepting for the counties at the extreme west end." He also notes the secession majority of the First Congressional District in the election of June, 1861. However, by the time the war was ended, the general consensus seems to be toward the view that sympathies of the state in general had passed through a phase of drastic realignment.

²⁰ Richard H. Collins, *History of Kentucky*, 2 volumes (Louisville, 1924), I, 106.

devout an enemy as the soldier in gray." And the informal combat being waged there was "a war which every farmer might be a night-rider who would shoot a courier, or band with other farmers to capture a wagon train or tear up railroad track."²¹

Railroads offered tempting targets not only to the homegrown variety of guerrillas, but also to the small bands of regular cavalry which were constantly moving around the Federal rear areas. Protecting the railroads, and keeping them in repair kept sizable bodies of Union troops tied down. The army of occupation thus became, to a great extent, "half constabulary and half track repair gang."²²

Not having ample cavalry to cope with the guerrilla nuisance (and an expensive "nuisance" it was), Grant was forced to shift whole infantry divisions. But this tactic would rarely ever produce results, because the mounted Rebel partisans simply refused to wait for the "ponderous columns" of Yankee infantry to arrive.²³ This unproductive formula was used time and time again to no effect in the Purchase, as we shall see.

Having difficulty in meeting the irregular military threat with purely military methods, Grant resorted to other methods, somewhat less direct, but perhaps more harsh. By July, he had become thoroughly provoked by the mounting seriousness of the guerrilla problem within the jurisdiction of his command. On the 3rd, he issued an order whereby military commanders, wherever loss had been sustained, were authorized to seize, from Confederate sympathizers in the immediate vicinity, personal property in an amount sufficient to reimburse the government for all loss, and for the expense of collecting such property. The order further provided that persons acting as guerrillas, without organization or uniform

²¹ Bruce Catton, *Grant Moves South* (Boston, etc., 1960), p. 290.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 304. Many years after the war, a veteran of the 61st Illinois Infantry recalled guard duty in 1862 on a railroad in West Tennessee. "Every foot of the railroad had to be vigilantly watched to prevent its being torn up by bands of guerrillas, or disaffected citizens. One man with a crowbar, or even an old ax, could remove a rail at a culvert, or some point on a high grade, and cause a disastrous wreck." He remembered how pleasant it was, when assigned railroad guard duty, to get out in the country "and far away from the noise and smells of the camps." Leander Stillwell, *The Story of a Common Soldier of Army Life in the Civil War* (Erie, Kansas, 1917), p. 62. In addition to guarding tracks, protection for moving trains was also necessary. L. G. Bennett and Wm. M. Haigh, *History of the Thirty-Sixth Regiment, Illinois Volunteers* (Aurora, Ill., 1876), pp. 226-27.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

to distinguish them from private citizens, were not to be entitled to the treatment accorded to prisoners of war when caught.²⁴

A more aggressive method of combating the guerrilla was the employment of task forces to hunt him out in his lair and destroy or capture him. Such a hunting expedition departed from Columbus in the early fall of 1862. Its mission was to proceed down the Mississippi on transports, land at Ft. Pillow, and proceed inland on a guerrilla sweep. It was commanded by Col. Frederick A. Starring, 72nd Illinois Infantry.²⁵

On the way, the expedition picked up Company D, 2nd Illinois Cavalry. These boys proved to be a little bit hard to handle. Among the escapades (described in vivid detail by Col. Starring in his report) of various members of this unit during the course of the expedition were: the robbing of an "old widow woman" of \$13 in silver, all she had; the stealing of a coat and bridle from an old man, professedly loyal, who had furnished a gratuitous meal; the forcible taking of \$19 from an old darky who had ferried them across a river; and the shooting down in "cold blood" of a wounded Rebel captain found convalescing at a home.

The commanding officer strongly disapproved of these depredations, and perhaps, because of unexplained circumstances, had been unable to prevent them. Nevertheless, the fact remains that such actions do little to endear an army to the inhabitants of an occupied region. No doubt, the cited instance of the perpetration of an extreme outrage by an ill-disciplined unit constituted an exception rather than the rule in the Union Army. Nevertheless, the responsibility for such an incident, or any similar one, could be lodged at only one place—the immediate overall field commander. As Napoleon once observed, in effect, there are no poor regiments, only poor colonels.

Viewed from the other standpoint, such incidents, resulting from guerrilla activity, are beneficial to the guerrillas' side. Even though occupying soldiers in hostile country may feel that they have some moral license to treat natives roughly, they unwittingly contribute toward making the job of the occupier more difficult, and the role of the guerrilla much easier.

Let us turn our attention back to Col. Starring's expedition from Columbus. His official report submitted to his next superior

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 291. O.R., Ser. 1, XVII, Pt. 2, 69.

²⁵ O.R., Ser. 1, XVII, Pt. 1, 145-48.

officer is quite interesting in at least two respects. We have treated one of those aspects—his indictment of the Illinois cavalry company for its acts of violence against civilians. The other very interesting note in the Colonel's report is his brief commentary on the guerrilla problem in general. He wrote: "I would remark that I deem it almost impossible to capture or catch the guerrillas of Tennessee, Missouri, or Kentucky with infantry. They are well mounted, keep themselves thoroughly apprised of all our movements by regular system or sort of pony express, sending word, signaling their neighbors, signs on trees, bushes in the roads, etc. Unless they have superior force and all the advantage they manage to keep out of the way or scatter and become peaceful farmers and citizens until the danger is past."²⁶

Delete the references to geographical location, and mode of conveyance, and those remarks could well describe partisan operations in any war anywhere, either today, yesterday, or two hundred years ago.

The Yankees soon found, though, that not all Southern partisan operations were based upon the policy of avoiding all contact with regular troops. Later in the month of October, on the 17th, the Federal garrison at Island #10 came under attack. Moving under the light of the harvest moon, through swamps and over back roads, 300 guerrillas managed to evade scouting parties and pickets. With local natives for guides, the Rebels got within 100 yards of the Yankee camp. By 0400 they were forming for assault when a Union sentinel became suspicious and fired a warning shot. The ever present threat to the success of any night attack, confusion, instantly resulted in the Confederate ranks. The rear of the Rebel group opened up on the forward elements, and vice versa. A sharp fire fight went on for some three minutes among the Rebels. Panic and casualties ensued before the Confederates were able to reorganize and to attempt to exploit their initial surprise of the Union camp. However, Yankee resistance was crystallized by then. The Rebel attackers were ultimately forced to with-

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 148. Report addressed to Brig. Gen. Grenville M. Dodge, Commanding, 4th Division, West Tennessee, headquartered at Columbus, Kentucky. Another and similar description of guerrillas in West Tennessee—"They wore no uniforms, and if danger approached, time enough to hide a shot-gun transformed them into ostensibly peaceful citizens of alleged loyal proclivities."—is found in *The Story of the Fifty-Fifth Regiment, Illinois Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War*, by a Committee of the Regiment, *op. cit.*, at 161.

draw. They retired in the direction of their horses which had been left a mile behind. The whole operation—after the raid on Island #10, they had planned to move on to Hickman—was cancelled and the band moved south.²⁷

Later, and twenty miles distant, a Union cavalry detachment overtook a small group of the retreating Rebs. A fight took place. The leader, Col. W. W. Faulkner, of the Confederate raiding party, two captains, an adjutant, and eleven enlisted men were taken prisoner. Total Confederate killed and wounded for the entire operation was never known—the Federals reported three of their own as killed.

Col. Faulkner and the other officers, upon their capture, claimed to be regulars and entitled to exchange. If the Federals had any question about Faulkner's status, it was because they knew him only as a leader of irregulars. He had organized a company of Kentucky cavalry in the Spring of 1862. By August, he was very active behind Union lines in West Tennessee. When the attack on Island #10 occurred, Faulkner's force was augmented by bands under Capt. Gideon Binford and Capt. Drew Outlaw.²⁸

Col. Faulkner would eventually secure his freedom from Yankee imprisonment and return with authority to raise a regiment of Partisan Rangers early in 1863. This regiment, the 12th Kentucky Mounted, would be built around the nucleus of many of the men who had participated in the abortive Island #10 opera-

²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 460-61. Report of Maj. Quincy McNeil, Commanding 2d Illinois Cavalry.

²⁸ *O.R.*, Ser. 1, XVII, Pt. 2, 161, 195, and 281; Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th and 12th Kentucky, C.S.A.* (Louisville, 1911), p. 68. The Union report of a surprise attack on Faulkner's command bivouacked near Dyersburg, Tennessee, on 7 August, revealed two interesting things. First, Faulkner conducted his irregular operations under cover of darkness, and let his men rest during the day (the Federal attackers surprised his command while its members were sleeping during the daytime); and second, Faulkner apparently had many Purchase natives in his unit (all three Rebels captured at the time were from the Purchase: "Fielding Bland, who lives within 7 miles of Blandville; Henry Torpley, 6 miles from Feliciana, Hickman County, Ky., and W. S. Bennett, 3 miles from Batimore, Hickman County, Ky."—actually, Blandville is in Ballard County, Feliciana was in Graves County, and there was and is a Baltimore in Graves County). *O.R.* Ser. 1, XVII, Pt. 1, 29-30. According to Brig. Gen. G. M. Dodge's report of this action to Maj. Gen. U. S. Grant, "Faulkner's Company" with "Porter's band" had been "ordered to burn all cotton west of Tennessee River, and if possible get into Kentucky to recruit their commands." *Ibid.*, 30.

tion. Once formally organized, the regiment was initially referred to derisively as the "Kentucky Gorillers" because it was composed of men who until 1863 had been engaged almost constantly in operations behind Union lines.²⁹

Another participant in the Island #10 attack was Capt. Henry A. Tyler of Hickman. His service up until the time the 12th Kentucky was officially formed was perhaps typical. He served in independent commands behind enemy lines, principally in West Kentucky and Tennessee. He became a company commander after the 12th was formed. When it came under the overall command of Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest in 1864, Tyler became one of his most trusted officers, with a reputation for competence as well as having very vicious fighting qualities.³⁰

So much for the Island #10 affair, its incidents, and the personalities involved. Elsewhere in the Purchase a personality in a different shade of uniform was making a name for himself in Paducah. Brig. Gen. E. A. Paine, a contribution to the Union cause from the State of Illinois, was in command of the post at Paducah. In a relatively short time, he proved himself quite competent, by his various harsh policies, in his ability to arouse the ire and indignation of citizens in general.³¹ At least one chronicler of history has charged that he leveled a special vindictiveness toward Jews.³² If this were true, then Paine, in relation to his military contemporaries in blue, did not seem to be alone. This strange behavior of the men from the North in a land which is so often damned for its racial views has never been satisfactorily explained by sociologists and other apologists, or critics, of social behavior. The example which follows of Yankee treatment of Southern Jews during the Civil War is an oft-neglected fact of the Civil War.

On 17 December, 1862, Grant ordered the expulsion within twenty-four hours of all Jews "as a class" from his military district. The effect of the order was immediately felt in Paducah. Thirty families were summarily routed from their homes and deported. Only after the personal intervention, sometime later, of President

²⁹ Henry George, *History of the 3d, 7th, 8th and 12th Kentucky, C.S.A.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-9, 71.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-70. Tyler is mentioned frequently in John A. Wyeth's well known biography of Forrest, *That Devil Forrest* (New York, 1959).

³¹ Hall Allen, *Center of Conflict*, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 30.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 28.

Lincoln, with his superior political acumen, were these people permitted to return to their homes.³³ (There are those who would say that this rather well forgotten incident was symptomatic of a racial situation existent then and now in the North, but never a substantial problem in the South, the land which traditionally bears the brand of racial bigotry.)

December, 1862, witnessed Confederate regular forces in large numbers in West Tennessee and Kentucky for the first time since the fall of Island #10. On the 15th, some 1800 men, ill clothed and armed principally with shotguns and flintlock muskets, crossed the Tennessee River. Old Bedford Forrest rode at their head. Most of these men were recruits. Forrest was looking for more men, as well as clothing and modern arms for those that he had. His mission was to raid, but Union commanders viewed it as a major advance in concert with other Southern forces. The size of his ragged army was grossly exaggerated—Federal estimates ranged from 7,000 to 20,000 men. Their reactions were commensurate. All guns at Island #10 were either spiked or dismantled, and all ammunition there was destroyed or moved to Columbus.³⁴

If all of the available Federal troops in West Tennessee and Kentucky had ever concentrated to meet him, he could have been overwhelmed. But in true Forrest fashion, he was always where he was going first with the most. Garrisons at Trenton and Union City, Tennessee, capitulated to him. The captured Federal troops from these posts almost equalled his entire force. At the latter place, he employed columns of Federals captured at Trenton in such a way that the Yankees were deceived into believing that the P.O.W.'s were Rebel troops.

Union City fell on 23 December. That night, an officer and forty men were dispatched to Moscow, due north in the direction of Columbus. These troops spoiled Christmas Eve for the Federal detachment guarding Moscow and its complex of railroad trestles bridging the Bayou de Chein, a slough. The principal defensive fortification, a stockade, was assaulted by yelling Rebel soldiers. At the same time, by appropriate shouted commands, they made

³³ O.R., Ser. 1, XVII, Pt. 2, 424, 506; Allen, in his work at page 124, says that Paine was a factor in the promulgation of this order. Paine is said to have told Grant that the Paducah Jews were secessionist, engaging in smuggling, and aiding guerrillas.

³⁴ For the official reports relative to this campaign, see O.R., Ser. 1, XVII, Pt. 1, 546-99.

it appear as though they were bringing artillery forward. Without offering further opposition, the Federal troops abandoned the works, and hastily departed in the direction of Columbus. The Confederate cavalymen then went about their business of destroying trestlework in the area.⁸⁵

Once the Federal garrison was driven from Moscow, Forrest was able to report that all United States troops north of Jackson, Tennessee, and west of the Tennessee River, were concentrated at Columbus, Paducah, and Ft. Heiman.⁸⁶ (Eventually, the latter would be abandoned, and Federal occupation of the Kentucky Jackson Purchase area could be conducted principally from the strong-points at Paducah and Columbus.)

From Union City, Forrest began the return movement south with his raiding party. Although he encountered serious opposition⁸⁷ in his withdrawal from West Tennessee, his raid was an unqualified success. Throughout, he had averaged moving some twenty miles per day—relatively fast for as large a body of men as he had. The severe damage inflicted by his wrecking crews to the railroad south of the Kentucky line left it useless to the enemy for a prolonged period. Some eighteen to twenty stockades had been captured and destroyed. The number of Union troops which had been killed or captured were estimated from 2,000 to 2,500. Many recruits were picked up—Forrest's original force of 1,800 men was considerably "stronger in numbers" upon its return. Ten pieces of artillery were captured or destroyed. Fifty wagons and ambulances with teams were taken. Ten thousand stands of small arms were captured along with a million rounds of ammunition. Eighteen hundred blankets and knapsacks were procured. Results such as these were what gave Forrest his reputation—he took in a force substantially composed of ill equipped recruits, he disabled enemy troops in numbers exceeding his own force, he maneuvered his way through and around

⁸⁵ Gen. Thomas Jordan and J. P. Pryor, *Campaigns of Lieut. Gen. N. B. Forrest and of Forrest's Cavalry* (Cincinnati, etc., 1868), p. 205.

⁸⁶ *The Confederate Soldier in the Civil War*, (Paterson, N.J., 1959), Edited by Ben LaBree, p. 148.

⁸⁷ At Parkers Cross-Roads in West Tennessee, Forrest was trapped between two numerically superior Federal columns of infantry which had converged on him in a confidently undertaken effort to cut off his "retreat." His simple, but somewhat unorthodox reaction was successful. He ordered a charge "both ways."

overwhelming odds, and he came out with a body of men better armed and equipped and larger than that with which he began.³⁸

All this was accomplished in country considered impractical for cavalry operations under winter conditions. To do it, the troops had to stay almost constantly on the move, with scarcely one complete night of rest. Far behind enemy lines, the command could have been overwhelmed by weight of numbers if the Union commanders could have ever concentrated their forces, and effectively employed the principle of mass.

Only a superlative leader of men could have procured such results from relatively untrained troops. And only an accomplished master of the art of war could have maneuvered such troops with success in the face of the odds against them.

Nathan Bedford Forrest was such a man. As a leader, he led, literally. He personally killed some thirty enemy soldiers in hand-to-hand combat. He had twenty-nine horses shot out from under him. But he drove as well as led; on several occasions, he was known to have summarily shot down skulking Confederate soldiers. As a tactician, his record speaks for itself. In sharp contradistinction to the other Confederate general officers in the Western Theater of War, Forrest was never defeated on a field of battle when he commanded, save for his last battle of the war where fate (his detailed plan of battle came into the hands of Union officers) and ridiculously overwhelming odds dictated a reverse, but not destruction. Unlike the more dashing cavalry leaders in the Eastern Theater, Forrest used his troops mainly as dismounted infantry. The horses of his men were merely modes of conveyance for the sake of mobility. The principal arm of his troops was not the more romantic saber, but rather firearms, be it shotgun, re-

³⁸ Gen. Thomas Jordan and J. P. Pryor, *Campaigns of Lieut. Gen. N. B. Forrest and of Forrest's Cavalry*, *op. cit.*, p. 221. Article entitled *Sketch of Lieutenant-General N. B. Forrest*, in *The Southern Bivouac*, II (March, 1884), 289-98. For other accounts of this operation, see also: John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 89-125; Andrew Lytle, *Bedford Forrest and his Critter Company* (New York, 1960), pp. 114-39. Forrest's destruction of railroad track cut off supplies to many Federal units in West Tennessee. Rations were short. One Union soldier who had experienced a lean Christmas, but who had just seen a newspaper with pictures of the Army of the Potomac enjoying a bountiful Thanksgiving, wrote home, "You see, the men in that army, by means of their railroads, are only a few hours from home, and old Forrest is not in their neighborhood, so it is an easy thing for them to have good times." Leander Stillwell, *The Story of a Common Soldier of Army Life in the Civil War*, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

volver, rifle, or carbine. (He disdained sabers as the mark of the West Pointer.) Thus, like John Hunt Morgan, he combined mobility with firepower to achieve shock.³⁹ (Unlike Morgan, though, his record of success in battle was consistent.)

Also like Morgan in Central Kentucky, and Jo Shelby in Missouri, he would in time assume the status of a folk-god in the areas of his operations and where his troops came from—the Purchase of Kentucky, the states of Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and other parts of the South.

Enough of generalities. We shall see more of Forrest in the Purchase. Let us move on to the specific military operations in far west Kentucky in 1863.

1863

The year began with the issuance by President Lincoln of a declaration of absolute emancipation of slaves in the seceded states. Although not applicable to the border state of Kentucky (and emancipation would not become legally effective there until the 12th Amendment, never ratified by Kentucky, became operative in December, 1865), the Commonwealth felt the effects thereof nevertheless. Word of the proclamation had its psychological effect on slaves in unoccupied areas of the South, and inspired them to escape to the North. And, of course, where the Union Army was in control, the slaves were freed by operation of the conqueror's law. For negroes migrating north out of the deep south states, Kentucky was the neck of the funnel leading to the promised land.

³⁹ Wyeth at page 536 of his work, *That Devil Forrest*, *op. cit.*, mentions the results of Forrest's hand-to-hand encounters with the enemy. An incident of his turning a shotgun on retreating Confederate troops is described on page 154. His disdain for the saber is reflected in a statement attributed to him and quoted by Lytle, *Bedford Forrest and his Critter Company*, *op. cit.*, p. 373. Even more interesting is a letter dated 3 March 1862, from a Confederate Army ordnance officer to Secretary of War Benjamin. The writer noted the shortage of available pistols for cavalry use. He then said: "Colonel Forrest, the most efficient cavalry officer in this department, informs me that the double-barrel shotgun is the best gun with which cavalry can be armed, and that at Fort Donelson one discharge of his shotguns, at close quarters, scattered 400 of the enemy whom three of our regiments had vainly tried to dislodge from their stronghold in a ravine." *O.R.*, Ser. 4, I, 965. As indicated in the text, Forrest's preference for firearms, rather than the saber, the traditional arm of cavalry, was shared with John Hunt Morgan. An excellent discussion of the latter's employment of the revolver, the spectacular results achieved, and the departure represented from conventional notions of warfare may be found at pages 22-24 in *Encyclopedia of American Hand Arms* (Huntington, W. Va., 1942), by George M. Chinn and Bayless E. Hardin.

Thus, droves of ex-slaves poured into the state as a consequence of Mr. Lincoln's proclamation.

The executive fiat was soon followed by a congressional act providing that the enlistment of a slave in the U. S. Army would automatically free him and every member of his family. This law applied to all slaves, including those in Kentucky, and under the stimulus of its inducement, thousands of them enlisted. It was charged that many Union recruiting officers in Kentucky credited their negro enlistees to their own states in order to lighten those states' draft quotas.⁴⁰

These two actions, one a presidential proclamation, and the other an Act of Congress, and their consequences, both direct and indirect, had their effect upon many Kentuckians who believed in the preservation of the Union, but failed, whether slave holders or not, to adhere to the tenets advanced by abolitionists. Union policies pursued in Kentucky in regard to the general issue of slavery were a factor in the transition—it might be called dramatic—of public opinion in the state during the course of the war. These are matters, however, which concerned the State of Kentucky as a whole; let us focus our attention back on the Purchase where the Yankee was considered an invader from the very beginning of the war.

Although by late February of 1863, Forrest's damage to the M & O Railroad south of Columbus in West Kentucky and Tennessee had been partially remedied, transportation by rail was not without its hazards and impediments. Guerrillas were becoming more brazen. Brig. Gen. Alexander Asboth, commanding the District of Columbus, complained that "lawless bands of guerillas . . . infest the country along the railroad." He also fretted about attacks on river traffic. The general surmised, correctly no doubt, that the guerrillas were able to derive their existence and support principally from disloyal citizens in the area. He accordingly directed appropriate counter-guerrilla measures against the civilian population which helped breed the menace to the supply lines the security of which was his responsibility. He ordered that anyone not belonging to the Confederate Army who should give "any kind of aid" to guerrillas was to be tried by court martial. And for every raid or attempted raid by guerrillas upon the railroad

⁴⁰ Federal Writers Project (Frankfort, 1939), *Military History of Kentucky*, p. 233.

or boats upon the river, the families in closest proximity to the scene of the outrage were to be arrested and held as hostages for the delivery of the real perpetrators.⁴¹

Available reports and records do not make clear the extent to which Asboth's General Order #11 was executed. However, subsequent events indicate rather conclusively that it did not have its desired results. Not only would guerrilla activity increase, but small detachments of regular Confederate raiders would operate frequently in the area of West Kentucky and Tennessee—and with a certain degree of freedom even though deep in enemy held territory.

It did not aid the military posture of the Union forces occupying the Purchase when Ft. Heiman was abandoned by U.S. troops in March of 1863. On the 7th, Gen. Asboth discovered quite by accident that Heiman had just been given up as a post. Against his pleas (voiced previously), it had been transferred to the Department of the Cumberland on 3 February. Theretofore it had been garrisoned by ten companies of cavalry, and a battery of artillery. Asboth considered it one of the most important points in the range of his district, controlling navigation on the Tennessee River (the "strongest point on the . . . River") and controlling the Kentucky-Tennessee state line as well as all the country toward Paducah and Columbus. Being just inside the Kentucky border, it provided a means of taking in the flank or rear any Rebel force crossing the state line or the Tennessee River.⁴²

It is not completely clear as to what prompted the decision to abandon Ft. Heiman—but Asboth promptly requested that it be returned to his jurisdiction so that he could reoccupy it. The urgency of the situation was heightened by the discovery that Rebels (whether regular troops or guerrillas is not clear from reports) had followed in behind the departed Yankees and reoccupied Heiman. It was also reported that they had moved back into Ft. Henry across the river. The telegraph lines hummed with messages. Anxiety heightened. The situation was considered extremely grave. The Union commanders felt that both Columbus and Paducah were seriously threatened. (Asboth gave credence to a report that Confederate Gen. Marmaduke was then on the other side of the Mississippi threatening Cape Girardeau, Mis-

⁴¹ O.R., Ser. 1, XXIV, Pt. 3, 74.

⁴² O.R., Ser. 1, XXIV, Pt. 3, 94, 99-100. See also Hall Allen, *Center of Conflict, op. cit.*, pp. 132-34.

souri.) Troops and gunboats were dispatched immediately from Columbus. Gen. Asboth personally led the expedition. Rebels were in fact found to be occupying Ft. Heiman, but shell fire from the gunboats persuaded them to evacuate the position. Federal troops reentered the breastworks on the morning of the 14th. With the garrisoning of this position accomplished, Asboth determined to strengthen further his control of the Purchase by establishing posts of troops, in addition to those then at Clinton and Benton, at Murray and Mayfield.⁴³

Ft. Heiman, largely forgotten though it is, was of major strategic significance at times during the war. It was constructed, apparently as somewhat of an afterthought, by Confederate troops early in the war. It lay across the Tennessee River from Ft. Henry. (There is conjecture as to whether the roles played by it and Ft. Henry should not have been reversed—because it occupied a critical terrain feature which completely dominated Ft. Henry. The latter was built on low and indefensible ground.) Abandoned by the Rebels before the fall of Ft. Henry in February of 1862, it was initially garrisoned by forces from the command of Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace. The Federal order to abandon it was issued on 6 March 1863. The decision to evacuate the position was perhaps brought about to some degree by the unrelenting harassment of the Federal troops by guerrillas and other Rebels.⁴⁴

Ft. Heiman, as already noted, was transferred back to the District of Columbus, after a brief occupation by Rebel troops, and re-garrisoned by Federals. A guerrilla hunting expedition into West Kentucky and Tennessee departed from it on 26 May and did not return until 2 June. Maj. Hans Mattson, 3rd Minnesota

⁴³ O.R., Ser. 1, XXII, Pt. 2, 152, 153; XXXIII, Pt. 2, 150; XXIV, Pt. 3, 100-02. These posts were temporary, though. Once Ft. Heiman was finally abandoned, the only permanent posts were at Paducah and Columbus, where fortified positions were located.

⁴⁴ O.R., Ser. 1, IV, 460-61, 481; VII, 137-38, 606, 699, 710-11, 723, 734-35. See also: Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, 2 volumes (New York, 1885), I, 291-92; H. Allen Gosnell, *Guns on the Western Waters* (Baton Rouge, 1949), p. 57; and Charles Moss, *Forgotten Fort Heiman, Land of Late Victory* (reprinted from the *Nashville Banner*, 1957), pp. 2-5. The newspaper reprint relates many interesting and colorful events associated with Ft. Heiman throughout the war years. According to the article, the 5th Iowa Cavalry, known as the Curtis Horse, spent a considerable amount of time at Ft. Heiman. The author states that the order to abandon the fort followed the catastrophic loss of an entire scouting party of twenty-eight men in an ambush.

Infantry, reported encountering several small groups of enemy soldiers and guerrillas. In the skirmishes which occurred, the Federals had two men missing, but they killed, wounded, and captured twenty-one of the enemy.⁴⁵

Confederate regular troops did not appear in force in the Purchase in 1863 until July. On the 10th, the hapless garrison at Union City, Tennessee, "an advance cavalry post," was again taken (Forrest's troops had captured it by ruse the previous December). This time, Col. Jacob Biffle, of Forrest's command, and an estimated 650 cavalrymen had struck.⁴⁶ A loss of some 104 men, killed, wounded, and captured was sustained by the Union Army. One hundred and sixteen horses were taken, and substantial quantities of transportation and camp equipage were either destroyed or captured. At Columbus, upon receipt of word of the attack, Gen. Asboth dispatched to the relief of Union City, Col. Scott of the 32nd Iowa Cavalry with six companies. These troops arrived by railroad about an hour after the most efficient departure of the Rebels.⁴⁷

Col. Scott in his report stated that the disaster had been caused by the "total neglect of the officers to follow even the ordinary military precautions." Surprise was apparently complete, and no organized resistance had been offered. Scott found the

⁴⁵ O.R., Ser. 1, XXIII, Pt. 1, 353-54. A detachment left the main body of this expedition, and went north to Columbus, rather than returning directly to Fort Heiman. The Major's report of his expedition is interesting in the way that it carefully distinguishes between enemy soldiers and enemy guerrillas.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 822-23. The estimate of Confederate numbers could have been exaggerated. See footnote 49. It is certain that Biffle was serving under Forrest at this time. (On 31 July 1863, Biffle is shown as commanding the 9th (19th) Tennessee which was in Cox's (2d) Brigade of Forrest's Division. O.R., Ser. 1, XXIII, Pt. 2, 944.) However, Forrest was then in Tennessee between Tullahoma and Chattanooga with Bragg's Army in its movements preliminary to the Battle of Chickamauga. See John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-13; Andrew Lytle, *Bedford Forrest and his Critter Company*, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-87. Therefore, Biffle must have been detached from Forrest's command and assigned the mission of conducting independent operations behind Federal lines.

⁴⁷ Union troops were dispatched to the scene in a remarkably short time (within three hours after the attack began) considering the fact that the units had to be assembled, loaded aboard railway cars, and moved twenty-five miles. However, they were more than matched in their military proficiency by the Rebel raiders who required no more than two hours to accomplish their mission at Union City.

citizens of Union City burying the Union dead and caring for the Union wounded. (The garrison, under the command of Maj. Edward Langen, was comprised of troops from the 4th Missouri Cavalry, most of whom had been ordered to Union City from Clinton, Kentucky, only two weeks previously.)

The Rebel raiding force departed from Union City in a southerly direction. Five days later, on 15 July they appeared at Hickman, Kentucky.⁴⁸ Here, their stay was more leisurely—they spent the night. Civilian estimates of the size of the occupying cavalry placed it at “about 3 companies.”⁴⁹ While in Hickman, the Confederates directed their attention to the stores and goods of local Union men (said Union men, sans families, either hid or hastily left in the direction of Columbus). The Rebels also stopped a steamboat.⁵⁰

The Yankee reaction was sufficiently tardy to permit the Rebels to move out of Hickman unmolested on the 17th. Infantry (Company K, 18th Illinois) and cavalry sent from Columbus via the river on the ram *Monarch* did not arrive until the day following the Confederate withdrawal. In addition, two companies of cavalry from a command then quartered at Clinton were ordered towards Hickman on the 17th.⁵¹

Those citizens of Hickman who had absented themselves during the Rebel occupation reported that the raiders bore with them a list of loyal men who were to be “shot or otherwise disposed of.” They were somewhat reluctant, understandably, to return to their hometown, and petitioned Gen. Asboth to provide them some sort of military protection.⁵²

The Federal troops at Clinton had arrived there on 15 July. A detachment, as noted, made an unsuccessful attempt to intercept

⁴⁸ O.R., Ser. 1, XXIII, Pt. 1, 825-27.

⁴⁹ All the circumstances tend to indicate that this was the same body of raiders that had attacked the Union garrison at Union City. However, it was either smaller than when at Union City, or its size there had been grossly exaggerated by the defeated Federals. Estimates by Union officers of the number of Rebels which had attacked Union City ranged from 600 to 650, whereas civilians stated that only some three companies (a company of cavalry, depending upon a variety of factors, could have consisted of anywhere from 50 to 100 men) of Confederates entered Hickman.

⁵⁰ O.R., Ser. 1, XXIII, Pt. 2, 537-38.

⁵¹ O.R., Ser. 1, XXIII, Pt. 1, 825.

⁵² Some of the petitioners, Union sympathizers who felt the brunt of the raid, were officials, either of Fulton County (Hickman was its county seat) or of the City of Hickman.

the raiders of Hickman. Thereafter, on the 22nd, the entire force, under the command of Col. George E. Waring, 4th Missouri Cavalry, moved out in the direction of Paris, Tennessee. Waring's mission was to seek out the Rebel cavalry then operating in West Kentucky and Tennessee. The whole area along the Kentucky and Tennessee state line was reported to be "full of guerrillas and conscripting parties, impressing and robbing Union citizens." Waring was warned that he would be in a country "surrounded by a population generally sympathetic with the rebellion." He was told to permit no excesses upon persons or property, but to treat "with severity" all Rebel sympathizers. Waring's command camped near Mayfield on the 23rd, reached Murray on the 25th, went down into Tennessee, and on the 27th was abruptly ordered to fall back immediately into Kentucky. They reached Feliciana, where they encamped, on the 30th.⁵³

Waring and his superiors thought that the Rebel raiding parties which they were encountering were part of Forrest's command. (If not under his command, then they were believed to be from his command. Records are not clear as to whether they may have been on detached duty from his command. He was at that time in fact with Gen. Bragg, in the vicinity of Chattanooga, and involved in the massive movements and counter-movements of the armies which ultimately produced the Battle of Chickamauga.⁵⁴) Morgan's great raid into Indiana and Ohio was then in progress. Official Union conjecture in West Tennessee and Kentucky was to the effect that Confederate troops were moving in force to take over and cut communications on the Mississippi River. The imagined effort was one in conjunction and cooperation with Morgan's operations.⁵⁵

It was during this period that Ft. Heiman was again ordered to be evacuated (this time, permanently, insofar as Federal troops were concerned), apparently in the belief that it would be un-

⁵³ O.R., Ser. 1, XXIII, Pt. 1, 827; Pt. 2, 549-50. In instructions sent to Waring on 30 July, Gen. Asboth noted that two days previously, a lieutenant had been bushwhacked near Clinton on the Obion bridge. Waring was told to warn his messengers to be careful. *Ibid.*, Pt. 2, 569.

⁵⁴ Forrest, like Morgan and other successful Rebel raiders, was often reported in many different places at the same time. At this time, he was nowhere near Kentucky. As to what he was doing then, see: John A. Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, op. cit., pp. 212-14; Andrew Lytle, *Bedford Forrest and his Critter Company*, op. cit., p. 188.

⁵⁵ O.R., Ser. 1, XXIII, Pt. 2, 538.

tenable against large Confederate forces moving up from the south. The troops from this post were transferred to Paducah—only coal barges were left at Heiman for the use of Union gunboats on the Tennessee River.⁵⁶

Not only was there the fear that the garrison at Ft. Heiman could be cut off by a large body of advancing Southern troops, but there was also the continual harassment of the garrison by Rebel guerrillas and irregulars. (Harassment existed in many different forms—perhaps the most damaging type was interference with supply lines to the isolated post.) There is abundant evidence that the general area around the fort was saturated with guerrillas and small bodies of Confederate regulars.⁵⁷ Federal patrols, as we have seen, frequently made contact with Rebels. Col. Waring, in his guerrilla sweep down into West Tennessee (discussed above) had run into one sizable body of Rebels, and his scouts had gained information about other large bodies of enemy cavalry in the area. Waring estimated that the whole enemy force in the district—

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 532, 536, 537, 541-42.

⁵⁷ According to the author of the previously cited *Nashville Banner* reprint, the deadliest guerrilla in the area was a native, an old man named Jack Hinson. His war against the Yankees was a private one, born of revenge. His two sons, charged with bushwhacking, had been executed by a firing squad from Ft. Heiman. The deep, throbbing grief of a man who had seen his sons shot down, perhaps needlessly, turned into a terrible campaign of vengeance. It is said that he felled enough Union soldiers to hold a fort or fill a gunboat crew. Each fallen Yankee merited a notch on his rifle. He fired from the river bank and dropped deck officers on passing steamers. He shot lone riders. Rewards were put on his head, and patrols were sent after him with orders to kill on sight. But his long rifle was never stilled. Jack Hinson cut thirty-six notches in it before he ended his war of revenge. Another account of Jack Hinson's "bloody vendetta with every thing that wore the 'blue' in 1862-65", and of his services to Forrest as informant and guide is found in *Battle and Sketches of the Army of Tennessee* (Mexico, Mo., 1906), by Bromfield L. Ridley, pp. 596-98.

There is an unidentified Capt. Hinson mentioned by Gen. Pillow in connection with the fall of Ft. Donelson. *O.R.*, Ser. 1, VII, 325. In January, 1864, a captured guerrilla named Hinson (described as being "especially guilty, and to be strictly guarded") was sent to Paducah along with other prisoners by Brig. Gen. William Sooy Smith, then in Savannah, Tennessee. *O.R.*, Ser. 1, XXXII, Pt. 2, 49. However, neither Hinson seems to be identifiable in any way with the old man mentioned in the story. All information is to the effect that Jack Hinson did not start shooting Yankees until after his sons were executed, which was probably in 1862. There is nothing to indicate that the old man himself was ever captured.

"guerrillas and all"—amounted to something just short of a thousand.⁵⁸

There was activity elsewhere in the Purchase. On 2 August, forty mounted Confederates were reported as having been near Hickman on the previous day. Gen. Asboth at Columbus immediately dispatched two companies of infantry and one of cavalry aboard the steamer *Crawford*. Their quarry proved elusive.

At about the same time, Col. Waring, still encamped near Feliciana, reported nothing of consequence, except a "few guerrillas in the neighborhood." On the 4th, Waring was directed to march from Feliciana to Union City, Tennessee, and to "endeavor to immediately clear" the country around that town, Troy, and Hickman of "(R. V.) Richardson's marauding parties, thus securing railroad and telegraphic communications to Columbus and Hickman."⁵⁹

⁵⁸ O.R., Ser. 1, XXIII, Pt. 2, 546-47. The "sizable body" encountered by Waring's scouts was a band of eighty, under one Hicks, moving toward Feliciana.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 588-91.

(To be continued)