

Strictures on Campbellism. Lexington: William M. Todd and Thomas T. Skillman at the Western Luminary Press, 1833.

Unitarianism Unmasked: Its Anti-Christian Features Displayed: Its Infidel Tendency Exhibited: And Its Foundation Shown To Be Untenable; In A Reply To Barton W. Stone's Letters To The Rev. Dr. Blythe. Lexington: Thomas T. Skillman, 1825.

Moreland, John R. To The Members of Mt. Pleasant Church. n.p., n.p., 1821.

(believed to have been printed at Cynthiana, Kentucky)

NOTE:

Dr. Bailey, who contributed this material to the JOURNAL, recently completed a 131 page summary of the life and influence of Barton Stone. Included in this summary is an extensive 35 page bibliography of Stone and his associates. Those wishing to examine this material should contact Dr. Bailey personally.

## The Civil War in Murray, Calloway County, Kentucky

Robert W. Caldwell

The 125th anniversary of General Robert Edward Lee's surrender at Appomattox, on April 9, 1990, will be one of the last important anniversaries of the Civil War. All the famous battles, Gettysburg, Shiloh, etc., have been remembered by memorial events, and reenactments. But scant attention has been paid to the small towns away from strategic areas.

The scope of the Civil War was so broad that even people in Murray were adversely affected by it. The same kind of depredations that are going on in such places as Haiti, or Nicaragua today were happening in the back yards of Murray residents 125 years ago. Approximately 20 to 40 citizens were shot by guerrillas during the war years, these guerrillas being undisciplined groups of deserters wearing both blue and gray.<sup>1</sup>

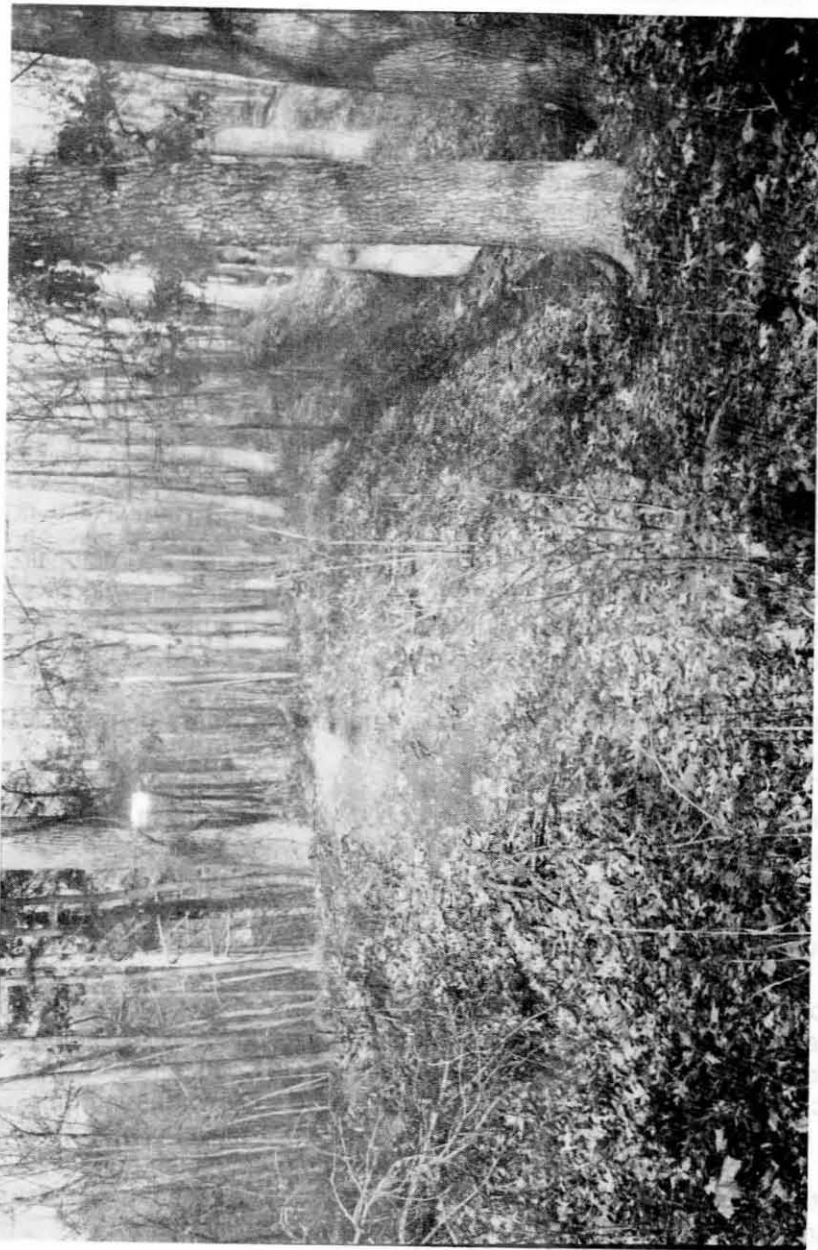
Residents buried food in mounds during the winter months, and hid their cattle in hollows and fence rows at night. Women would bar doors and windows against feared attacks while men would stalk the shadows around their homes. Arson, rape, and murder were commonplace.<sup>2</sup>

Both armies were compelled to live off the land, and competed for available horses, livestock and foodstuffs.<sup>3</sup>

Even without a war, times were bad enough. Nearly everyone in Murray at that time had his or her "chill day." People believed this was caused by the night air so they kept their windows closed at night to ward off malaria. Typhoid was prevalent. Operations were practically unknown. If anyone got appendicitis, he simply died of "locked bowels."<sup>4</sup>

The town of Warburg, later called Blood, still later called Newburg, now under water, was occasionally shelled by gunboats traveling along the Tennessee River because it was a landing used to run supplies to Confederate troops.<sup>5</sup> Gunboat crews also gathered people's corn, and killed cattle for food. Sometimes the citizens living along the river could not resist taking shots at the gunboats. "John T. Bailey, for instance, who lived near the mouth of Bailey's Creek on the Tennessee River, shot at a head that was looking out a gunboat window, and it was believed that he had killed his target."<sup>6</sup>

The whole Purchase Area was so pro-Southern that it was called "The South Carolina of Kentucky." Paducah was called the "Charleston of Kentucky." In 1861, a convention was held in Mayfield to consider the question of joining together the portions of the Purchase Area in Kentucky and Tennessee to form



Part of the surviving earthworks of Fort Heiman.

photo by Robert Caldwell

a separate state.<sup>7</sup>

Several companies were raised in Murray. Every able bodied citizen was compelled to attend the county muster and drill. The muster was commanded by Major Obidiah McClean. Out of the 1,800 men of military age in the county, about 800 went off to fight for the South, and 200 went off to fight for the North. Many never returned.<sup>8</sup>

C.C. Bowman of Columbus was the first to recruit a company in Calloway County. This became company F of the 1st Kentucky which operated in northern Virginia until it was disbanded in May 1862.

One of the Southern companies, Company H, lead by Murray resident Captain G.A.C. Holt, part of the 3rd Kentucky Infantry, led by Murray resident, Colonel Albert Press Thompson, left for the front in April 1861, and marched into fame as part of the celebrated Kentucky Confederate Brigade. Company H participated in much of the local action, described later, as well as Shiloh, Baton Rouge, Vicksburg, Oxford, Fort Pillow, Selma, Macon, and Tishimingo Creek. Out of the original 87 men, only 25 returned.

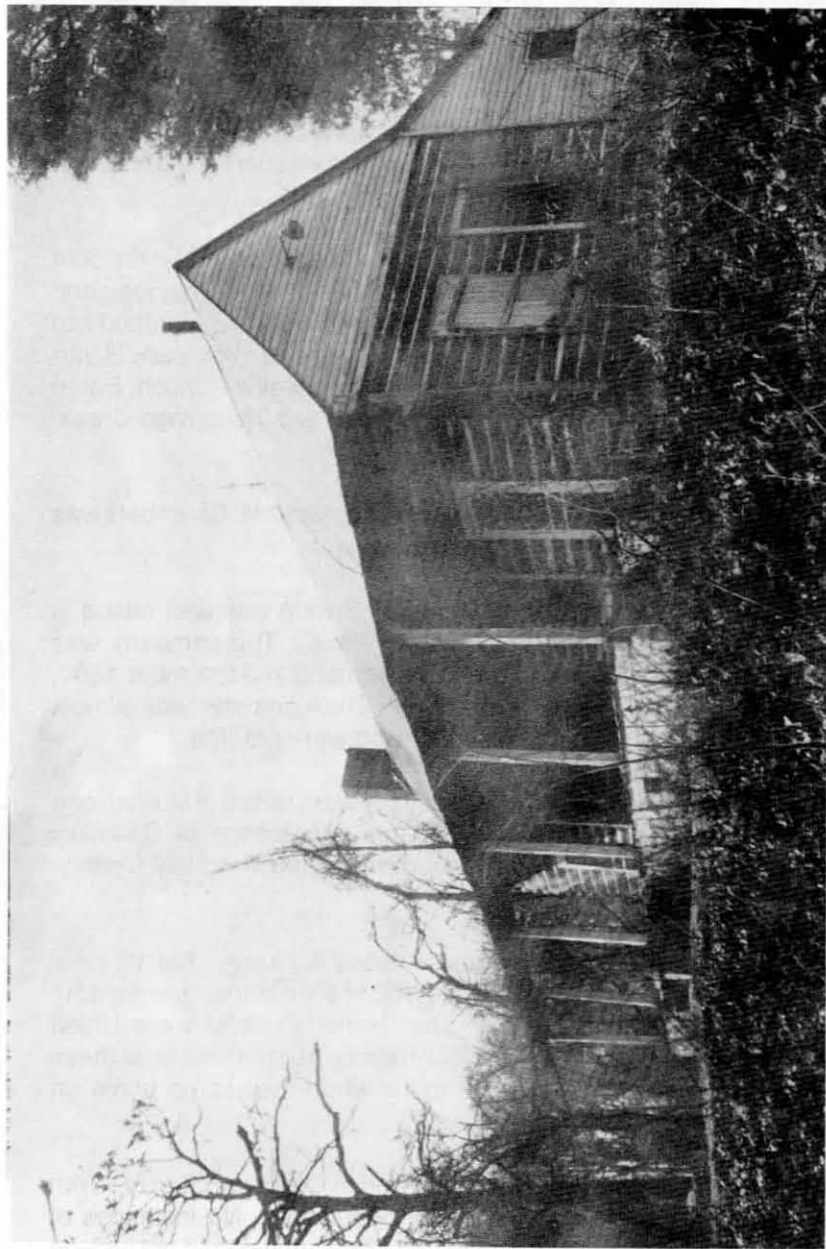
Company G of the 7th Kentucky Infantry, led by Captain J.M. Chambers was also raised in Murray. It fought in the same battles.

A company of infantry led by Captain Monoah Swann was also raised in Murray. Within days they fought at the Battle of Paris. The company was detached to General Nathan Bedford Forrest's command in September 1864, and served in West Kentucky and Tennessee. The company was almost decimated; only seven returned home plus four who were paroled.

Two companies of Colonel (?) Faulkner's cavalry were raised in Murray, one of these under Captain James Melton (probably J.F. Melton of Calloway County). Melton's company consisted mostly of men from Calloway County, most of whom were less than 18 years old.

Several companies for the Union were also raised in Murray: the 1st Kentucky Battalion, led by T.P. Carter, and a large number of enlistments in the 15th Kentucky Cavalry and other regiments. The "Home Guards" were Union enlistees who stayed in the area. Captain William Hurt was in command of these and captured a great many Confederates, many when they came home on leave.<sup>9</sup>

On the eve of the Civil War 1,500 slaves were living in Calloway County. With 8,400 whites, the slaves made up 15% of the population. No instances of mistreatment are known. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation did not include Kentucky, but Calloway County granted slaves their freedom anyway. One of the last slave survivors, Tom Gardner, was a janitor at Murray High School



Cabin built by Rainey T. Wells, the Second President of Murray State University, on the Site of Fort Heiman.

photo by Robert Caldwell

between the years of 1909 and 1910.<sup>10</sup>

On December 6, 1861, citizens of Murray made application to John S. Bowen, colonel of the fourth division from Camp Beauregard, southwest of Mayfield, to establish a command in Wadesboro or Murray. These citizens said they had an ample supply of provisions, especially pork, that they would sell to the Confederacy cheap—wheat 60 cents a bushel, corn 25 cents.

Bowen reported that there was running water within a mile of Murray, and that there was a good road to Eggners Ferry, near Aurora which wasn't on the map. He also recommended that a command in Murray could cover the part of the state that was not protected, and would form a strong defensive line from the Mississippi River to the Tennessee River.<sup>11</sup>

Fort Heiman, located in the southeast corner of Calloway County, was the closest point of military importance to Murray. The fort was built to correct the deficiencies of Fort Henry which was located in an unsuitable place. Early in the war the Confederates did not want to violate Kentucky's neutrality, so they made sure to locate both Forts Henry, and Donelson in Tennessee. However, there really was no suitable location on the border for either fort. This was particularly true of Fort Henry which was not only located in the flood zone, but was directly across the river from a high cliff. The Union could occupy the cliff, and command the fort.

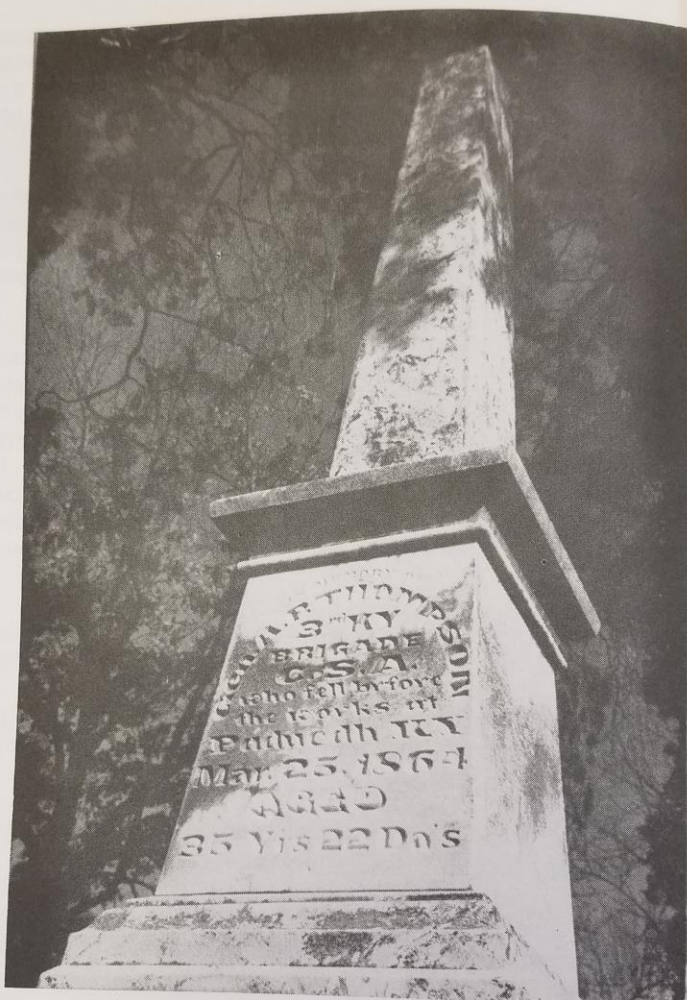
Several officers inspected Fort Henry and recommended fortifying this cliff. In September 1861, Major Jeremy F. Gilmer was appointed to do just that.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, during November 1861 through February 1862, Union Brigadier General Charles F. Smith marched from Paducah to Calloway Landing, 46 miles to the south, on a Reconnaissance expedition.

Confederate General Lloyd Tilghman, in command at Fort Henry, reported on January 19, that he thought Smith was in Murray with 7,500 men, 1,000 cavalry, and 12 field pieces of artillery. However, Smith made no mention of Murray in his reports. But he did complain about his men plundering and looting despite attempts to control them. Some of his men may have passed through Murray.<sup>13</sup>

On February 4, three Union gunboats attacked Fort Henry. The engagement lasted about half an hour, and no shots hit the fort. During the engagement 1,100 Confederates supported by artillery occupied the unfinished Fort Heiman. After this attack, Colonel Adolphus Heiman decided that he would not be able to hold the outpost and asked Tilghman for permission to withdraw these troops. Tilghman consented.<sup>14</sup>

On February 6, Smith once again marched down from Fort Anderson in



Gravestone of Albert Press Thompson in Bowman Cemetery off North 4th Street in Murray.

photo Robert Caldwell

Paducah. He was ordered to march his two brigades along the west bank of the Tennessee River while Flag Officer Andrew Hull Foote's gunboats approached Fort Henry.<sup>15</sup>

Tilghman, now at Fort Henry, sent most of his men to Fort Donelson. With the handful of men left he fought to cover the retreat as the river flooded the fort.

Meanwhile, Smith's division was opposed only by mud as it approached Fort Heiman. Three companies of cavalry that Tilghman sent out to slow the advance failed to appear. Smith's troops did not reach the fort until after the surrender of Fort Henry. About 6 P.M. as the sun was setting, his troops set up camp.<sup>16</sup> This, however, was not the last of Fort Heiman.

J.F. Melton commanded a company of cavalry in Tilghman's division. He retreated to Fort Donelson, but was captured after its surrender on February 16. He escaped while being transported from Camp Chase to Sandusky on April 26, 1862. He returned South to raise a new company, but was recaptured on July 13.<sup>17</sup>

On February 13, Confederate Colonel J. H. Miller of the First Battalion Mississippi Cavalry heard about depredations being committed in the area of Fort Heiman. When he moved his troops into the area to clean it out, he found the enemy waiting for him about four miles from the fort. After some fighting, he fell back.<sup>18</sup>

"In the early part of 1863," Josh Ellison of Murray wrote in his diary, "a squad of Yankees came from Paducah to Murray and at the point of a bayonet drove T.M. Jones out of the county judge's office and gave it to A.W. Wadlington. Drove P.M. Ellison out of the clerk's office and gave it to John B. England. Drove R.L. Ellison out of the circuit clerk's office and gave it to Nathan Bowman. Drove Crawford Duncan out of the sheriff's office and gave it to Nat Ryan, Sr. Drove J[ohn].E. Churchill out of the jailer's office and gave it to A. Riley.

"P.M. Ellison and others were arrested by the soldiers and carried to Paducah and put in a prison because they would not take the oath of allegiance to the Union."<sup>19</sup>

Late in 1863, about 300 Federals took possession of Murray, and threw up earthworks near town on south fourth street—later the site of the Murray Coal and Ice Company.<sup>20</sup> "Local residents prepared to leave their homes to be out of the expected battle, but without notice or ado the troops moved away and no battle was fought."<sup>21</sup> This was the only force of regular troops stationed in Murray during the war.<sup>22</sup>

On March 30, 1863, J.F. Melton wrote Confederate Senator Henry C. Burnett, from the military prison in Alton, Illinois, complaining of the conditions of

his imprisonment and demanding him to work toward his release. Melton said that when he was being transported back to prison after being recaptured, he was heavily ironed with log chain. Then he was "thrown into a cell 6 by 3 feet with iron fetters on, kicked, cuffed, taunted, jeered and maltreated in every conceivable form. I remained the inmate of this living tomb until my life was despaired of. I was then removed to the hospital where I have remained ever since, denied the privileges of a common culprit, denied a parole, denied an exchange, several of which have left here during my imprisonment. To my demands they have replied by adding insult to injury, in renewed insult and cruelty. I have had to run the gauntlet of every disease which human flesh is heir to—smallpox, measles, mumps, pneumonia; in a word all the ills of Pandora...

"I have seen thousands of my companions in arms consigned to a premature and untimely grave here by the cruelty and injustice of my enemies, murdered in cold blood in this lazar house of disease and death."<sup>23</sup>

"In the winter of 1863-64," Ellison wrote in his diary, "a squad of soldiers came from Paducah to Murray and burned the east side of the court square on Friday night and Monday night they burned the north side of the square."<sup>24</sup> Most of these buildings were general merchandising stores.<sup>25</sup> The motive for this burning was a reprisal for the southern sympathy of the town. But the specific provocation remained a mystery for years.

Ed Digid Sr., owner of a hardware store, later told this story. He and a friend, Cons Frazier, saw some men being recruited for General Nathan Bedford Forrest cavalry and "not being satisfied with the big folks having all the fun," found some paint and an old meal sack, and painted a crude Confederate flag.

Digid recalled, "That night, Cons and me went up that big tree... I climbed as far as I could without it bending over too much. It was way up high and we stuck bailing wire through the seam. When I got to the toppermost where it would hang out just right to swing straight down, I wired that dude fast. I started down, and Cons had gotten a hatchet out of Mr. Linn's crib and I climbed back up to cut every limb off that main stem from the flag down... Soon as we finished we scampered home."

The next day he noticed people staring at the flag and getting excited. In a few days it started drawing crowds.

"Cons and me got skeered as rabbits, and swore we would never tell," he continued. "It was all for fun but that meal sack caused more trouble and raised more cain in less time that you ever heerd of..."

Troops came into town and started shooting at the flag, he said. "The soldiers set up camp at Pleasant Hill, and during the night, the soldiers hotter than all getout over that flag, returned to the square, shootin' up and setting fire

to a row of buildings on the east side..."

Grownups paid angry but silent attention as the next day the soldiers pulled down the flag and put up a Union one.

"The soldiers came back to town that night," Digid said, "and burned the other side of the square. They didn't burn down the courthouse because that would have gone against the president's orders not to destroy government buildings."<sup>26</sup>

On March 23, 1864, Confederate soldiers from Forrest's cavalry, probably on their way to the battle of Paducah, blundered into a force of Union soldiers at Hugh Arant's farm in Benton near where the swimming pool now is. Both groups were bent on stealing horses.

No one knows exactly what they fought about, how many were engaged, or who won. There were two engagements several days apart fought on the same ground.

The Union troops made off with widow Arant's horse. When she complained to the commanding officers in Paducah, it was returned to her.<sup>27</sup>

During March 25 and 26, a large Confederate force under Forrest attacked Paducah at 2 p.m. Colonel Thompson took the 3rd and 7th Kentucky regiments as close to the fort as he could and still keep under cover from the fort's artillery. Shortly after 3 p.m., Thompson ordered the attack. At 3:30 p.m. firing ceased and both sides met under flags of truce.

The Confederates asked Colonel S. G. Hicks, the commander of the fort to surrender. When he refused, Thompson renewed the attack.<sup>28</sup> Thompson was killed in the assault. The accounts differ: When he rode out to direct the assault — While he was sitting on his horse talking to several officers during a lull in the battle — Sergeant Tom Hayes of the 15th Kentucky fired one of the forts cannon — a gunboat fired a shot — which struck him about theommel of the saddle — which decapitated him, in either case he died instantly.<sup>29</sup>

Again the Confederates fell back and took shelter behind and in the houses around the fort. There the sharpshooters went into action. By 8 p.m. the Confederates had retreated.<sup>30</sup>

On November 4 and 5, 1864, the 3rd Kentucky, now led by Colonel G.A.C. Holt, took part in Forrest's assault on Johnsonville, Tennessee.<sup>31</sup> Forrest wanted to cut off the boatloads of supplies going up the Tennessee River to Johnsonville on the way to supplying General Sherman's army in Georgia. He put artillery in place at Fort Heiman without attracting the attention of passing riverboats. Fort Heiman was finally ready to play its part in the war.

Soon the Mazeppa, a supply boat, appeared. It was quickly disabled. Forrest's men captured the crew, unloaded the supplies and burned the boat.

Soon they had captured three Yankee boats. Then Forrest got a daring idea. He loaded some of his men onto two of the boats, the Undine and the Venus, and started toward Johnsonville. The rest of his troops followed on land. The Venus, skippered by Colonel W.A. Dawson, ran into two Yankee gunboats. Before the boat got too damaged, Dawson ran it aground, led his men off and burned it.

Captain Frank Gracey on the Undine managed to get away, and played cat and mouse with the Union gunboats for a few days before the boat was hit—forcing him to run it ashore and set it on fire.

Forrest's men continued on to Johnsonville, and prepared to shell it. Captain John Morgan cut notches in the riverbank so the guns would be below the angle of fire of the guns in the fort.

The attack came as a complete surprise to the Union garrison who thought they were safe since the gunboats had been destroyed.<sup>32</sup> "The first round of shots disabled the gunboats, the next round set fires along the wharf and in the warehouses."<sup>33</sup> The bombardment demoralized the garrison, sending most of the troops scampering up the hill to the safety of the fort. Before long the entire Johnsonville waterfront was in flames. During the bombardment, Forrest made one of his most famous commands, "Elevate the breach a little lower, boys!" Smoke rising from Johnsonville could be seen for miles.<sup>34</sup>

The only official hanging in Calloway County took place during the Civil War or shortly after. Pud Diggs was accused of being a guerrilla, and for the murder of George Miller. He was incarcerated in the Murray jail where he was chained to the floor since the jail could easily be broken into. Everyone believed Diggs's friends would try to free him, but for the fact his friends were afraid of the jailer, John Churchill, a tall, dignified, commanding figure, a man wholly without fear, they might have tried.

Thousands of people gathered to witness the festivities. As Churchill lead his charge toward the gallows, a young man by the name of Ed Ryan caught up in the revels fired his pistol.

A cry was heard, "The gorillas have come to turn Diggs loose!" and the crowd dispersed in panic. Everyone guarding Diggs ran, except Churchill, who was armed with a single barreled shot gun. Diggs stood unmoved through it all, and when the crowd reassembled, the execution proceeded.<sup>35</sup>

Diggs was merely one of thousands killed in the great tragedy known as the Civil War. The '60s, then, as the '60s a hundred years later, was a time when a war divided our country.

The war of the 1860s, however, did not come to people's living rooms in a little box. It came to people's living rooms.

## Notes

1. Dorothy and Kerby Jennings, **The Story of Calloway County, 1822-1976**, copyright 1978 by the Authors, Murray, Kentucky . p. 36.
2. Jennings, p. 36.
3. Jennings, p. 31 & 36.
4. **History of Calloway County-1931**, compiled by **The Ledger and Times**.
5. Jennings, p. 36.
6. J. Milton Henry, **The Land Between The Rivers**, Taylor Publishing Company, p. 101.; his notes— Interview with Charlie Crutcher, Dover, Tenn...; Stanley F. Horn, **The Army of Tennessee**, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1941, pp. 80-98; letter from J.C. Cook to Major Nathan Brandon, Oct. 13, 1861.
7. **Brief History of Kentucky**, HISTORY OF MARSHALL COUNTY, Robert LeHeave; John C. Waters papers.
8. Jennings, p. 32; **History of Calloway County-1931**.
9. Jennings, p. 32-33; **History of Calloway County - 1931**; Berry Craig, "Calloway County: Confederate hotbed," **Paducah Sun Democrat**, April 19, 1978.
10. Jennings, p. 40-41; Craig. **Paducah Sun Democrat**, April 19, 1978.
11. **The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, Volume 7, p. 738-9**.
12. Henry, p. 101; his note—Stanley F. Horn, **Tennessee's War 1861-1865**, Nashville, TN: Tennessee Civil War Centennial Company, 1965, p. 30.
13. Henry, p. 102; **Official Records**, I, 7, p. 72 & 74.
14. Henry, P. 105-106; his note—Edwin C. Bearss, **The Fall of Fort Henry**, reprinted from **The West Tennessee Historical Society**, Vol. 17 (1963), p.3.
15. Henry, p. 110.
16. Henry, p. 110.
17. **Official Records**, II, 5, p. 859.
18. **Official Records**, I, 7, p. 416.
19. Jennings, p. 35.
20. Jennings, p. 32. **The Murray Ledger and Times**, May 9, 1935.
21. **The Ledger and Times**, May 9, 1935.
22. Jennings, p. 32.
23. **Official Records**, II, 5, p. 859.
24. Jennings, p. 35-36.
25. **History of Calloway County-1931**.
26. Marty Ball, article in **Paris Post Intelligencer**, January or February 1988, original source 1915 issue of **The Ledger and Times**.
27. Berry Craig, "Battle of Benton almost escaped notice", **The Paducah Sun**, August 15, 1982.
28. Hall Allen, **Center of Conflict**, Published by the **Paducah Sun-Democrat**, 1961, p. 163-164
29. Allen, p. 164; Jennings, p. 34.
30. Allen, p. 164.
31. Jennings, p. 31-32.
32. Allen, p. 139-144
33. Allen, p. 145.
34. Allen, p. 145.
35. Jennings, p. 39-40.