

History 225  
Notes with Davis essay  
page two

Once the Civil War broke out this was a signal for groups of Kansans better known at the time as Jayhawkers to raid across the Missouri border and begin a campaign of pillaging and rapine all on the name of punishing secessionists.

Charles Jennison, U.S. Senator James Henry Lane, James Montgomery, an early follower of John Brown, William Cody (latter reaches public eminence as "Buffalo Bill"), Daniel Anthony, the brother of abolitionist and feminist Susan B. Anthony, made raids into Missouri.

These raids were really occasions for looting and pillaging Missouri towns along the Kansas border. They stole every thing they could carry back to Kansas. What they couldn't carry back they either killed, like the livestock, or burned to the ground--houses and in some cases, like the town of Osceola, they left as a smoldering ruin.

In the process Jayhawkers delighted in running off slaves and bringing them back as free men into Kansas. Missouri slaves seeing their opportunity to escape bondage took advantage of these destabilizing guerrilla forays to cross the Missouri River into Kansas and thereby win their own freedom.

This large-scale and self-starter emancipation was in violation of Union policy at the time. Missouri had not seceded from the Union and furthermore it was not the administration's policy prior to the EP to use the conflict to end slavery.

By March 1862 these freelancing raids largely came to an end when federal forces in the area were strengthened to stop the marauding. But by early spring of '62 most of western Missouri was dismantled and laid waste.

Of course the savagery was not over. Missourians were bent on retribution. This would come in the form of a former school teacher by the name of William Hart who would change his name to William Quantrill.

For Kansans Quantrill became the devil incarnate. His gang of hundreds of Missouri outlaws and raiders included some of the most dangerous men on the planet--Cole Younger, Wild Bill Anderson, Frank James, George Todd, Dick Yager, and dozens more. All men with severe attitudes. Many of them had lost family and friends to the earlier Jayhawker "frolics" in western Missouri and there were blood scores to settle.