

# FURLOUGH

BY

JAMES

PATRICK

MORGANS



*"Stacked Arms" by Conrad Wise Chapman (courtesy Valentine Museum, Richmond, Virginia)*





The city of Atlanta, Georgia was in flames, fallen victim to Sherman's Army. To the battle-hardened Union troops from Iowa and Missouri, like Thomas Goodman, the immolation meant a long overdue furlough. Although Goodman was from Hawleyville in Page County, Iowa, he and other residents had been recruited into the 13th Missouri Infantry, later to be consolidated with the First Missouri Engineers.

Furloughed with Goodman were other Page County residents, James Mobley, Cass Rose, and Bud Barnum. The "furlough squad," as Goodman called it, numbered about a score and left Atlanta by train on September 22, 1864. A happier band of soldiers it would be hard to find, with laughter and horseplay the order of the day. However, 35 miles outside Atlanta, Wheeler's Rebel cavalry had torn up some 80 rods of tracks. For the "furlough squad" it was a grim reminder; they were not safely home yet. But Goodman and his friends did not give in to melancholy apprehension. Using their knowledge gained as part of the First Missouri Engineers, the boys, so eager for home, repaired the track in just four hours.

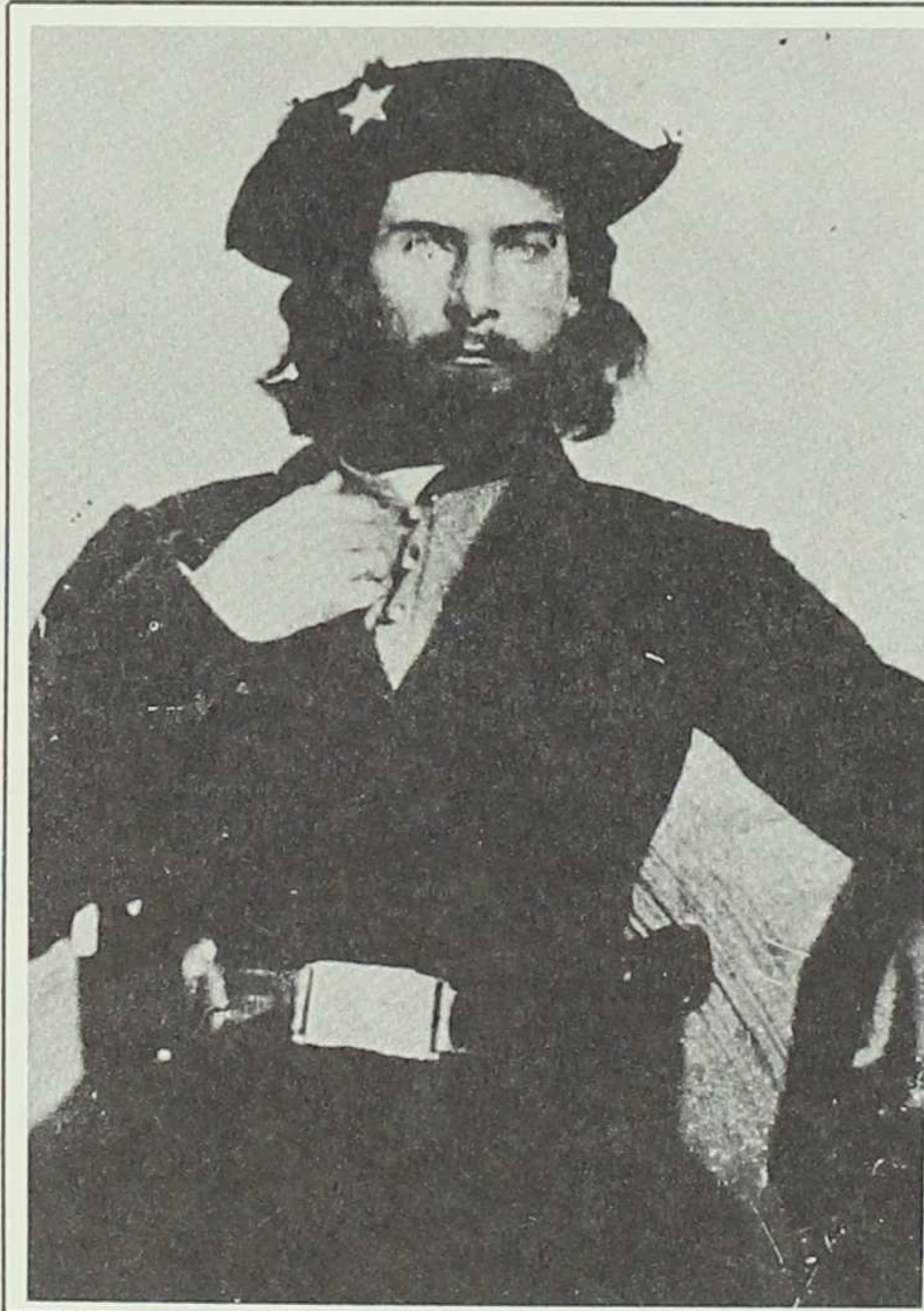
They passed Chattanooga, Nashville, and Louisville on the way to "God's Country," as they called it. Along the route Rebel sympathizers told the "furlough squad" that Wheeler's cavalry would tie into them again, but the boys in blue reached St. Louis without further incident.

In the city, Edward Pace, a resident of Taylor County, Iowa, joined Goodman and his band. Pace, who had recently been discharged from the Union Army, was anxious to get home. Some of the Missouri boys left the group at St. Louis, and the Iowans spent the day there. They planned to take the train through St. Charles, Mexico, Centralia, and then to intercept the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad at Macon, Missouri.

It was a misty morning when the furlough squad left St. Louis on September 27, 1864. They railed rapidly into St. Charles, Missouri, meeting, much to their surprise, most of the Missouri boys who had left a day earlier. Since their arrival in St. Louis, the Missourians had heard gruesome stories about guerrillas marauding through northern Missouri, making it a virtual no-man's land. Once in St. Charles, they decided to wait for Goodman's squad in order to travel together, hoping there would be safety in numbers.

Somewhere in or around Mexico, Missouri, seven members of the First Iowa Cavalry also joined Goodman's group. Bound for business in St. Joseph, the seven members of the First Iowa Cavalry were: Owen P. Gore of Lee County, Oscar B. Williams of Van Buren County, George W. Dilley of Davenport, Edward Maders of Burlington, John Russell of Fairfield, Joseph H. Arnold of Mt. Pleasant, and Charles Carpenter of Waukon. Twenty-four men, only three of them armed, now rode in the furlough squad. And as the train pulled closer to Centralia, Missouri, Thomas Goodman looked out the window. Something looked wrong—very wrong.





Bloody Bill Anderson (courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri)



Jesse James (courtesy Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library)



Bloody Bill Anderson with a company of 80 men rode into Centralia, Missouri on September 27, 1864 to pick up newspapers for information on Confederate General Sterling Price's invasion of Missouri. Boys, most of them between 17 and 21, they were nevertheless heavily armed, mounted on fine horses, and quite without mercy. Perhaps the most ruthless of all the Confederate guerrillas, Anderson had gathered around himself some of the most desperate men in America, Payton Long, George Shepherd, and Clell Miller of Kearney, Missouri among them. In 1871, Mil-

ler would stand trial for robbing the Ocobock Brothers Bank at Corydon, Iowa. He was acquitted, but was later to gain national recognition as one of the bank robbers shot dead in the streets of Northfield, Minnesota during the Great Northfield Raid.

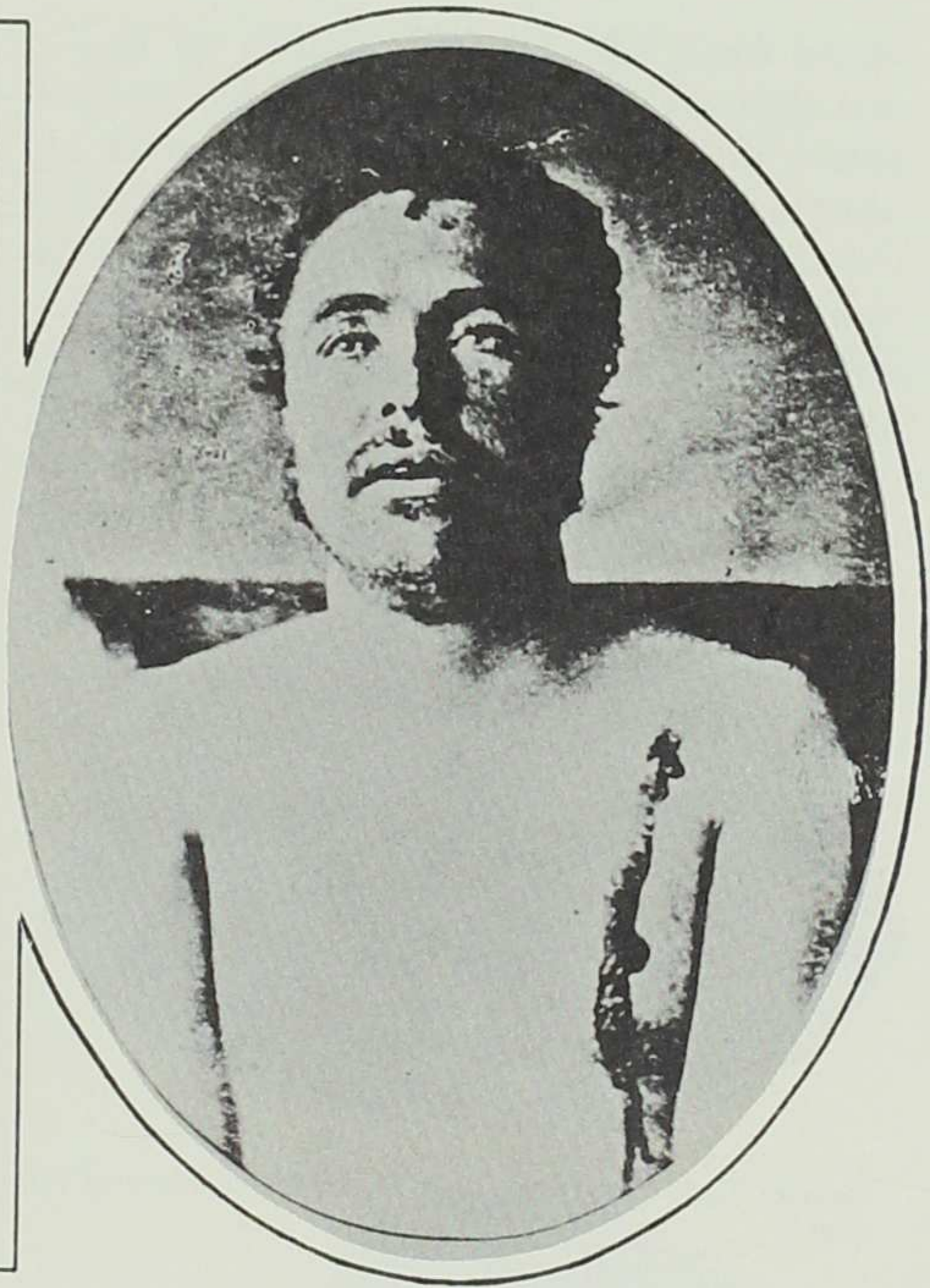
Kearney, Missouri also provided Bloody Bill with a pair of brothers destined for international fame, Frank and Jesse James. But, as the furlough squad was to learn, of all the men around Anderson, none was more sadistic than his 20-year-old first lieutenant, Archie Clement.

No sooner did the Anderson bunch ride into Centralia than they began indiscriminately





Frank James (courtesy Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma Library)



Clell Miller (courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri)

robbing its citizens. They found whiskey, along with a large consignment of boots. So they filled the boots for tumblers and drank up. Homes and stores were looted and the guerrillas rode through town with long tails of calico streaming from their saddles.

Dr. T.S. Sneed, citizen of Centralia and a Southern sympathizer, was introduced to Bill Anderson. As they were talking, Sneed turned around to see his horse being led away by one of Anderson's men. Sneed protested to Anderson, who said, "Go and get him, tell the man I said he must not take your horse." The Doctor started after the man, but before he reached him another guerrilla demanded his money.

He told the man that Anderson sent him after that horse, brushing past the fellow until, a short distance farther, he was stopped by yet another freebooter demanding money. Sneed pointed to the first guerrilla and said, "You're too late." At last, Dr. Sneed reached his horse and was able to recover it.

Many other Centralians were not so lucky and paid for the least provocation with their lives.

At 11:00 the stage from Columbia arrived, and its passengers were promptly relieved of their valuables. A congressman and other notables were on the stage, but the guerrillas failed to discover their identities because they





George Todd (courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri)

were distracted by the whistle of the 11:30 special train from St. Louis. The guerrillas, dressed as they always were in Union uniforms, rushed down to the depot to blockade the tracks and stop the train.



Thomas Goodman was puzzled as he looked out the train window and saw slovenly dressed soldiers in Union blues reeling drunkenly about the depot.

Suddenly one of the boys from the First Iowa Cavalry, a veteran of guerrilla warfare, shouted: "There are guerrillas there, for sure."

Then a hail of bullets was fired into the train. Two soldiers bolted from the car, only to be shot down by Anderson himself before they reached the platform. The guerrillas stormed the train. Goodman and the furlough squad retreated to the middle of the car just as the Anderson bunch entered, one of their number shouting, "Surrender quietly and you will be treated as prisoners of war."

That was when one of the furlough squad made the mistake of saying, "We can only surrender as we are totally unarmed."

A mere moment transformed the attitude of the guerrillas. They each picked out a man, waved a pistol in his face, and robbed him. One by one, each soldier was relieved of everything he owned. The civilian passengers were also robbed, and the express car rifled.

The robbery concluded, Anderson declared: "You Federals have just killed six of my men, scalped them, and left them on the prairie . . . I will show you that I can kill men with as much skill and rapidity as anybody. From this time on I ask no quarter and give none. Every Federal soldier on whom I put my finger shall die like a dog. If I get into your clutches I expect death. You are all to be killed and sent to hell. That is the way every damned soldier who falls into my hands shall be served."

Several of the furlough squad protested that they were from Sherman's army and had nothing to do with any scalping incident. For that matter, Anderson had failed to mention that the guerrillas themselves had been scalping and mutilating Federals and civilians regularly for two years. Ignoring the furlough squad's pleas of innocence, Anderson commanded the boys to fall into line and strip. Whipped into a fury, he demanded: "Boys, have you a Sergeant in your ranks?"

No one answered. To do so, they feared, would invite instant execution.

"If there be one, let him step aside."

There were several sergeants standing in the line before Bloody Bill Anderson. But only



Sergeant Thomas Goodman (and even he didn't know why) stepped forward. Two guerrilla guards quickly ushered him away.



"What are you going to do with them fellows?" little Archie Clement asked, pointing to the line of soldiers.

"Parole them, of course," Anderson laughed.

With that, Archie started firing into the line of naked and unarmed men. And the rest of the guerrillas followed little Archie's lead.

Goodman turned around while he was being led away. The line had simply disappeared, levelled with the ground. Some of the soldiers lay wounded, groaning in agony, their pleas for mercy met only with more gunfire. One man, a Sergeant Peters, managed to get up, knock over a few guerrillas, and run under the station platform. Anderson had his bunch burn the platform. Smoked out, Peters was cut down like a cornered animal.

#### Note on Sources

The principal sources for the article are: Thomas Goodman's account of his ordeal in W. L. Kershaw's *History of Page County* (S. J. Clarke Co.: Chicago, 1909); Edgar T. Rodemyre's "Centralia Massacre and the Battle" (unpublished manuscript); Wiley Britton's *Civil War on the Border* (Chicago: 1882) and *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: 1881-1901, series I, Volume XLI, part 1; series I, Volume XLI, part 3); Jay Monaghan's *Civil War on the Western Border 1854-1865* (Little, Brown and Co.: Boston, 1955); Albert Castel's *William Clarke Quantrill: His Life and Times* (Frederick Fell: New York, New York, 1962); Richard S. Brownlee's *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy: Guerrilla Warfare in the West, 1861-1865* (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, 1958, O-L); William A. Settle, Jr.'s *Jesse James Was His Name or, Fact and Fiction Concerning the Careers of the Notorious James Brothers of Missouri* (University of Missouri Press, 1966); R. E. Cunningham's *History of Page and Fremont Counties* (Shenandoah, 1973); James D. Horn's *The Outlaws—The Authentic Wild West* (Crown: New York, 1977); William Connelley's *Quantrill and the Border War* (Pageant Book: New York, New York, 1956); S. H. M. Byers' *Iowa in War Times* (W. D. Condit and Co.: Des Moines, 1888); Charles H. Lothrop's *First Regiment Iowa Cavalry* (Beers and Eaton: Lyons, Iowa, 1890); Brig. Gen. Guy E. Logan's *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers in the War of the Rebellion Together with Historical Sketches of Volunteer Organizations* (Vol. IV: Des Moines).

Led by Archie Clement, the band began scalping and mutilating the dead. The train was set aflame with its throttle opened full steam and its whistle blowing. Blazing, the train screamed out of Centralia without an engineer.

The jubilation touched off by the runaway and blazing train was only increased when Anderson's guerrillas spotted a gravel train coming into Centralia. After robbing its crew, they put this train to the torch as well.

One of the civilian passengers from the first train, acting as spokesman for the group, asked Anderson if they could leave. Anderson replied leeringly, "You can all go to hell, for all I care."

They walked instead to the depot at Sturgeon, the nearest railtown. Non-combatants, ordinary men, women, and children, every one of them was in a state of shock.



Archie Clement (courtesy State Historical Society of Missouri)





"Guerrilla depredations" (Frank Leslie's Illustrated Famous Leaders and Battle Scenes of the Civil War)



It was about an hour later that Major A.V.E. Johnson of the 38th Missouri (Federal) Infantry rode into Centralia. The sight that greeted him was sickening, chaos, with bodies lying everywhere. T.S. Sneed and other citi-

zens warned Johnson not to pursue Anderson, as he had been joined by other guerrilla leaders, George Todd, John Thraikill, Dave Poole, and Si Gordon. It was reckoned that the guerrillas now numbered some 300 strong.

The land around Centralia was flat. Johnson was able to go to one of the two-story buildings



Johnson had his men dismount, ordering every fourth man to hold the horses.

One of the guerrillas, John Koger, watched as the Federals dismounted. "Why the fools are going to fight us on foot," adding: "God help them."

Major Johnson's Federal troops were on a slight hill. The guerrillas were down below in a thicket of plum trees that hid their total number. Anderson's men were to hold the middle, with John Thraikill's boys to his right, and the combined forces of George Todd and Si Gordon to the left. Dave Poole and his men brought up the rear. George Todd lifted his hat to Anderson in the Shelby salute. When Anderson lifted his to Poole the charge began.

The guerrillas charged uphill to Major Johnson's men, most of the Federals' shots sailing ineffectually over their heads. Only three guerrillas were hit. Hank Williams was shot dead off his horse. Frank Shepard's brains and blood splattered onto Frank James' pants. Richard Kinney was wounded and would die several days later. These were the only casualties the guerrillas were to suffer all day.

Before Johnson's troops could reload, Anderson's men were upon them, mowing the Federals down with their pistols. They tried to fight back, using their rifles as clubs. The troops who had been detailed to hold the horses, seeing the slaughter before them, tried desperately to get away, but most were hunted down like animals. In the Federal line, everyone was killed. Blue-eyed, 17-year-old Jesse James put the bullet into Major A.V.E. Johnson's body that ended his life. And then the guerrillas returned to Centralia to annihilate the small force of Federals left in town.

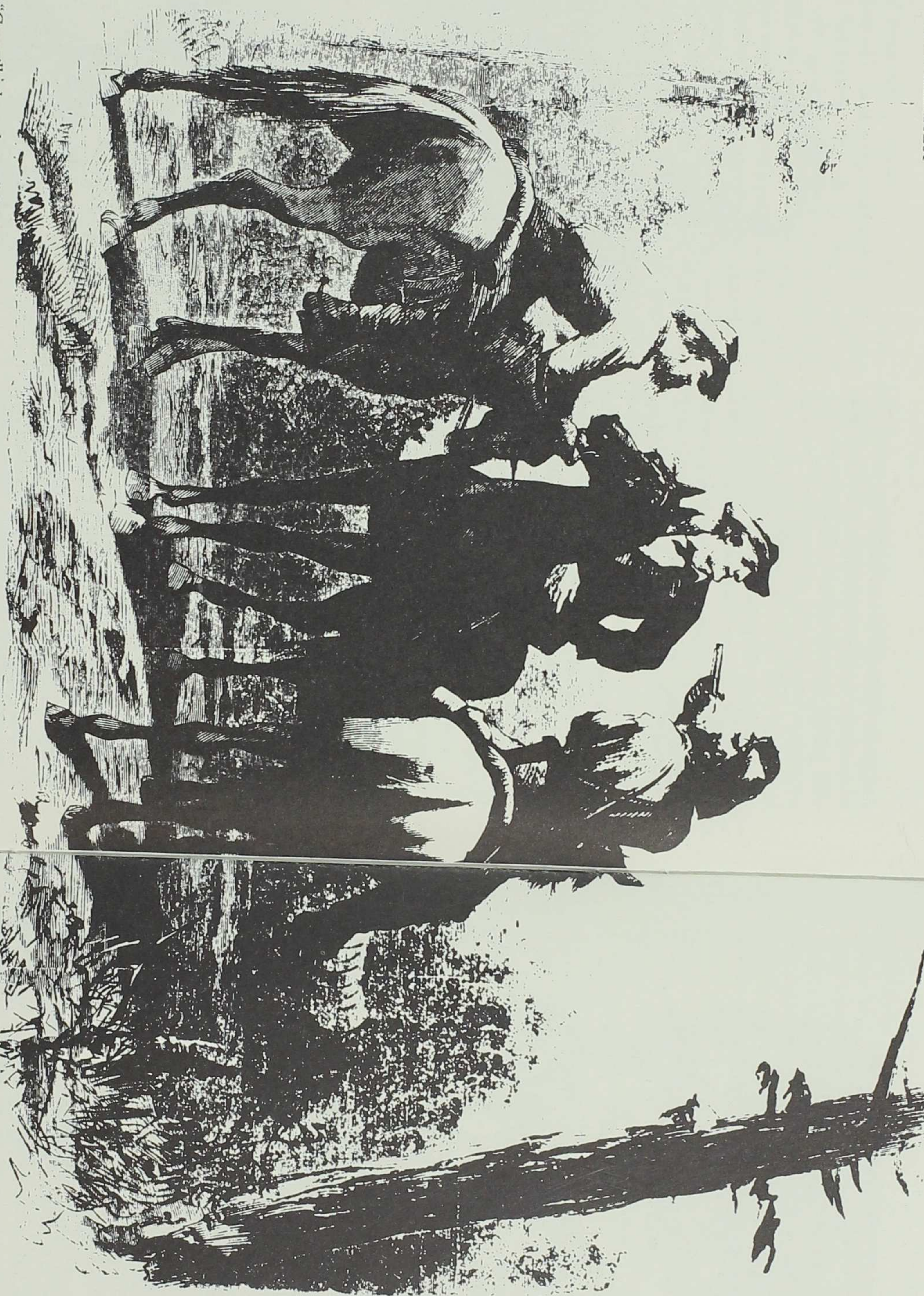
They showed no mercy to the Union troops. They would shout at cornered soldiers to give themselves up, that they would be treated as prisoners of war. When the Federal soldiers came out, their hands in the air, the guerrillas simply cut them down. By the end of the day, most of Johnson's 150 men had been killed in

in town and see where the guerrillas were camped—a few miles from town. He left a small detachment in Centralia to guard the town, riding out with about 120 soldiers, mostly untrained boys mounted on work horses and armed only with one-shot Enfield muskets.

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*Guerrillas pilfering supplies (Harper's Weekly)*

action.

Once again the Rebels stripped Johnson's soldiers, taking all valuables. Then they commenced decapitating, scalping, and mutilating the bodies.



Thomas Goodman had witnessed many of the gory incidents that day. His mind was racing, wondering why Anderson had spared his life. Did Anderson have some blood-thirsty sport or ritual in mind for him?

As night fell on Centralia, Goodman's life was repeatedly put in jeopardy by various guerrillas who pointed a variety of carbines and pistols at him. Goodman's guards, Hiram Litton and Richard Ellington, routinely knocked the barrels of these firearms skyward just as they were discharged.

That night, with neither blanket, coat, nor food to comfort him, Goodman watched the stars, thinking of the horrible bloody day that had passed. Finally, the powerful blacksmith from Hawleyville could do nothing but weep.

The next night, the guerrillas, with Goodman in tow, were on the move. Northern Missouri was like a beehive, suddenly bristling with thousands of Union soldiers. The Federals had even taken to peppering the woods with cannonfire in an effort to force the guerrillas from their suspected hiding places.

Anderson and his men rode all night, stopping at first light to eat and to feed their horses at the farms of Rebel sympathizers.

They hid during the day, starting out again when night fell. Meanwhile, Goodman formulated plans for escape. He knew the only way he could stay alive was to keep quiet, even



though he was constantly subjected to insults, prodding, and anything else the guerrillas could think of to humiliate him. Goodman only hoped his guards would remain alert and quick enough to ward off any more pot shots.

The next day, he was ordered to curry and saddle Anderson's horse. He must have made a good job of it, for Anderson seemed oddly pleased with him.

"Well, my old fellow," Anderson asked Goodman, "how do you get along?"

"Very well, sir."

"Well, you, my man, are the first being whose life I have spared, who was caught in Federal blue."

Goodman's brief exchange with Anderson produced a remarkable effect on the guerrillas, tempering their harsh treatment of Goodman. As each day slipped by, he was allowed more and more freedom of movement. But escape seemed impossible, since he did not know the area, and the daily movement of their camp only confused him more.

But one night, when Anderson and George Todd's men met at a rendezvous point, Goodman thought he had found his chance. There had been much drinking, and in particular both Anderson and Todd were drunk as lords. Anderson weaved through camp on his horse, firing away at his own men. As the night wore on, Goodman waited in vain for his two guards to start drinking. It was daybreak before he discovered they were both teetotalers.

The next day they camped at a farm where, to Goodman's relief, the lady of the house made sure he had enough to eat.

On the evening of the 10th day of his captivity, Goodman and the guerrillas rode one mile above Rocheport, Missouri to cross the Missouri River and head south. The first lot of guerrillas got in a skiff. By the water, their horses proved restless, and one of Goodman's guards was called away to help get them in the

river. A moment later some sudden excitement caused the other guard to move toward the river almost six yards away from Goodman. He knew it had to be now or never.

Goodman began to walk away, casually, trying not to attract attention. The guerrillas had been getting accustomed to seeing him move about without his guards, and with the confusion down by the river, he was able to slip away into a thicket. But the only Union military facility Goodman had ever heard about in these parts was in Fayette, Missouri. He had no idea how to get there.

Traveling all night in absolute terror, Goodman knew he could not seek help from any Union soldiers he might see. Likely, they would be guerrillas in disguise. The local citizens, many of whom were Southern sympathizers, could also be as dangerous as guerrillas.

Goodman traveled all night, not knowing if he was walking toward Fayette or away from it. Just about daybreak, he could stand it no more. Seeing a black man passing near an old field, he cried out, asking if he were anywhere near Fayette. The man replied that he was one mile from Fayette, and only three or four hundred yards from the Federal pickets of the garrison.

Goodman made his way to the pickets, and, in time, back home to Hawleyville.

Within six weeks of Goodman's escape, Bloody Bill Anderson would be dead, his head impaled upon a pole before a squad of jeering Union soldiers.

Later in his life, Goodman moved to Clarinda, Iowa, where he plied his trade of blacksmithing. He finally moved to California, where he died—peacefully—at the turn of the century.

And Sergeant Goodman died never knowing that his life had been spared that day to set up a prisoner exchange for Cave Wyatt, one of Anderson's own sergeants, who had been captured and imprisoned by Union forces at Columbia, Missouri. □

