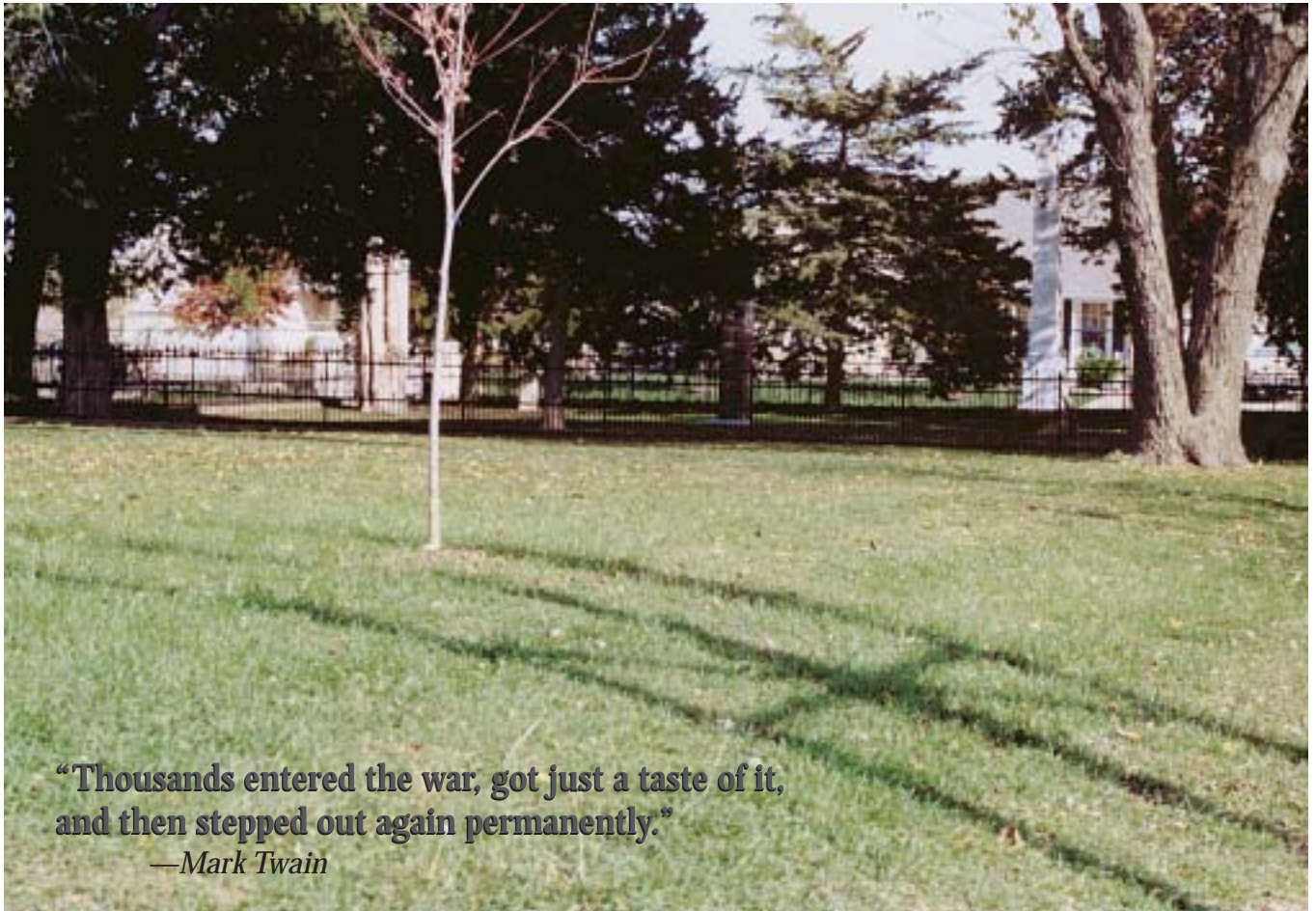


MATT MATTHEWS AND KIP LINDBERG

“SHOT ALL TO PIECES”

The Battle of Lone Jack, Missouri, August 16, 1862



“Thousands entered the war, got just a taste of it, and then stepped out again permanently.”

—Mark Twain

Lone Jack battlefield and cemetery, 2003. *Photograph by Alinda Miller*

FOR SEVERAL DECADES THE SMALL COMMUNITY OF LONE JACK, MISSOURI, hosted an annual picnic commemorating the turbulent Civil War battle fought there on August 16, 1862. Families drove wagons or rode horses for miles, arriving early to spread their blankets in the best location, under the shade trees near the speakers' platform. Following lunch a succession of speakers would address the crowd and recall, between pitches made by aspiring politicians, the dramatic events of the Battle of Lone Jack.

One year the keynote speaker was a local office seeker, “Colonel” Crisp, who was renowned for his vivid descriptions

of the town's historical event. The colonel awed the crowd with his recounting of the glorious charges, snapping banners, and dashing uniforms. At his feverish climax, however, an aged veteran struggled to his feet and interrupted the mesmerizing oration. “Colonel, that didn't happen that way,” he announced. “I was there, and I know what took place. You've misrepresented the facts.” Without a moment's hesitation Colonel Crisp declared, “God Damn an eyewitness anyway! He always spoils a good story!”¹

The history of the Battle of Lone Jack is a good story, and one that is now largely forgotten. Few outside of Jackson County

have ever heard of the battle, except perhaps in a passing literary or film reference.² While certainly not an engagement of national note, the Battle of Lone Jack was of great local importance; it was, by and large, a battle fought by the men of western Missouri—men who were friends and neighbors, boyhood chums, and blood relatives. And because both sides were the “home team,” playing under the evaluative gaze of loved ones, it became a personal and passionate fight, marked by extremes in both courage and casualties.

By the summer of 1862 Missouri, while far from serene, was certainly more

peaceful than it had been the previous summer. The first year of the war had witnessed several large battles and dozens of skirmishes. Tens of thousands of Federal troops from Missouri, joined by others from Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana, traversed the state, engaging the pro-Southern Missouri State Guard, irregular partisans, and Confederate troops from Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, and the Indian Territory. A series of Southern victories had wrested much of the state from the Union, but lacking the logistical resources to retain their foothold the Confederate forces withdrew. By the onset of winter, the Missouri State Guard was left as the solitary guardian of the trophies won during the previous summer. But it too was poor in resources. Many of the guardsmen left for their homes to harvest crops, planning to return to the ranks after spring planting. Those who remained in the army did so in winter camps across southwest Missouri. Cut off from these secessionist havens, potential recruits in the northern part of the state awaited the opportunity to join their compatriots.

A turn in fortunes would alter their plans. Union forces under Brigadier General Samuel R. Curtis launched a campaign in January 1862, pushing the Missouri State Guard and its recently organized counterpart, the Missouri Confederate Brigade, from the state. Defeated at the Battle of Pea Ridge, or Elkhorn Tavern, in March, these rebels were forced to continue the fight in Arkansas and Mississippi, dreaming of the day they could return to their beloved home state.

Meanwhile, Federal authorities furthered their goal of securing Missouri for the Union. In the absence of an organized enemy, Federal troops could focus on eliminating the small but steadily growing numbers of partisan guerilla bands that posed an increasing threat to Union lines of supply and communication. While Federal authorities continued to raise volunteer regiments with which to prosecute the war farther south, they badly needed a force that would constitute a deterrent to local insurrection.

The force they organized was named the Missouri State Militia, or MSM. Armed, equipped, and funded by the federal government, this force was to be retained for service within the state, securing strategic centers of population and



Left: Colonel DeWitt Clinton Hunter. *Bushwhacker Museum, Nevada, Missouri*

Below: Colonel Jeremiah Vardeman "Vard" Cockrell. *General Sweeny's Civil War Museum, Republic, Missouri*



commerce, and patrolling vital avenues of communication. Since each company operated in the locality in which it was raised, the rank and file knew every country lane, briar patch, and river bottom, and soon became effective in ferreting out enemy bands. In contrast to the negative connotation implied by the title "militia," these forces were more effective in small-scale, anti-guerilla operations than much larger volunteer or regular army units.

In an effort to further augment Union forces in the state, the newly appointed governor, H.R. Gamble, authorized the commander of the District of Missouri, Brigadier General John M. Schofield, to issue General Order No. 19. Effective July 22, 1862, the order stated that all able-bodied men were required to join the pro-Union Enrolled Missouri Militia, or EMM, bringing with them their own horses and weapons. In addition, all weapons and ammunition in civilian hands were to be confiscated and used for the public defense. Further orders clarified the intent: in order to "put down robbery, plunder, and guerilla warfare, which it is plainly the duty and interest of every citizen to aid in doing," Missouri men had to don Union blue or face stiff fines or incarceration. Exemptions were granted to those willing to "contribute money rather than personal service," as well as "all disloyal men and those who have at any time sympathized with the rebellion." Those men, while not required to serve in the Union militia, still had to register for service, giving their names and place of residence, and sur-

rendering their weapons. Not made specific was the certainty that those who refused to join the militia for reasons of self-proclaimed disloyalty would be closely observed under what was essentially house arrest.³

Farther south, in and around Van Buren, Arkansas, a number of Missouri cavalry regiments were attempting to complete their organization before being accepted for Confederate service. All were under strength and desperate for an infusion of recruits. The sheer distance from Missouri, and the inability of recruits to make the journey south without molestation by the Federal MSM, prompted Confederate authorities to approve a raid into Missouri for the purpose of gathering recruits. Brigadier General James S. Rains, senior officer of the greatly diminished Missouri State Guard, assigned command of this expedition to Colonel Jeremiah V. Cockrell. The colonel, more widely known as "Vard" Cockrell, was a Methodist minister from Warrensburg, Missouri. He and his brother, Colonel Francis Marion Cockrell (quickly rising to fame in the Confederate Missouri Brigade), were well known among the Southern families in Jackson County, and it was believed his presence would influence others of similar belief to enlist. Cockrell was to lead the force

into west-central Missouri, an area known for its pro-Confederate views. Word of Order No. 19 had reached the wilds of Arkansas, and it was earnestly hoped that thousands of Missourians, forced to choose between compulsory Union service and voluntary Confederate service, would choose the latter and join Cockrell.

In the last week of July 1862 Colonel John T. Coffee and Lieutenant Colonel John C. Tracy, each with about three hundred men, rode from their camps at Frog Bayou and headed north to Missouri. Both commands considered themselves independent from Cockrell, as Coffee still refused to join the Confederate service and Tracy remained convinced he would soon receive some special dispensation from Richmond.

On August 1 Cockrell and his small command moved out, accompanied by Colonel Dewitt C. Hunter and his seven hundred and fifty soldiers. The advance guard of the expedition consisted of roughly seventy troopers led by Captain Joseph O. Shelby. With Cockrell in overall command of the expedition, Lieutenant Colonel Sidney Jackman took charge of his four hundred and fifty men. Jackman's command was badly mounted and equipped, in part because of the abysmal supply system of the Trans-Mississippi Confederacy. Many of these men lacked saddles and rode bareback, while most of their bridles were simply ropes or lengths of braided bark.

As the secessionists rode rapidly north, hundreds of men who had refused to join the enrolled militia flocked to the rebel banner. They "pranced [in] from every direction," recalled Jackman. "The woods seemed alive with men, and all fleeing the wrath of what was known as the Gamble order." Many already had friends or family in rebel service, and did not want to be forced into facing them across a battlefield.⁴

On August 11, as these mounted forces moved north, the Union high command was stunned by the fall of Independence, Missouri. A combined force of Confederates under Colonels John T. Hughes, Upton Hays, and Gideon Thompson, supported by William Quantrill and his small guerilla band, had struck without warning, capturing the entire Federal garrison. Among the handful of secessionist casualties was Colonel Hughes, killed at the head of his regiment.

With Hughes dead, Upton Hays assumed control of their combined commands.

Bewildered by the sudden influx of Confederate recruiters into Missouri, and chagrined by the loss of Independence, Schofield ordered Brigadier General James Totten, the commander of the Central Division of the District of Missouri, to start assembling a force to drive the secessionists out of western Missouri. Wishing to give further support to Totten, Schofield appealed to the Kansas departmental commander, Brigadier General James G. Blunt, for additional troops.



Library of Congress



Kansas State Historical Society

Left: Brigadier General John M. Schofield, commander of the District of Missouri.
Right: Brigadier General James G. Blunt, Kansas departmental commander.

On August 12 Totten ordered one company of the 7th Missouri State Militia (MSM) Cavalry to move from Syracuse to Sedalia. As Company H moved out, Major Emory S. Foster of the 7th MSM was ordered to Sedalia to take command of the forces assembled there and move quickly to Lexington, where he was to take charge of an ad hoc force and move south into Jackson County.⁵

Totten's selection of Major Foster to command this northern pincer movement was almost certainly due to Foster's reputation as one of the most aggressive officers in the Missouri Militia. Only twenty-three years old, the former newspaper editor from Warrensburg had already garnered the respect of friend and foe alike. Foster was a staunch Unionist for whom the war had begun on a personal note. At an election in Warrensburg early in 1861, pro-secession opponents had murdered his brother Marshall as he was on his way to vote. With the coming of the war Foster raised and commanded

a company of Union cavalry known as the "Fremont Scouts," leading them against local secessionist forces comprised of the very men he suspected had assassinated his brother. Foster quickly gained notoriety as a courageous warrior, an honor he shared with his younger brother Melville, who also served as a company commander in the 7th MSM Cavalry. In April 1862 the brothers were wounded in an engagement with Quantrill's guerillas just outside Warrensburg. Recovered from their wounds, they resumed their vendetta.⁶

To add some firepower to the Federal strike force Totten ordered a section of the 3rd Indiana Light Artillery, under the command of Lieutenant James C. Devlin, to join Foster's command. Devlin's two guns were of a type known as "James Guns," being outdated M1841 six-pounders altered for greater accuracy by rifling the bronze tubes to a pattern developed by inventor and former senator Charles T. James.⁷ Late on the night of August 12 the train carrying the Indiana section sped past the depot at Syracuse. A witness recalled that the cars "whirled by our depot with the speed of lighting, without making any stop, amid the wild cheers of the men... half enveloped in sparks of fire, [the train] seemed to be *whirling to Hell*."⁸

The following day Totten ordered newly promoted Brigadier General Fitz Henry Warren and his 1st Iowa Volunteer Cavalry, supported by a section of artillery, to move north from Clinton, Missouri, into Jackson County. There he

was to link up with Foster's party moving south from Lexington, smashing any rebel forces in between.

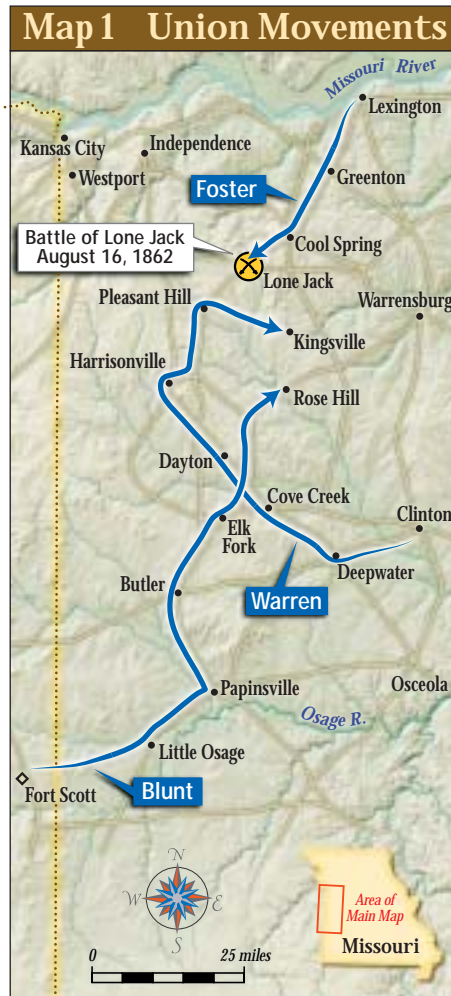
At 11:00 a.m. on August 14, following a grueling forty-eight hour forced march, Foster arrived in Lexington with Devlin's section of Indiana artillery, Company H of the 7th MSM Cavalry, and two companies of the 8th MSM Cavalry. That same day Schofield wired Totten, telling him it was time to strike the Confederate force reported near Lone Jack, a small community in southeast Jackson County. Schofield was sure that this rebel force, which he thought numbered no more than a thousand men under Hughes and Quantrill, would be easy prey for the converging Federal forces. Totten quickly issued orders to effect this edict.

At 1:00 a.m. on the morning August 15 Foster received Totten's order to sally forth from Lexington at daylight. He was to move some thirty miles southwest to Lone Jack, where he would rendezvous with Warren's command. Foster left Lexington at dawn with approximately eight hundred men. He had with him five companies of the 7th Missouri Volunteer Cavalry, three companies of the 6th MSM Cavalry, two companies of the 8th MSM Cavalry, three companies of the Second Battalion, Missouri State Cavalry, Company H of the 7th MSM Cavalry, and Devlin's two James guns. Melville Foster accompanied the force, undoubtedly as eager as his older brother to close with the enemy.⁹

Unbeknown to Foster the campaign had already suffered a serious setback. Warren, for reasons still unknown, had disobeyed orders, moving his six hundred men southwest from Clinton instead of north toward Lone Jack. Receiving reports from alarmed Union citizens along his route, Warren telegraphed his superiors in Leavenworth, Kansas, that a large rebel force under Coffee, Jackman, and others had passed through the area with a column of around 6,000 men, moving north. Totten was stunned by the news of such a large Confederate force in Jackson County. He immediately sent word to Lexington to recall Foster, but the command had already left Lexington, moving south at a rapid pace. Couriers were dispatched, but Totten could not be assured Foster would receive the order in time.¹⁰

Unlike the slow moving and directionally challenged Warren, the third col-

umn of Union soldiers left Fort Scott, Kansas, at 9:00 a.m. on August 15 destined for Jackson County. Brigadier General James G. Blunt led his 2,500 men swiftly north, placing his infantry in wagons so that they could keep up with his cavalry.¹¹



* * *

MEANWHILE, THE SECESSIONISTS HAD NOT BEEN IDLE. Cockrell and Shelby had started for Jackson County on the evening of August 14, Cockrell desiring to see his family, turning command over to Colonel Hunter and departing for his home in Warrensburg. The next morning Hunter marched the command farther north, halting at Lone Jack about midday on August 15.¹²

The village of Lone Jack had been founded in the early 1830s, acquiring its name from a giant blackjack oak tree that was visible for miles across the prairie. In 1843 a new addition, known as "New Town," was established to the south of the existing settlement. By 1862 New Town consisted of two stores, a blacksmith shop, a saloon, a post office, and a few

small residences. The most impressive structure was a large frame hotel known as the Cave House. "The oddity of such a hotel in such a place was ludicrous in the extreme," recalled one visitor, "for it could easily have accommodated in one night all the visitors it had any reason to expect in a month." About 1,300 people lived in the community, almost all committed to the rebel cause.¹³

After searching the area for much needed supplies the secessionist force deployed around the town. Hunter and Jackman marched west, establishing their encampments about four miles from Lone Jack. Quantrill's guerillas, arriving on the scene, bivouacked about a mile farther west. Coffee, with Tracy's independent command, set up camp about a mile south of town. Captain Shelby and his command were not present, having forayed into Lafayette County the previous day. It was his desire to recruit enough men in his home county to raise an entire regiment.¹⁴

Meanwhile Foster's column was making good time as it pushed south into Jackson County. Around noon the major received intelligence from friendly residents that the rebel commander, John T. Coffee, was camped near Lone Jack with some 1,600 followers. This news, combined with the knowledge that Hays and Quantrill were also near Lone Jack, should have given the major pause. However, Foster was undeterred. Sending a message back to his commander in Lexington, Foster promised he would be in a grand fight by that evening.¹⁵

Cockrell never made it to his family home. Approaching Warrensburg he heard that Union forces were converging on Jackson County. Reversing course, Cockrell returned to his command, arriving at his camp about 9:00 p.m. on August 15.

At approximately the same time, Foster's command reached Lone Jack. Interrogating citizens, the Federal commander learned that Coffee and his force, now estimated at only eight hundred men, were camped just south of town. Issuing orders to tighten girths and ready weapons, Foster delivered on his promise of an engagement before day's end, leading his command into action at 11:00 p.m.

Just south of town Foster's advance ran into rebel pickets. A scattering of

musketry, quickly followed by volleys of carbines and blasts of cannon fire, illuminated the night. Foster's command rapidly shattered the enemy line, capturing several Confederate outposts before sweeping into the rebel encampments. Completely unprepared for the assault, Coffee's and Tracy's commands abandoned their camps, fleeing in confusion and disappearing into the darkness.¹⁶

While the impetuous attack was successful it was by no means decisive, for most of the rebels escaped. Even worse, elements of the Union command lost contact in the darkness and became disorganized. During the skirmish some of Foster's cavalry mistook the Indiana artilleryman for the enemy, firing into them and killing four men. Foster placed section commander Lieutenant Devlin under arrest, later claiming the Hoosier officer was drunk. Whatever the reason, either mistaken identity or dereliction of duty, this friendly fire maddened and disheartened the Indiana boys.¹⁷

As Coffee's and Tracy's men vanished into the dark of night, the echo of Union artillery continued to reverberate for miles, alerting the individual secessionist commands that an event of great importance had occurred. The fact that a Union force was in the area and confidently operating at night was unsettling, and their supporting artillery suggested it was a sizable force and not just a scouting party. Soon after the skirmish ended Colonel Hays, with his four hundred men, rode into Vard Cockrell's camp. Included in Hays' command was a company commanded by Captain Caleb Winfrey, a physician whose home and office were in Lone Jack. Having served as a surgeon with the Missouri State Guard the previous year, Winfrey had exchanged his medical kit for a sword and recruited his own cavalry company. Joining Hays only days before, Winfrey's company had an intimate knowledge of Lone Jack and a vested interest in its security.¹⁸

Colonel Cockrell ordered his men into battle formation and waited for Coffee and Tracy to join him. As the troops rested on their arms Cockrell learned that a Union force of unknown strength had attacked Coffee and Tracy, and returned to Lone Jack for the night. Uncertain as to what action would be prudent, Cockrell consulted Jackman, who urged an attack on the town in the morning, fearing that the Union force, whatever its

strength, would hamper a withdrawal south. Cockrell agreed.¹⁹

Soon Tracy and his command straggled into Cockrell's camp, having lost their pursuers before circling west. Tracy had no knowledge of Coffee's condition or location, only that the two commands had become separated in their flight south from Lone Jack.

Civilians from New Town informed Cockrell that the Union force numbered about one thousand men, and with the addition of Tracy's command Cockrell believed he held a numerical advantage and planned his attack accordingly. The Confederate forces would position themselves for a dawn assault on the town. Hays would prepare a mounted diversion from the north while Hunter, Jackman, and Tracy moved dismounted through a weed-choked field west of town. Once the Unionists were focused on Hays' feint, the dismounted men would emerge from their cover and assault the town from the west.

Jackman led their commands to a point a half-mile from Lone Jack, where the men dismounted. About half the Confederate force, approximately 1,500 men, was unarmed, having enlisted with the expectation of being issued weapons. These men were to wait near the ammunition wagon, which had been brought up to a point northwest of town. Meanwhile, Cockrell's force closed on the Union position. Hunter, with perhaps one hundred fifty men, joined Jackman's command of five hundred soldiers, and together with Tracy's three hundred fifty recruits moved through the fallow field of weeds west of town. They halted at a point estimated to be a mere hundred yards from the enemy position, secure in the knowledge that Hays, with his force of four hundred men, was preparing to attack from the north.²⁰

Following their disorganized assault on the Confederate camps, Foster and his men had returned to Lone Jack. The Federals were completely exhausted by the



Left: Colonel Upton Hays. *Jackson County (Missouri) Historical Society.*

Right: Major Emory S. Foster, commander of Union forces at Lone Jack. *Lone Jack Museum.*

The success of the flank attack depended greatly on surprise, as the rebels lacked the resources for a sustained fight. Despite the fact that his men had an average of only six cartridges apiece, Cockrell thought that sufficient as the "enemy would run after a shot or two." Not wanting to delay the attack by distributing a greater supply of ammunition, and unwilling to await Coffee's uncertain return, the entire Confederate command was ordered into position.

Hays rode away with his column while Cockrell, Hunter, Tracy, and

events of the past few days. Most of the men picketed their horses close to the main street, tying their reins to an Osage orange, or bois d' arc, hedge running parallel to and about fifty yards from the eastern edge of the street. When properly trimmed such a hedge presented a tough and nearly impenetrable mass of thorns, each several inches in length. These hedges had become popular in the previous decades as an effective barrier to errant livestock, protecting cropland more efficiently than either split rail or stone fencing. The hedgerow ran north

and south along almost the entire eastern length of the street, turning east at its northern and southern ends to surround a field of tall corn. As the command collapsed into sleep up and down the street, Foster established his headquarters in the Cave Hotel. The two cannons of the Indiana battery were parked near the blacksmith shop.

As soon as the Union cavalrymen returned to town it became clear to the residents that the Federals intended to stay. Fearing the secessionists would give battle in the morning, most of the inhabitants took what valuables they could easily remove and fled under cover of night. By morning only a few diehard families remained. Mrs. Bart Cave, whose husband was proprietor of the Cave Hotel, re-

mained with her three small children and her mother-in-law. She soon saw their home turned into a field hospital, as Foster ordered the Confederates wounded in the skirmish to be treated there, and delegated Assistant Surgeon William H. Cundiff from the Second Battalion Missouri State Militia Cavalry to that duty. In the early morning hours Foster informed his commanders that at daybreak the command would mount and ride west, ready to give battle to whatever enemy they could find. At no point during the night did a messenger arrive from Lexington with word of Totten's order to withdraw, and Foster remained blind to the fact that a Confederate force more than three times the size of his own was within striking distance.

As daylight approached Hunter, Jackman, and Tracy waited patiently for Hays' flank attack to begin—the signal to launch their own assault. The eastern horizon began to brighten, and still there was no sign of an attack nor further word from Hays. Then to Jackman's great astonishment Hays appeared out of the darkness, riding slowly down the rebel line. Jackman called out, "Colonel Hays, in the name of God, what are you doing here?" Hays responded that his attack would soon begin and, after surveying the line, turned and slowly rode away. Jackman believed the only explanation for Hays' delay and personal reconnoiter was that the colonel was distrustful of his fellow commanders' experience and intent.²¹

As Hays' men made their final preparations for the attack a ripple of gunfire broke the early morning calm. Union pickets had discovered Hays' advance and loosed a few panicky shots. The discharges alerted Foster to a possible threat but did not seem to unduly alarm the men themselves. A Union picket, recalling the three or four shots fired north of town, believed that a few of his wayward comrades were simply "aiming to get some chickens for breakfast." Whether alerted by this gunfire, or simply following his decision to pursue the rebels at first light, Major Foster ordered his men to rise and prepare for battle.²²

As the minutes ticked by, and the first rays of sunlight began to emerge in the east with no further sign of Hays' attack, Jackman's men grew more anxious. Circulating among his men, Jackman heard a number of voices mutter fearfully that something was wrong; it was not safe to remain in their exposed position any longer. While the tall weeds gave them concealment, they would provide no protection once the Federals spotted their position, for minie balls would cut through the grass as easily as the blade of a scythe. Private C.B. Lotspeich of Jackman's command remembered lying prone in the field and listening to the Union forces as they began stirring. "We lay there and could hear them give every command," he said, "hear them putting on accouterments, loading their guns [and] forming lines of battle." Listening to his opposite number issuing commands, Hunter chaffed at the delay, badly wanting Jackman to order an attack regardless of Hays' failure to appear. "We



A rare photograph of Missouri Confederates. Left to right: Thomas H. Brown, William A. Brown, and Abe Brown, all of whom served at Lone Jack with Colonel Upton Hays. *The Lone Jack Museum.*

waited until they had donned the blue, seized their guns, [and] provided themselves with plenty of ammunition," he later complained. "[They] formed into line and counted off, as if on parade, and were thus ready and waiting for a foe to fight." As the Federals continued their preparation Hunter pleaded with Jackman to launch the attack immediately. Jackman declined to attack before Hays, a decision seconded by Tracy, and the entire command continued to hug the ground and wait in baited silence.²³

The Federal pickets fell back into the town, heralding the Confederate threat to the north. Although Foster later claimed he had forty minutes to prepare for the Confederate assault, other eyewitness testimonies differ, suggesting the Federal commander barely had time to organize his command. Nonetheless, compared to their opponents, Foster's men were well trained and disciplined, as well as slightly better armed, and they went to their work with alacrity. Rushing into position along the street north of the blacksmith shop were Companies A, C, E, F, and I of the 7th Missouri Volunteer Cavalry. Many men in this unit were equipped with Hall's breech-loading carbines, giving them a slight edge in rate of fire over their muzzle-loading foes. With the exception of the 7th Missouri Volunteers, however, Foster's force was armed almost exclusively with M1854 Austrian "Lorenz" rifles, M1841 "Mississippi" rifles, and a handful of M1853 British "Enfield"-pattern rifles.²⁴

In the center, forming in and around the blacksmith shop, were Companies A, C, and F of Nugent's Second Battalion MSM Cavalry, supported by Company H, 7th MSM Cavalry—the only company present from Foster's personal command. On the far left of the Federal line Companies A, B, and E of the 6th MSM Cavalry speedily assembled in the road, while Companies F and H of the 8th MSM Cavalry formed to their right.

A small force from the 7th Volunteers, probably no more than a company, occupied some houses on the northern edge of town, rapidly turning the dwellings into fortified fighting positions. Whether through lack of time or neglect, or the desire to keep their means of a rapid withdrawal close at hand, the command's mounts were left where they had been picketed the night before. Tied to the hedgerow, the horses were pre-

pared for action, but lacking any cover they were dangerously exposed to hostile fire. Most would still be in the street when the attack began.²⁵

The two rifled James guns were soon unlimbered to the right-front of the blacksmith shop, the new location of Foster's headquarters, and the Union commander ordered that the cannon be positioned to command the street from end to end. With Lieutenant Devlin still under arrest, command of the artillery section went to Sergeant James M. Scott and Sergeant J.C. Updegraff. Captain Milton H. Brawner, commanding Company A, 7th Missouri Volunteers, was assigned the responsibility of supporting the guns.

Foster evacuated his combatants from the Cave Hotel, leaving behind Surgeon Cundiff and his three Confederate wards. Mrs. Cave, with her children and mother-in-law, again chose to stay, perhaps believing they were as safe in their own home as anywhere else in town. Before departing, Major Foster ordered the hotel marked with a yellow flag to denote its occupation as a hospital.²⁶

The sun was now up and, even though there was no sign of Hays, Jackman issued the order to attack. Yelling as they struggled through the tall weeds and hemp, the three Confederate commands charged toward the enemy. Pausing only to take aim, the rebels poured a galling fire upon the Federals in the street. "Our line of battle was scarcely formed when they came upon us, yelling like savages," reported Captain



Lieutenant Colonel Sidney Drake Jackman.
U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

William Plumb, commanding Company B, 6th MSM, "and sending their balls into our ranks thick as hail." A soldier in the 8th MSM recalled that the attack was so swift his unit was forced to fight dismounted "for they had not time to mount." For most of the Federals this was just as well, as it would have been extremely difficult to reload their muzzle-loading rifles on horseback.

The attackers hastened to close with the enemy, for most were armed with double barreled shotguns, effective only at short range. The rebels emerged from the weeds, only to come up against a rail fence running north to south some fifty yards from the Union position. As the Confederates struggled to clear the obstacle a massive volley erupted from the Union line. The Federal cavalymen had opened fire on their exposed foe, and were quickly joined by the Indiana artillery discharging blasts of canister. Jackman saw a man on the left of Hunter's line go down; rushing to his assistance Jackman saw there was little he could do, and after pleading desperately



Dr. (Captain) Caleb Winfrey. *General Sweeny's Civil War Museum, Republic, Missouri.*

for water for several minutes the man died. Under this “rain of lead” Private Joseph Burcham, recruited into Hunter’s command just six days before, observed a number of men running away. Others became “less anxious to press to the front” and flung themselves behind what cover could be found.²⁷

Returning to the battle line, Jackman witnessed Captain Levin Lewis fall from a wound to the head. Regaining his composure, Lewis, a Methodist minister in civilian life, explored the injury. The bullet was evidently almost spent when it struck the captain, for despite the flow of blood Lewis could feel the ball had simply embedded itself in his skull. Amid the din of battle he removed the offending bullet himself, only to be struck again in the hand. Jackman observed the injury and the self-surgery that followed, and later joked with Captain Lewis that he “had hoped to convert [Lewis] to Campbellism, but since Yankee bullets could not penetrate his head, there was no use in trying....”²⁸

While Hunter’s and Jackman’s men sought protection behind the fence, Tracy’s command negotiated the obstacle and rushed boldly toward the barricaded houses to their front. They did so, however, without their commander, who

turned to make his way to the rear as the assault on the Federal position began. One of his men recalled, “All of the sudden Tracy retreated to the rear, making as many gyrations as a burning worm, saying he was shot.”²⁹

As the assault progressed, the battle was joined by Hays’ tardy command, which moved to attack from the northwest. For some unexplained reason Hays too dismounted his force, contrary to Cockrell’s orders. In the forefront of this assault were Captain Winfrey and his men. Incensed that the Federals had occupied his house and office, Winfrey launched an immediate charge upon his own residence. His company was repulsed in a brutal hand-to-hand encounter. Undeterred he reformed and attacked again, driving the Union men out of his home and into the street beyond. Tracy’s men linked up with Hays’ command and engulfed the buildings in a deadly close-range crossfire.

Heavily outnumbered and taking horrendous casualties, the Federal right collapsed. Abandoning the barricaded dwellings they quickly retreated southeast toward the blacksmith shop, followed closely by the triumphant Confederates. With their flank now turned, the advanced companies of the 7th Missouri

Volunteers retired from their position along the north end of the street, falling back to the line formed by the Indiana battery and their own Company A.³⁰

From the blacksmith shop Major Foster watched as a mass of Southerners ran across the northern end of the street. Recalling the desperate situation, Foster noted, “A considerable body of men on foot, and armed with shotguns, running and firing as they ran, sought to pass on the north of our position to our rear.” To counter this threat Foster ordered Captain William Long and a portion of his Second Battalion MSM Cavalry to move back behind the hedgerow to his right, and take up a defensive position.

From his supporting position near the guns, Captain Brawner witnessed the cannons turn toward the swarm of advancing Confederates. Although under considerable fire themselves, the artillerymen “opened upon them with terrible effect, scattering them in confusion.” Recoiling under the bombardment the rebels took cover next to the Osage orange hedgerow. Under a withering fire from Brawner and the two rifled cannons to their south, the Confederates were now fired upon by Long’s cleverly concealed force.

The devastating crossfire was too much for many of the Confederates, who abandoned their position and took cover in the tall hemp. Others stuck fast to the hedgerow and continued the fight. John S. Kritzer of Hays’ command recollected that each time they fired their shotguns and old brindle-stock squirrel rifles, “There was sure to be meat in the pot, in other words, a dead Yankee near the cannon.”³¹

Meanwhile, the attack on the Federal left had stalled. Hunter’s men hugged the fence, while the troopers of the 6th MSM fired back from an even more exposed position in the street. Soon, however, realizing they could not sustain such an exposed position, Captain Plumb and the three companies of the 6th MSM moved north up the street, seeking the protection of the dwellings on the east side of the road.

Plumb’s detachment moved north to find shelter and Hunter formed his men into column, intending to attack east across the street. But as he prepared to launch the assault, he learned that most of his soldiers had already exhausted their meager supply of ammunition. To make

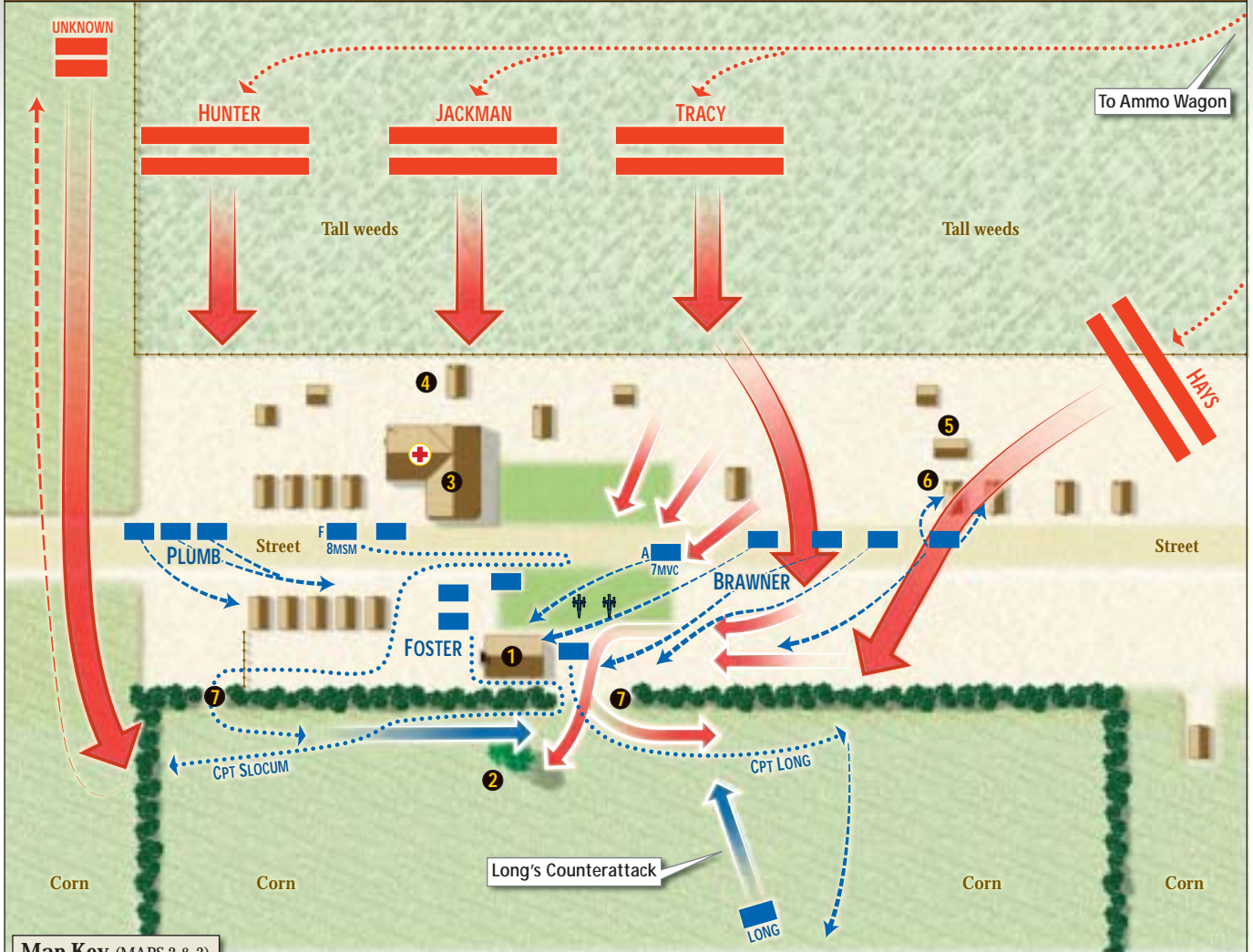


Left: Private John Berry, Company H, 8th Missouri Militia Cavalry. Berry suffered a broken right shoulder at Lone Jack, probably in one of the deadly assaults on the guns.

Lurette Williams Collection, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks.

Right: Henry D. Moore, captain of Company H, 8th MSM Cavalry. At Lone Jack he was shot twice in the left thigh and once in the right ear. *Courtesy Jerry Moore.*

Map 2 Lone Jack 5am to 7am Aug 16, 1862



Map Key (MAPS 2 & 3)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| | Two James rifled cannons (Union) | | Stables |
| | Old frontier-style weather boarded single story house | | Dr. Caleb Winfrey's house and store |
| | Outbuildings (i.e., cow sheds, etc.) | | Osage orange hedgerow |
| | Blacksmith shop (Foster's headquarters); large building, single story | | Openings in hedgerow |
| | Blackjack oak tree; very tall, visible for miles | | Rail fence |
| | Cave Hotel; two story building, frontier-style and weather boarded | | Cornfields |
| | Log cabin | | Area of tall weeds |
| | Public square | | Building used as field hospital |



0 150 feet

matters worse, he received word that a Union cavalry force was moving through the cornfield on his right flank and reasoned that, "unless immediate steps were taken, they would capture our horses and ammunition, and also be able to charge me in the right rear."³²

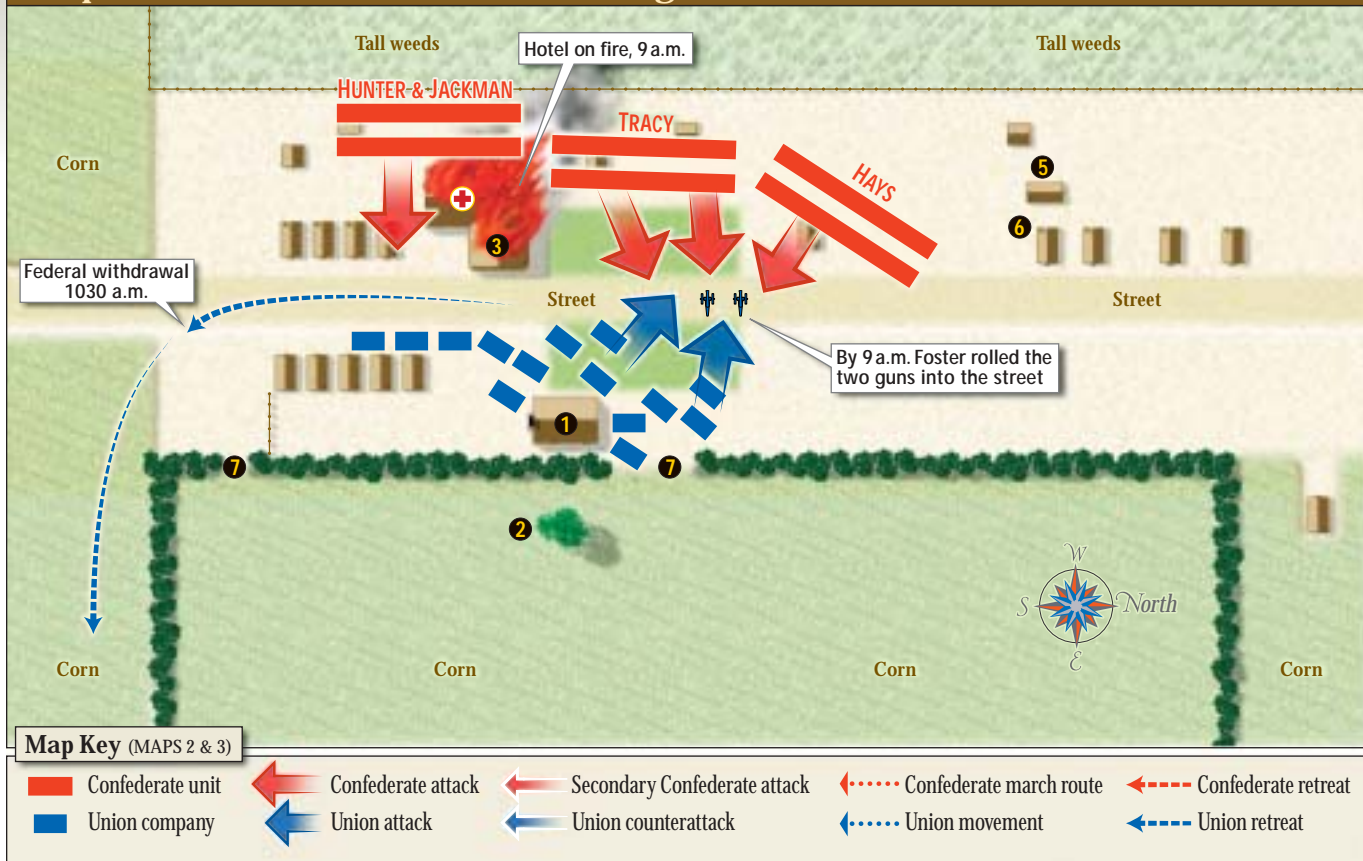
The flaws in the independent nature of the rebel command and the resulting poor communication were quickly becoming apparent. Unbeknownst to Hunter the horsemen moving on his right were not Union cavalry but fellow Confederates. Although it will probably always remain an enigma, it is highly prob-

able that this force was part of Coffee's missing command, or possibly a mounted force led by Captain David Shanks of Hays' command. Far from threatening Hunter's position this force, numbering perhaps two hundred men, was attempting to turn the Union left flank. Plumb's Union detachment, catching a glimpse of the horsemen as they emerged from the cornfield, opened fire as it crossed to the east side of the street. Plumb later claimed he "repulsed a large force of cavalry, which charged furiously upon our left, aiming to rout us at the first dash."³³

Plumb's fusillade may well have discomforted the mounted rebels, but a greater shock was quickly to follow. Foster had once again dispatched a small force behind cover of the hedgerow, this time under the command of Captain Elias Slocum of Company H, 7th MSM Cavalry. Pulling two companies from the center, Slocum worked his way south along the prickly barrier to a point perhaps a hundred feet south of the Union left, where the hedge, turning sharply, ran into the cornfield.

As the rebel horsemen charged through the tall corn south of the hedge,

Map 3 Lone Jack 7am to 10:30am Aug 16, 1862



hoping to outflank the Union position, they smashed headlong into the formidable hedgerow. Describing the resulting carnage, Foster wrote:

Furious cries and fearful maledictions, mingled with the sharp rattle of Slocum's rifles, told of confusion on the one side and deadly determination on the other of that green wall. Here was one of the deadliest spots on the bloody field of Lone Jack. But the killing here was all done by Slocum, for so great was the confusion among the guerrillas—those behind crowding forward upon those checked by the hedge—that not a hundred shots, all told, were fired by them. Finding this route impracticable they returned to the main body of Confederates massed on our front.³⁴

Hunter, not sure who was on his right and with his men almost out of ammunition, marched his command southwest in a maneuver designed to protect his flank. Then, changing his mind, he resolved to replenish his ammunition and headed northwest, the last known direction of the ammunition wagon. By doing so Hunter abandoned the field

completely, leaving an irate Jackman with his right flank completely exposed.

Shortly after Hunter's departure Jackman ordered his own men to retire, partly because of the exposed flank but also because they too were out of ammunition. Marching west, Jackman's soldiers rejoined Hunter and together they moved north toward the ordnance wagon. A lull descended on the southern portion of the field.³⁵

In stark contrast, the fighting to the north grew in intensity. The roar of musketry and cannon fire rose to a crescendo, and pausing only long enough to regroup, Tracy's and Hays' commands renewed their assault. The Confederates, led by Hays himself, stormed from the west side of the street. With their trapped comrades from the hedgerow joining them, the Confederates aimed their attack squarely at the two guns of the Indiana battery. Desperate for cover, many of the Union men brought up their mounts to use as a living breastwork. Seeing this, Hays ordered his men to direct their fire at the animals. Brawner's company alone lost twenty-six of them in rapid succession. For many years residents and veterans would recall the piteous screams and groans of

these dying horses as they collapsed in heaps.³⁶

The Hoosier cannoneers worked the two guns at a feverish pace, discharging blasts of canister as quickly as the cylinders could be rammed home. With each discharge dozens of iron balls belched from the guns, and billowing clouds of white smoke, combining with the smoke from hundreds of small arms, choked the air and obscured friend and foe alike.

Just moments after Hays ordered the charge the surging rebel tide swept over the artillery pieces. A brief but bloody close-quarter engagement ensued. One young Confederate jumped up on a captured gun, yelling "Hurrah for Jeff Davis!" before falling dead, riddled with bullets. The surviving cannoneers abandoned their guns and ran to the rear, passing the blacksmith shop and squeezing through the break in the hedge beyond, with Brawner's supporting cavalry joining the rout. Directly on their heels came the screaming rebels, many following the Union men through the opening in the hedgerow. As the rebel force poured around the hedge Captain Long and his detachment fled south into the cornfield. Word that the guns had

been captured spread quickly along the Union line, disheartening the defenders.³⁷

Toward the left-center of the street, Company F of the 8th MSM Cavalry was ordered to mount up and ride north toward the captured James guns, but as they neared them the order was countermanded. Instead the company was directed to find a way to enter the cornfield east of the hedgerow and drive the enemy out. The company of Federals proceeded south, finding another break in the hedgerow. "We went out some twenty or thirty rows [into the cornfield,] turned north, then wheeled into line and made a charge," stated Corporal William L. Roney. "The enemy was packed in there as thick as they could lie on the ground. They rose up and gave [us] a frightful volley, and wounded quite a few." Forced back by a hail of gunfire, Company F retreated to its original position and dismounted.

As Captains Brawner and Long tried to rally their shaken men, Major Foster took steps to remedy the situation. With no enemy on his left flank he ordered Captain Plumb to move with two companies toward the center to help recapture the guns. Taking his own Company B, and Company A of the 6th MSM Cavalry, Plumb united with some rallied soldiers and rushed toward the captured guns.³⁸

Amid the dust, smoke, and mangled heaps of dead and dying men and horses, the Unionists struck back. Fighting hand-to-hand the blueclad troopers recaptured their cannon and quickly got them back into action. The shattered Confederates were once again driven back across the street, while an equal number took refuge on the east and west side of the hedgerow. Among the bodies littering the street was that of Plumb, stopped by a rifle ball that shattered his right shoulder.

Meanwhile Jackman, arriving at the ammunition wagon, was astonished to find hundreds of men simply milling around. Jackman witnessed Cockrell "urging them, with all his power that was in him, to return to the battle, but with little effect." While most of Hunter's and Jackman's men hurriedly filled their pockets and cartridge pouches with ammunition, the remainder seemed unconcerned about future operations. Perhaps Foster's spirited defense was judged too

great to overcome, or this style of fighting deemed too reckless for new recruits, but many in the Confederate force refused to return to the fight. The presence of so many reluctant warriors had a detrimental impact on those preparing to return to battle. These men told Jackman, "Why [should] a few of us go back to be killed, when the whole command is here and refuses to go back?" Nevertheless, gathering up all who would follow, Jackman and Hunter marched directly back toward New Town.³⁹

On his way to the firing line Jackman spotted Colonel Tracy being carried from the field by two men. Jackman, alarmed, inquired about his fellow commander's injury. Tracy told him he had been wounded by an exploding shell while at-

tacking the Federal guns. The rain of iron fragments had, in Tracy's words, "cut me on the top of the head and some cut my legs terribly in front and one piece struck me in the fundament, and now the blood is running down my legs." After a quick examination, Jackman could find no trace of the wounds, and in fact could find nothing physically wrong with Tracy. "[I] was thoroughly convinced," stated Jackman, "that [Tracy] was mistaken as to what was running down his legs."⁴⁰

Now resembling more an armed mob than a military unit, Jackman's and Hunter's ad hoc command returned to the fight on the western edge of town. As the Confederates climbed the fence and moved toward the cover of a few scattered outbuildings they were once again met

COLE YOUNGER

First Lieutenant Thomas Coleman "Cole" Younger served under Colonel Upton Hays at Lone Jack. After the war Cole Younger, along with Frank and Jesse James, gained national notoriety as bank and train robbers. On September 7, 1876, the James-Younger gang attempted to rob a bank in Northfield, Minnesota, but were met by a hail of gunfire. Cole and his brothers, Jim and Bob, were seriously wounded and later captured and convicted. Sentenced to life in prison, Cole was helped in his parole efforts by former Lone Jack veteran Major Emory Foster. Surprisingly, the Federal commander wrote to Judge George M. Bennett of Minneapolis in the late 1890s in an effort to help secure Cole's freedom. Foster's letter contains an interesting account of the battle and sheds light on conditions in Missouri immediately after the war:

During the progress of the fight my attention was called to a young Confederate riding in front of the Confederate line, distributing ammunition to the men from what seemed to be a 'split basket.' He rode along under a most galling fire from our side the entire length of the Confederate line, and when he had at last disappeared, our boys recognized his gallantry in ringing cheers. I was told by some of our men from the western border of the state that they recognized the daring young rider as Cole Younger. About 9:30 a.m. I was

shot down. The wounded of both forces were gathered up and were placed in houses. My brother and I, both supposed to be mortally wounded, were in the same bed. About an hour after the Confederates left the field, the ranking officer who took command when I became unconscious, gathered his men together and returned to Lexington.

Soon after [their departure] the Confederates returned. The first man who entered my room was a guerrilla [Quantrill's band arrived after the fight], followed by a dozen or more men who seemed to obey him. He was personally known to me and had been my enemy from before the war. He said he and his men had just shot a lieutenant of a Cass county company whom they found wounded, and that he would shoot me and my brother. While he was standing over us, threatening us with his drawn pistol, the young man I had seen distributing ammunition along in front of the Confederate line rushed into the room from the west door and seizing the fellow, thrust him out of the room. Several Confederates followed the young Confederate into the room, and I heard them call him Cole Younger. He (Younger) sent for Col. Cockrell (in command of the Confederate forces) and stated the case to him. He also called the young man Cole Younger and directed him to guard the house, which he did.

by a withering fusillade from the Federals positioned across the street. The attacking force quickly took cover and returned fire. Aiming at shadowy figures made indistinct by clouds of billowing smoke, some of the shots fired by Hunter's and Jackman's men missed their mark. Flying wide, these bullets smacked into Hays' and Tracy's position behind the hedgerow in the rear of the Federals. One of the men injured by this friendly fire was Private Henry C. Luttrell. Severely wounded, he was dragged away to the rebel field hospital, established in a mill just north of New Town.⁴¹

Working his way among the prone forms behind the hedge, Colonel Hays tried to rally his dazed command. Desperate to instill an aggressive fighting

spirit, he shouted above the roar of battle that he would show his men something. With a pistol in each hand Hays gave the order to "Charge, double quick!" at the Union men in the cornfield. The Southerners rose as one, with even the unarmed men ready to launch themselves at their foes.

From his position in the cornfield Captain Long witnessed Hays' preparations and launched a hasty counterattack. With their backs against the hedge barrier the Confederates found themselves faced with the threat of the charging Federals while still taking fire from their own men across the street. Hays reluctantly ordered a swift retreat, and while most of the rebels managed to escape through the opening in the hedgerow,

some found this avenue blocked by the onrushing cavalrymen.⁴²

Major Harvey Vivian and three of his subordinates were captured by Long's onrushing troopers. The officer watched as the dismounted Union men shot his three comrades. As they turned on the major a Union officer intervened, insisting Vivian be taken prisoner. While marching their captive toward the blacksmith shop a volley erupted from the Confederates across the street, sending the Union guards diving to the ground. Instead of taking cover Vivian ran, suffering a bullet through the arm in the process. Desperation forced him to claw his way to safety through the thorny barrier. "Upon landing on the other side I was somewhat of a tattered mess," reported Vivian, "[as] the majority of my clothes had hung in the hedge." With his body torn and bleeding he stumbled toward a riderless horse, swung himself into the saddle, and made good his escape.⁴³

As the fighting continued to rage, a stream of wounded Federals found their way to the Cave Hotel; with the yellow hospital flag clearly visible it appeared a safe sanctuary from the maelstrom engulfing the street. Inside Mrs. Cave and her family, along with Dr. Cundiff and his assistants, gave what aid they could to the wounded and dying.

Between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m., as the opposing lines consolidated their positions, the battle evolved into a shooting match across the sixty-foot-wide street, Hays' and Tracy's men holding the west side of the street, the Union men the east. To the right-front of the blacksmith shop, the two rifled cannons continued to blast away at any viable target, albeit at a slower rate owing to the number of casualties among the crews. Although the Confederates faced a serious disadvantage, having to fire directly into the rising sun, they nevertheless were now well within shotgun range of the enemy. With both friend and foe firmly entrenched, Foster likened the struggle to "two wrestling athletes [holding] each other in a horrible embrace."

As bullets and buckshot filled the air the Union casualties began to mount. One of Captain Long's cavalrymen was struck in the face by a shotgun blast, the buckshot tearing away his lower jaw. Dazed, the critically injured soldier stumbled against another comrade, who had been wounded when a rifle ball broke

My brother had with him about \$300, and I had about \$700. This money and our revolvers were, with the knowledge and approval of Cole Younger, placed in safe hands, and... delivered to my mother in Warrensburg, MO.

Cole Younger was then certainly a high type of manhood, and every inch a soldier, who risked his own life to protect that of wounded and disabled enemies. I believe he still retains those qualities and would prove himself as good a citizen as we have among us if set free, and would fight for the Stars and Stripes as fearlessly as he did for the Southern flag.

I have never seen him since the battle of Lone Jack. I know much of the conditions and circumstances under which the Youngers were placed after the war, and knowing this, I have great sympathy for them. Many men, now prominent and useful citizens of Missouri, were, like the Youngers, unable to return to their homes until some fortunate accident through [threw] them with men they had known before the war, who had influence enough to make easy their return to peace and usefulness. If this had occurred to the Youngers, they would have had good homes in Missouri.



Thomas Coleman ("Cole") Younger.
Historical Society of Missouri

Source: *The Story of Cole Younger—By Himself* (1903).

both of his arms. Neither man wanted to leave the fight, so they determined to work in tandem. Unable to load his rifle on his own, the jawless man would hold the cartridge while his comrade tore through the paper with his teeth, exposing the powder and ball. Onlookers watched in amazement as the two continued to blast away at the enemy despite their horrible wounds. Nearby, Foster watched a round tear through the skull of one of Captain Plumb's men. Although mortally wounded the soldier continued to fumble through the motion of reloading his rifle; he died an hour later with the weapon still locked in his hands. Private George T. Delozier of Company F, 8th MSM, was wounded in succession by a bullet through the right shoulder, one through the right side of his neck, and finally a blast in the face from a shotgun. At his post beside the blacksmith shop Private William Hopper, of the Second Battalion MSM, was hit in the hand and knuckles by two spent rounds. As he bent to recover his fallen rifle a third bullet ricocheted off the building and struck him in the back of the head, driving him face forward into the dirt street.⁴⁴

Confederate casualties mounted too. As cannon and small arms fire swept the avenue the rebels managed to work their way through the buildings and lots to the back of the Cave Hotel. Taking devastating fire from the buildings east of the street, Jackman's men broke into small squads, each desperately trying to find cover. The colonel and five others took refuge behind a small cabin in back of the Cave Hotel. In seconds, however, a bullet slammed into the temple of a man beside Jackman. A moment later a round ripped through the head of a first sergeant, who fell beside the other victim, whereupon a third bullet shattered the skull of Captain Abner Bryant. Certain that the next shot would add another body to the rapidly growing pile, Jackman recommended to his surviving comrades that they change position. The words had hardly left his mouth, however, before a fourth shot struck home. Jackman and the remaining man quickly moved to a new location.

Convinced that the deadly sniper fire was coming from within the Cave Hotel, the Confederates began firing into the two-story structure. While this small arms fire easily penetrated the thin board walls it seemed to have little effect, as the

rebels continued to lose men to the concealed Federals.

Frustrated, Lieutenant James C. Martin suggested to Jackman that the snipers could be flushed out if the structure was set ablaze. Jackman approved the plan and ordered his remaining soldiers to prepare to shoot any Federals who emerged from the hotel. Martin, assisted by Private Lafayette Logan, sprinted to the back of the structure, picking up bits of paper and other combustibles along the way. Within minutes the two men had crammed the kindling into the weatherboard, setting fire to the hotel.⁴⁵

Busily moving from patient to patient, Dr. Cundiff watched in horror as flames began to consume the back wall of his hospital. Rushing outside, the surgeon pleaded for assistance. From across the street a small force of Union men responded, hastily flanking the hotel and holding the rebels at bay until Cundiff could remove his patients. As the wounded were carried across the avenue Mrs. Cave and her family exited the building, running as fast as they could through a hail of gunfire and making their way over the fence to take cover in the tall weeds. Before long, however, Mrs. Cave, while attempting to comfort one of her offspring, was shot in the chest and mortally wounded. She died five weeks later in the presence of her traumatized children.⁴⁶

Within minutes the entire hotel was engulfed in flames. Miraculously, Cundiff had managed to get almost all of the wounded out of the building. One man, a Confederate badly wounded in the skirmish the previous night, was not moved in time and was burned alive in the flames.

From the limited vantage points offered by the blacksmith shop, Foster continued to scan the horizon for any sign of reinforcements. At 9:15 a.m. he observed a force of some two hundred men about a mile south of town. Believing them to be Federals, Foster's soldiers let out a loud cheer. However, after observing the fight for a short while, the mounted men turned and rode from view; to this day their identity is unknown.

The battle continued to rage, and the Union men around the blacksmith shop began to take accurate fire from a small house to their north. In an effort to dislodge the sharpshooters Foster ordered

his two James rifles pushed forward into the street. As Captain Brawner and his company deployed to protect the remaining cannoners, the Union gunners took sight down the length of their tubes and began to fire salvo after salvo into the house to the north.⁴⁷

With projectiles pummeling their residence, Mrs. William Phillips, her two children, and a sixteen-year-old niece took shelter in a bedroom, crowding into the meager protection of an empty wardrobe. Soon one of the Federal shots ripped through the house, smashing the bedstead and showering the wardrobe with debris; the family lost no time in fleeing.⁴⁸

Shortly after 10:00 a.m. Foster noticed that the Confederate fire was slack-

DEATH OF CAPTAIN LONG

Among the civilians who voluntarily fought alongside Confederate troops in the battle was a group of brothers from Pleasant Hill, Missouri, a community approximately a dozen miles southeast of Lone Jack. James Henley, with ten other boys, raced to the scene of the fight, anxious to get a shot at the Yankees. A brother, Andrew Henley, was also involved in the fight as a recent recruit of Vard Cockrell.

Following the battle James Henley was surveying the carnage when he heard his name being called by a wounded Federal officer. The man was unrecognizable, with black smears of gunpowder and dried blood obscuring his face, but James knew the voice belonged to Captain William Long. Prior to the battle Long had been commander of the Federal garrison at Pleasant Hill, which was located at the old fairgrounds opposite the Henley family home. Long had befriended the family, despite their secessionist leanings.

The brothers decided to take the wounded officer into their own care. When Long said he was too badly hurt to make the trip on horseback, Joseph Henley, the boys' father, rode home and returned with a wagon.

While all of his three wounds were serious, the shot that had shattered Captain Long's leg was most dangerous, and several days after the battle his leg was amputated. By that time Andrew Henley, also wounded in the leg at Lone Jack, had returned home. Long, hearing that the

ening. Convinced that the enemy was running low on ammunition, Foster surveyed the area. To his great surprise he witnessed a man on horseback distributing cartridges among the rebel soldiers deployed along the west side of the street. As the Union soldiers fired away the man continued to dispense the greatly needed ammunition, apparently unconcerned by the Federal bullets hissing around him. With his supply finally exhausted the man rode calmly away, amid the cheers of impressed Federals.

Within a few moments the center of the street was once again engulfed in gunfire. As one wing of the Confederate army poured deadly shotgun blasts into the Federal position, some of Hunter's and

Jackman's soldiers moved stealthily upon the guns of the Indiana battery. Once again the section of James rifles and Brawner's supporting cavalry came under a blistering fire.

Enraged by what he perceived as the needless slaughter of his men, Lieutenant Devlin broke from arrest and ran to his section, ordering his men to fall back to the safety of the buildings. As the crews began to break, Sergeant Scott, "with blackened face and flaming eyes, and fighting like the devil incarnate," countermanded Devlin's order. The artillerymen, trying to decide whose order to follow, hesitated. At that moment Devlin was struck down, two bullets tearing through his lower abdomen and testicles.

As their officer crumpled to the ground, and with a surging mass of yelping rebels bearing down on their position, most of the Hoosiers abandoned their artillery pieces.⁴⁹

Emboldened by the sudden cessation of artillery fire the Confederates stormed into the street. About one hundred and fifty Southerners descended swiftly on Brawner and the few remaining men of the artillery crew. A savage hand-to-hand contest followed, the rebels capturing the guns and forcing the Federals to flee. As the Confederates wheeled the pieces around, and attempted to get them into action, Brawner called for reinforcements. In another mad sortie, Brawner once again secured the guns, driving the Southerners back to the west side of the road. In seconds, however, the Confederates again charged, driving Brawner and his exhausted warriors back to the blacksmith shop.

The bloody contest was by no means over. Again Union soldiers stormed out of the blacksmith shop and surrounding structures, with Captain Brawner leading them forward, back toward the guns. Amid the heaps of dead and dying men and horses, the close-quarter struggle continued, revolvers, clubbed muskets, and fists all being freely used. Brawner's force once again secured the guns as the Confederates retired. Knowing their position was untenable the Union men began to wheel the guns by hand back toward the blacksmith shop. Before they could get far, however, another Confederate charge, the largest of the day, swept forward. In the face-to-face bloodbath that followed, a wounded Brawner and his survivors were sent reeling. As Foster watched from the blacksmith shop, the victorious rebels began to pull the captured guns through the maze of prostrate bodies back to their side of the street.

Meanwhile, Major Foster called on Captain Long for immediate support. Long, who had been fighting Hunter's and Jackman's men south of the blacksmith shop, responded quickly, and despite his wounds personally led sixty men to the blacksmith shop. Foster remembered, "[Long's] coat had been thrown aside and his shirt, open at the collar, exposed his breast bathed in blood and powder stained. He had a strange light in his eye, and his parted lips showed his teeth set sharply together." Through the roar of small arms fire Foster called out



Captain William A. Long (left), commander of Company A, Second Battalion Missouri State Militia Cavalry, and unknown comrade. *Courtesy Margaret McClellan.*

oldest son was recuperating in the next room, asked if it was possible to see him. When Andrew hobbled into the room and over to the bed Long took his friend's hand and shook it heartily.

Captain William Long died soon after, still in the care of the Henley family, and was buried in the Pleasant Hill cemetery.

Source: *Pleasant Hill Times*, August 25, 1911

to Long, asking if he would help recapture the cannons. Long replied in the affirmative, saying, "I would go with you to hell!" With only an empty pistol in his hand, Long and his sixty men followed Major Foster and small force into the firestorm beyond.

Foster's forlorn hope emerged from the blacksmith shop and leapt upon the enemy. Surprised by the savage onslaught, the stunned Southern men again abandoned their prizes and staggered back to the east side of the street. The surviving Union force began wheeling the cannons back to the blacksmith shop, past the ever-growing piles of dead. As he strained to move one gun Major Foster was struck by a bullet to the back, and he fell into the dirt street.

Once the guns were back on the Union side of the street, Melville Foster traversed the road again, under an intense storm of gunfire, to return to his brother's side. As the young captain reached his brother and bent down he too was struck. A bullet ripped through his right breast, emerging near his right shoulder blade. Losing blood quickly, the mortally wounded officer managed to retrieve his brother and struggle back to the blacksmith shop, being hit again in the process. The final charge had been successful; the artillery would remain in Union hands for the duration of the battle. It had been a costly victory. Forty-eight of Long's sixty men were killed or wounded within a few moments. Among the rows of dead and dying men littering the street was Captain Long himself, having fallen at the head of his command. As Major Foster lay in a half conscious state on the floor of the shop the battle continued to rage outside. The few remaining cannoners, assisted by volunteer cavalymen, once again manned their guns and opened on the Confederates.⁵⁰

About 10:30 a.m. the firing again seemed to taper off, then cease. From their position the Federals caught glimpses of Confederate troops in small groups of twos and threes breaking from cover and leaving the field. Elated, a spontaneous cheer went up from the Union lines—the rebels had begun withdrawing to the north. To the Unionists it seemed that their sacrifice and struggle had been rewarded with victory.

The celebration was short lived, however. The Confederate retreat halted as the heretofore absent command of

Colonel Coffee, over eight hundred strong, emerged from the woods north of town and deployed for battle. The appearance of this force, fresh and apparently ready to redeem their reputation, electrified their exhausted compatriots. "[These reinforcements] arrived just in the nick of time, when victory was poised over the field, uncertain where to perch," reported Hunter.⁵¹

section were dead, their crumpled corpses still harnessed to the limbers. Unable to drag the cannon by hand to Lexington, some of Foster's exhausted survivors rolled the guns south down the street, past the hedgerow, and into the cornfield beyond.⁵³ Here the artillery pieces were spiked, the tubes dismounted from the carriages, and the carriages given a superficial camouflage of corn stalks.⁵⁴



Photograph of the subdivision located on the eastern portion of the Lone Jack battlefield.

Photograph by Alinda Miller.

The Friends of Historic Lone Jack, who support the Lone Jack Battlefield, Soldier's Cemetery & Museum in a variety of ways—including conducting all tours and providing publicity for the museum—are actively trying purchase and preserve the remaining portion of the battlefield.

To learn how to make a donation to the Lone Jack preservation project or to become

a member of the Friends of Historic Lone Jack, visit their website: <http://www.friendsofhistoriclonejack.org> or write to: Friends of Historic Lone Jack, P.O. Box 34, Lone Jack, MO 64070.

Other questions can be directed to Alinda M. Miller, president of the Friends of Historic Lone Jack, at: President@friendsofhistoriclonejack.org

With Major Foster grievously wounded, Captain Brawner took command of the remaining Union forces. It did not take him long to evaluate the combat effectiveness of his dwindling command. His men were exhausted, having traveled over a hundred miles in the previous days and fought the skirmish the night before, and having been heavily engaged since daybreak. In addition, they were nearly out of ammunition. With reinforcements nowhere in sight, Captain Brawner reluctantly but prudently gave the order to abandon Lone Jack and retreat to Lexington.⁵²

This would not be easy, as scores of horses had been killed and wounded. All of the horses belonging to the artillery

Mounting his command, with some no doubt riding double, Brawner led his men out of the village they had fought so hard to defend. Nearly every officer in his command had been killed or wounded, including Brawner himself. Unable to take their wounded with them, the Federals gathered them into a small store building near the smoldering ruins of the Cave Hotel, where they were left to the mercy of the rebels. Among these bleeding men were the two Foster brothers and Captain Long. The Federal dead were left where they fell, as there was not time enough for their burial. The cavalry column wound north from Lone Jack unmolested, reaching the Federal garrison at Lexington at 7 p.m.

Captain Brawner expressed confidently to his superior that his men had won the battle. The price for this “victory,” however, had been high; of the eight hundred men who left Lexington the day before fewer than half returned. Brawner reported forty-three men killed, 154 wounded, and seventy-five missing, for a total of 272. This does not fully explain the return of less than four hundred of the command. Perhaps the rest were slightly wounded, either taking refuge in sympathetic homes along the route of retreat or returning to their own homes to recuperate; or perhaps they were troopers who straggled or were forced to march on foot, arriving in Lexington later. In any case, Foster’s command suffered a casualty rate of at least thirty-four percent, and perhaps more than fifty percent.⁵⁵

Bolstered by Coffee’s arrival the combined rebel command once again entered Lone Jack, only to find its bullet-riddled buildings deserted. As the rebel surgeons began ministering to the Union wounded the soldiers began to comb the battlefield for much-needed ordnance and supplies. The retreating Federals had left behind hundreds of rifles, pistols, and carbines. Scattered through the buildings and yards were sets of leather accouterments, canteens, blankets, and pieces of clothing. In addition, scores of saddles and bridles were removed from the dead cavalry horses for further use. Hunter found the two artillery pieces where they had been left, guarded only by a small boy and two horses. The guns were jubilantly claimed as trophies of war.⁵⁶

The blistering August sun made it imperative that the bodies of the dead be buried quickly. Two parallel trenches were dug under the shade of the large blackjack tree, with the bodies of the dead laid inside, segregated into friend and foe. Colonel Hunter walked along the trenches, surveying the bodies as they awaited a covering of earth. Inquiring of the officer in charge of the burial detail, Hunter learned that 119 Federals and forty-seven rebels had been brought there for burial. Undoubtedly more Confederates had been killed, as several sources list a nearly equal number of dead for each side. Most likely many of the Southern dead were identified and their bodies retrieved by friends and family for private burial. Whatever the number of Confed-

erate casualties they were certainly severe, as Colonel Tracy reported after the fight that the Southern command was “shot all to pieces, crippled, and bleeding.”

Important, too, was the disposal of the dead cavalry and artillery horses. One local farmer, Tom Roupe, was ordered to drag some seventy-five to one hundred dead or dying horses off the main street and deposit their carcasses outside of town, an effort that took all day.⁵⁷

As the secessionists completed policing up the battlefield their commanders took stock of the situation. Operationally their campaign had been a success. Men had been recruited in adequate numbers, enough to field several full regiments. Even better, the Federal loss in arms and equipage significantly benefited the Confederate command.

However, the rebels knew their position was untenable, so preparations were made to begin their movement south. They too would leave the seriously wounded behind. Those who could not journey to their own homes to recuperate would be left with local citizens or await the return of the Federal army.

By mid-morning of August 17 the remaining rebels were warned of the presence of another Federal force. General Warren entered Lone Jack that morning, and General Blunt arrived from Fort Scott the next day, his 2,500 men making the trip with remarkable speed. Discovering the fate of Foster’s command, and ascertaining the Confederate route of retreat, Blunt set off in pursuit. The Union pursuit was dogged, but the Confederates made good their escape, soon reaching the relative safety of north-central Arkansas.

* * *

MANY OF THE MAJOR PARTICIPANTS, including Foster, Hunter, and Jackman, contributed their memories of the battle to a series of newspaper articles published in the 1880s. Understandably, the accounts were in many respects contradictory. Moreover, many of the writers, especially the ex-Confederates, descended to character assassination. Prompted by this public squabbling Henry Luttrell, having survived his wound and served until the end of the war, wrote:

Let the honors fall on those who deserve them. But after the sad story is all and truly told it reveals the sorry spectacle of con-

temptation for the honor of superiority in command among the officers, where unity should have existed. Even at this late day we see that the venom has not all been exhausted. No wonder the Confederacy collapsed.⁵⁸ □

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NOTES

1. A teenage Harry S Truman, future U.S. president, was among those in the audience when veteran and Truman family friend Abe Koger corrected Colonel Crisp. This is his recollection of that event. Merle Miller, *Plain Speaking: An Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman* (Berkeley, CA, 1974), p. 68; David McCulloch, *Truman* (New York, 1992), p. 63.
2. “Rooster” Cogburn, the fiction character created by author Charles Portis for his book *True Grit*, and portrayed by John Wayne in the 1969 motion picture of the same name, claimed he lost his eye as a Confederate participant at the Battle of Lone Jack.
3. *Organization and Status of Missouri Troops (Union and Confederate) in Service During the Civil War* (GPO, Washington, D.C., 1902), pp. 48-54.
4. Richard L. Norton, ed., *“Behind Enemy Lines”: The Memoirs and Writings of Brigadier General Sidney Drake Jackman* (Springfield, MO, 1997), pp. 72-73, 81.
5. United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 Vols. (Washington, D. C. 1880-1901), Series I, Volume 13, p. 238 (hereafter cited as O.R.; all citations of O.R. refer to Series 1 unless indicated otherwise).
6. George S. Grover, “Major Emory S. Foster,” *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. XIV, Nos. 3-4 (April-July, 1920), pp. 425-32.; *Liberty Weekly Tribune*, April 4, 1862.

7. Ordnance Reports, Box 767-768, RG: 94, Stack: 8WC, Row 13, Compartment 16, Shelf B, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Frank J. Gammon of Huntersville, North Carolina, conducted this research, which clearly shows that the two guns used by Union forces at Lone Jack were bronze M1841 6-pounders with 3.67-inch bores, rifled to the James system. In addition, newspaper articles and veteran accounts make numerous mentions of "rifled bronze cannon" and specify James shells.
8. S.K. Hall, Letter to Harris, 12 September 1862, from the collection and courtesy *General Sweeny's Museum of Civil War History*, Republic, Missouri.
9. *O.R.*, Vol. 13, pp.238, 569, 575.
10. *O.R.*, Vol.13, pp. 569, 575.
11. *O.R.*, Vol. 13, p. 571.
12. Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 82-84.
13. Kit Dalton, *Under The Black Flag* (Memphis, 1912), p.76; Romulus L. Travis, *The Story of Lone Jack* (n.p. 1907).
14. Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 84.
15. *O.R.*, Vol.13, p. 239.
16. *O.R.*, Vol.13, pp. 237, 239.
17. S.K. Hall, Letter to Harris; *O.R.*, Vol. 13, p. 239.
18. Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 85; W.L. Webb, *Battles and Biographies of Missourians: or the Civil War Period of Our State* (Kansas City, 1900), pp.153, 159.
19. Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 86.
20. *Ibid.*, 89-90.
21. *Ibid.*, 92.
22. Corporal William L. Roney, hand-written memoirs, scrapbook, compiled by the Independence, Missouri, chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy, transcribed by *The Blue and Gray Chronicle*, Independence, Vol. 6, Number 3, February, 2003.
23. Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, p. 92; C. B. Lotspeich, Manuscript, Mid-Continent Library, Independence, Missouri; *Missouri Republican*, September 12, 1885.
24. Ordnance Returns for 7th Missouri Volunteer Cavalry, Second Battalion Missouri State Militia Cavalry, 7th Missouri State Militia Cavalry, 6th Missouri State Militia Cavalry, 8th Missouri State Militia Cavalry, National Archives, Microfilm, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.
25. *Missouri Republican*, August 1, 1885; Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 93.
26. *Missouri Republican*, September 26, 1885.
27. *O.R.*, Vol. 13, p.237; Roney memoir; Lotspeich manuscript; Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 92-93; Leslie Anders, "Fighting the Ghost at Lone Jack," *Missouri Historical Review*, Volume LXXIX, Number 3 (April, 1985), p. 342.
28. Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 93. Campbellism was founded by Thomas Campbell and his son Alexander Campbell, in the early 19th century. The order was known by many names such as, the Restoration Movement, Disciples of Christ, and The Christian Church. Many in the church believed that it was a return to the pure New Testament and teachings.
29. *Lebanon Rustic Leader*, May 12, 1881.
30. Webb, pp. 159, 328-30.
31. *O.R.*, Vol. 13, pp. 237, 239; *Missouri Republican*, August 1, 1885; *Confederate Veteran*, April 1916, p. 63.
32. *Missouri Republican*, September 12, 1885.
33. Janet B. Hewett, ed., *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Addendum [Reports], Vol. 13, Serial No. 19 (Wilmington, 1996), p. 46.
34. *Missouri Republican*, August 1, 1885. Foster wrongly believed this to be Quantrill's command.
35. *Missouri Republican*, September 12, 1885.
36. W.L. Webb, *Battles and Biographies of Missourians: or the Civil War Period of Our State* (Kansas City, 1900), p.157.
37. Webb, 158.
38. *O.R.*, Vol. 13, p. 237; Roney Memoirs; *Supplement to the O.R.*, Vol.13, Serial No. 19, p. 46.
39. *Supplement to the O.R.*, Vol. 13, Serial No. 19, p. 46; Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 96.
40. Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 97. A previous example of Tracy's behavior comes from Dr. John W. Armstrong, who fought at Lone Jack. Armstrong claimed that Tracy ran away from a fight in "Hogeye," Missouri, early in the campaign. *Lebanon Rustic Leader*, May 12, 1881. It should be noted, however, that Tracy had by all accounts performed honorably at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, where he was wounded in action. Henry C. Luttrell, a Lone Jack veteran, made the following statement after reading Jackman's account of Lone Jack: "Tracy certainly did not show any sign of cowardice while leading his regiment to the charge on that fated morning; he faced 'the music' like a little man to my certain knowledge up to the time of his wound. What he did afterwards, I, of course don't know, but I don't believe he acted the pusillanimous cur that Jackman describes." *Missouri Republican*, October 3, 1885.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Webb, 157. Letter from Major Vivian, Jackson County Historical Society Archives.
43. Article on file at the archives of the Jackson County Historical Society.
44. *Missouri Republican*, August 1, 1885; Pension application of William Hooper, National Archives and Records Administration
45. Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 99-100; *Missouri Republican*, September 12, 1885.
46. *Missouri Republican*, September 26, 1885; Webb, 159. Jesse M. Cave, "Memories of the Battle of Lone Jack," *Independence Examiner*, August 14, 1937.
47. *Missouri Republican*, August 1, 1885.
48. W.Z. Hickman, *History of Jackson County* (Topeka, KS, 1920), p. 283.
49. *Missouri Republican*, August 1, 1885.
50. *Ibid.*, Roney Memoirs.
51. *Missouri Republican*, August 1, 1885; September 12, 1885.
52. *O.R.*, Vol.13, pp. 237-38.
53. Roney memoirs.
54. "Spiked" means the cannon were damaged, probably by driving a rat-tailed file into the vent hole to prevent the insertion of a friction primer or other ignition device. By removing the trunnion caps and lifting the carriage trail a cannon tube could easily be dismounted. Weighing around eight hundred pounds, it would take several men to remount the tube on the carriage. According to Captain Brawner's after-action report, "we spiked one of [the guns] and otherwise very much injured the other, while the ammunition belonging to them was mostly destroyed before we left."
55. Report of Colonel Dan Huston, September 23, 1862, from the collection and courtesy *General Sweeny's Museum of Civil War History*, Republic, Missouri.
56. *Missouri Republican*, September 12, 1885.
57. Norton, ed., *Behind Enemy Lines*, 110; Ernest N. Roupe, "Boyhood Memories of the Civil War," from the Jackson County Historical Society Archives.
58. *Missouri Republican*, October 3, 1885.

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