

*James Simeon Whitsett*

# CIVIL WAR GUERRILLA



James Simeon Whitsett, 1925

By Ronald N. Wall  
Florence, Arizona 2005

*James Simeon Whitsett, Quantrill Raider*  
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## Introduction

Listed at the end are the sources I used, but I want to especially thank Cecil R. Coale, Jr. of McKinney, Texas for bringing Sim Whitsett to my attention and locating several of the documented references to him. Cecil was the first to put Sim's story in writing from a genealogist's point of view. Cecil is the great-grandnephew of Joseph Haden Whitsett of Texas. Hade, like Sim, rode with General Jo Shelby and the two met at least once in Texas in 1863-64. I'm not attempting to replace Cecil's work but to expand on it.

I am also grateful to Helen Eller, Sim's great-great granddaughter, for giving me information about her family, particularly the descendants of Sim. Helen also shared with me reunion photos and other material she possessed or found on the Internet.

The most important source I have about Sim Whitsett is "*Noted Guerrillas, or the Warfare of the Border*" by John Newman Edwards." After years of searching, I found and purchased a copy on CD-ROM from the [www.civilwarstlouis.com](http://www.civilwarstlouis.com) web site. My knowledge of John Newman Edwards was augmented by the introduction to "*Noted Guerrillas*" by G. E. and D. H. Rule (2002).

Major John Newman Edwards mentioned Sim Whitsett twenty-eight times in his book, "*Noted Guerrillas, or the Warfare of the Border*," published in 1877. Except for a couple of remarks attributed to Frank James and quoted in less contemporary works, Edwards' book is the original source for nearly everything written about Sim Whitsett as a Civil War guerrilla. Edwards was General Jo Shelby's adjutant during the Civil War and went with him and Sterling Price to Mexico at the end of the war. After Major Edwards and the former Confederate Generals returned from Mexico in 1867 Edwards wrote two important books, "*Shelby and His Men*" and "*Shelby's Expedition to Mexico*." Unlike his stories about the guerrillas, Edwards had first-hand knowledge of Shelby's campaigns. His writing about Shelby was overblown but generally accurate. In 1873 Edwards wrote an anonymous article for the St. Louis Dispatch titled, "*The Terrible Quintette*." This piece was apparently the first of Edwards' propaganda efforts glamorizing the James-Younger Gang. The "*Terrible Quintette*" article dealt in length with the outlaws' years as Civil War Guerrillas and "*Noted Guerrillas*" was its offspring. Edwards founded the *Kansas City Times* and was its editor for many years. Following the publication of the St. Lois Dispatch article, he used the *Kansas City Times* to continue glorifying the legends of the James and Younger brothers, all former guerrillas. When Jesse James' son, Jesse Edwards James, was born he was named in honor of John Edwards.

John Newman Edwards was well known for his florid and long-winded prose. He was an alcoholic and sometimes felt he did his best writing with artistic inspiration coming from a bottle of whiskey. When reading his books I sometimes wondered if he was not occasionally, just a bit, over-inspired. His

primary interest when writing about the James gang and Quantrill's guerrillas was to present them as heroes of the South rather than produce an unbiased history of these men. In most cases I have simply repeated Edwards' stories about Sim Whitsett because I have no other source. You should not consider these tales to be completely accurate, but, I suspect, neither are they entirely fictional. Due to the number of times that Sim Whitsett is mentioned in the book, I believe that he was one of Edwards' sources for many of the stories about the guerrillas and their battles.

The story of John McCorkle titled "*Three Years With Quantrill*" was written by lawyer O. S. Barton and first published in 1914. McCorkle was one of Quantrill's former scouts and he was considered an honest and reliable man. McCorkle was still living when Barton obtained a copy of McCorkle's unpublished journal and turned it into what is now a classic. The copy of the book I own was published in 1992 by the University of Oklahoma. It is indexed and annotated by Albert Castel, a recognized authority on the war in the west and Quantrill. This book contains no mention of Sim Whitsett, but it helped me with a time framework for some of the events in which Edwards says Sim participated. In his notes at the end of the book, Castel corrects many of McCorkle's factual errors and gives us additional details about many of the events described in the book.

One source, considered one of the more reliable, is the memoir of William H. Gregg, "*A Little Dab of History Without Embellishment*," written by Gregg around 1906. The manuscript was never published and is in the Western Historical Manuscript Collection of the University of Missouri. I'm sure that this manuscript would have been helpful but I was unable to obtain a copy. I do not know if it mentions Sim Whitsett.

I used information from other books about Quantrill to help me find a balanced view of Whitsett's experiences. I used these books also to create a time-line I needed to make sense of some of Edwards' stories. In the bibliography at the bottom of this web page I list all of the sources I have consulted. The more modern books also helped me understand the motivation and personalities of Quantrill, his officers and many of his Raiders.

If you intend to do your own research on Sim Whitsett you need to be warned about one book in particular. In 1923 John P. Burch published, "*Charles W. Quantrell A True History of His Guerrilla Warfare on The Missouri and Kansas Border During the Civil War of 1861 to 1865, As Told by Captain Harrison Trow*." Several years ago I ran across an original edition of this book with its snappy title in the Fort Smith, Arkansas city library's rare book collection. I was thrilled because up to that time I had been unable to find any books about Quantrill that mentioned Sim Whitsett. This book was full of stories about him. I fed quarter after quarter into the copy machine until I had a copy of the entire book in my briefcase. In November 2005 I was able finally to buy a copy of "*Noted Guerrillas*." I had been looking for it for years because almost every book written about Quantrill listed "*Noted Guerrillas*" as a source. I barely finished reading one sentence in "*Noted Guerrillas*" when I realized what Burch had done. For his book, Burch had copied verbatim entire sections

of "*Noted Guerrillas*" and then presented them as original accounts told to him by Harrison Trow. Burch even failed to rework the stories or tone down Edwards' distinctive style. It appears that the most work he put into his book was writing that captivating title. By 1923 John Edwards was dead and "*Noted Guerrillas*" had been out of print for decades. I guess Burch thought no one would notice. I wonder if even Harrison Trow realized what Burch was up to. I was amused by one glaring error Burch made - he copied John Edwards' mistakes about Quantrill's name. Almost on every page of "*Noted Guerrillas*" Edwards refers to William Clarke Quantrill simply as *Quantrell*, misspelling his surname. However, one of the first illustrations in the book is an etching of Quantrill labeled "*Charles William Quantrell*." From the beginning I wondered how Harrison Trow, one of Quantrill's officers, could have made such a mistake. Quantrill never used the name Charles except as an alias when he was in trouble with the law in Kansas. John Edwards never met Quantrill and in the 1870's the only publications about Quantrill were a few dime novels (the comic books of their day). It is not so hard to understand how Edwards could have made a mistake about Quantrill's name, but very difficult to see how Harrison Trow could have done so.

There were few if any accounts of the activities of Quantrill and his men written at or near the time of the actual events. Quantrill only wrote one report to his superiors and it was full of misinformation and exaggerations. None of the guerrillas, as far as is known, kept day-to-day journals. Edwards relied on the accounts of ex-guerrillas, told to him ten to twelve years after the fact. Edwards was more interested in glorifying the guerrillas than in producing an accurate history. McCorkle and Gregg's memoirs were written as much as forty years after the war. Without a doubt most of the stories told by Edwards, McCorkle and Gregg were full of inaccuracies and sometimes, complete fabrications. Not that they intended to lie about those years, but because human memory is a fragile thing. Today, scientific studies tell us that a person's memory is dramatically altered by later events, the mind's attempt to reconcile fleeting bits of memory, the stories of others and even the public's conception of what happened in the past. Most unreliable are the numbers given for enemy strengths and casualties. Dates are most often remembered incorrectly, even when the witness is emphatically certain of them. Although the stories of Quantrill and his men repeated here are almost certainly wrong in many aspects, they give us a general picture of those times and the people who participated in them.

## *Chaos on the Border*

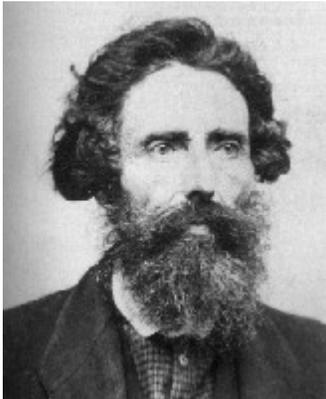
He was born **James Simeon Whitsett** on March 19, 1845 to John R. and Eliza (Oldham) Whitsett. John was the son of James and grandson of Samuel Whitsett. Samuel and James came to Montgomery County, Kentucky from Pennsylvania about 1790. In John and Eliza's family, James Simeon was tenth of twelve children, with four sisters and one brother who survived childhood. The family lived on land settled by John and Eliza when they came to Missouri from Kentucky in about 1839. They were among some of the earliest settlers of Jackson County. The Whitsett homestead was about a mile north of Hickman's Mill in Jackson County. Today Hickman's Mill is a suburb of Kansas City. A few miles away in Sni-bar Township lived John's cousin Isaac and his wife Cynthia (Noland) Whitsett. Isaac and Cynthia were also the parents of six children, three boys and three girls. Regardless of the fate of his own family, Sim was probably affected by the tragedies that visited his relative's family before and during the war. Those events may help to explain his membership in the guerilla band. This is his story. It is not a history of Quantrill or his Raiders, or the war on the border. Extremely talented authors and highly qualified historians have dealt with those subjects in numerous books. We deal with them here as the frame around the portrait of James Simeon "Sim" Whitsett. Most of this story spans only three years of his life, from the age of seventeen until the age of twenty. Those three years would have, without question, had a major influence on who Sim Whitsett was for the rest of his life. He died on May 22, 1928 at the age of 83.

High School history taught me that the Civil War began with the shelling of Fort Sumter in April 1861. In fact, the bloodletting started much earlier on the Kansas-Missouri border. The trigger was the Kansas-Nebraska Act passed by Congress in 1854. The question was whether these two territories would be admitted to the Union as free or slave states, affecting the political balance between those two opposing issues. Nebraska was certain to be a free state because it bordered no slave state. Kansas was up for grabs since it shared its eastern border with Missouri, a slave state. Both sides of the slavery issue swarmed into Kansas in hopes of tipping the balance to their favor.

Neither side was above using questionable or even illegal means to affect the outcome. "Free-soilers" stuffed ballot boxes while southerners from Missouri voted in elections in Kansas. Legal voters on both sides of the issue were intimidated or prevented from casting ballots. Dubious politics soon turned into violence and bloodshed.

There were two main groups at the center of the violence. We must generalize a bit to characterize these two groups. "Jayhawkers" from Kansas professed abolitionism and radical free-soil (anti-slavery) politics. The other group was the "Bushwhackers" from Missouri (so-called because of the brushy trails these men rode, not because of ambushes with which the term has become synonymous). The later were usually of southern ancestry and pro-slavery. Both groups attracted men who were little more than criminals, more interested in plunder than politics. Of the two, Jayhawkers were at first the

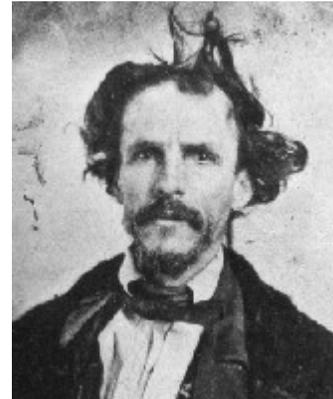
most violent. Into the Jayhawker mix came extremists like John Brown, U.S. Senator James Lane, Rev. James Montgomery and Charles Jennison.



Rev. James Montgomery



Jayhawker Charles Jennison



U. S. Senator Jim Lane of Kansas

Old John Brown (a distant relative of mine), who met his final fate at Harper's Ferry, believed that the slavery question could be resolved only by a national blood bath and he was in a hurry to start the blood flowing. Soon after arriving in Kansas, he was involved in raids and murders of slave owners in particular and southerners in general.

The Reverend James Montgomery was a radical abolitionist who led raids into western Missouri, killing livestock, shooting down southern farmers working in their fields and liberating slaves. Sometimes liberation meant kidnapping blacks against their will and carrying them back to Kansas. Montgomery's men were not averse to plundering the homes and farms of their victims.

The very worst of the Jayhawkers were U.S. Senator Jim Lane and Charles Jennison. Jim Lane, although a free-soiler, was a racist and had no personal qualms about slavery. His motivation was to keep Kansas an all white state. Charles Jennison was simply a thug. His interest was obtaining fame for himself and the plunder he could extract from his victims in Missouri. If Quantrill was evil, Jennison was more than his equal.

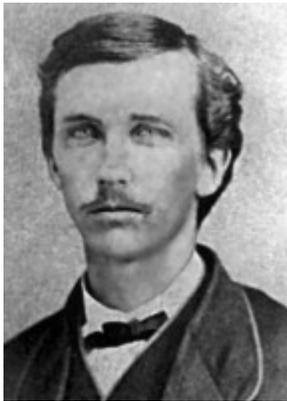
The eastern abolitionist Rev. Henry Ward Beecher was largely responsible for arming Kansas abolitionist settlers and Jayhawkers like Lane, Jennison and Montgomery with 1853 Sharps breech loading rifles. His group sent to Kansas territory these rifles which were much superior to the muzzle loading muskets in common use in the 1850's. Beecher's followers were shipping crates of Sharps rifles to the Kansas territory marked as Bibles. The rifles became known as Beecher's Bibles.

In Kansas, there were people genuinely interested in the abolition of slavery by peaceful means. Most of these were Quaker groups from the east who moved to Kansas specifically to help slaves find freedom. They raided the farms of slave owners to free slaves and help them make their way to the Underground Railroad. Unfortunately, their decency, sincerity and worthy goals were eclipsed by the more radical and violent elements in their midst. Most southerners were unlikely to make a distinction between peaceful Quakers

stealing their "slave property" and murderous Jayhawkers stealing everything of value.

Jayhawkers regularly raided western Missouri, stealing livestock and slaves, plundering homes and farms and killing anyone foolish enough to resist. In retaliation, Missourians formed bands of Bushwhackers and launched attacks of their own on citizens of Kansas suspected of sympathizing with the Jayhawkers. Anyone known to be a free-soiler was fair game. The situation soon became tit-for-tat with atrocities on both sides. However, in the late 1850's Missouri was the main killing field, made bloody by large bands of marauding Jayhawkers. Into this mayhem wandered William Clarke Quantrill from Canal Dover, Ohio and late of Lawrence, Kansas.

### *William Clarke Quantrill*



Quantrill was a man of little character who played both roles, Bushwhacker and Jayhawker - which ever at the time seemed to offer the best chance of financial gain. He was born in Ohio but during the war claimed he was a southerner from Maryland. He moved to Lawrence, Kansas and began teaching school and seeking his fortune. He rode with Jayhawkers, stealing slaves and plundering. Then he and his Bushwhacker friends would return the slaves to their owners to collect the reward. Historians have discovered that Quantrill was a gambler with large debts, a common thief, burglar, cattle rustler and horse thief. He left Kansas for Missouri one step ahead of the law. At worst, he was a psychopathic criminal and at best an opportunist always looking for the easy way to make his fortune and a name for himself. If ever there was a man seeking both fame and fortune, it was Quantrill.

In December 1860, with warrants out for his arrest in Lawrence, he led a small group of Quakers on a raid to the Morgan Walker plantation in Jackson County, Missouri. Walker was a wealthy farmer who owned a number of slaves. The Quakers intended to free any slaves willing to go with them back to Kansas. Quantrill had other plans. On the pretense of scouting the target, Quantrill went alone to the Walker home. He told Andrew Walker, Morgan's son, that he had lured a group of Jayhawkers to the farm and wanted to set a

trap for them. The ambush unfolded pretty much as Quantrill planned resulting in the death of three of the five Quakers. To explain his presence in the band Quantrill made up a story about an attack by Jennison and his Jayhawkers on him and an older brother a few years earlier. Quantrill claimed the attackers had murdered his older brother and left him for dead. Since that time he had infiltrated various bands of Jayhawkers, extracting revenge on his brother's murderers, killing them one by one. The five that had accompanied him to the Walker farm were the last of the group. From that time on Quantrill often repeated this story, and men who rode with him claimed many years later that it was true. It was in fact a complete fabrication. After the war, several writers conducted thorough research into Quantrill's family history. He had no older brother and no Jayhawker attack on his family had ever occurred. Several years after the war Quantrill's aged and destitute mother came from Dover, Ohio to visit one of the guerrilla reunions in Jackson County, Missouri. The surviving guerrillas treated her kindly but many refused to believe that she was really Quantrill's mother. Evidence firmly establishes that she was.

The Walkers and many of their neighbors fell for Quantrill's fib. After the incident, Quantrill stayed with the Walkers and he rode with a small group of Missouri home guard. These armed men were lead by Andrew Walker and their mission was to protect southern families around Jackson County from Jayhawkers. Quantrill was not the leader and lived entirely off the generosity of the Walkers.

Civil War came on April 12, 1861 and for a short time, Quantrill joined General Sterling Price's Army. In September 1861, the Union Army pushed Price's army out of Missouri into Arkansas. Quantrill deserted the army and returned to the Morgan Walker farm in Jackson County. He took up again with Andrew Walker and his home guard unit. When Walker quit the group to return to work on his father's farm he left Quantrill in charge. In December 1861, Quantrill's Raiders consisted of only fifteen men. On Christmas day, the small gang disbanded for a few weeks and each man returned to his home. In January 1862, Cole Younger joined Quantrill, driven by the murder of his father by a group of Missouri Federal militia. The senior Younger was a slave owner but a staunch supporter of the Union. Soon others found their way into Quantrill's camp. By February 1862, Quantrill had a sufficient force to raid Independence, Missouri and Aubry, Kansas. His men, mounted on superior horses and better armed than the Union soldiers, caused the Federal cavalry much embarrassment. Nearly captured twice during the ensuing pursuit, his men escaped each time displaying extraordinary bravery and daring. These early adventures gained Quantrill his reputation. He was also beginning to show a streak of brilliance as a guerrilla leader and his name was soon a household word in eastern Kansas and western Missouri.

On March 19, 1862, the Federal authorities in Kansas City issued an order that all guerrillas were to be treated as common criminals rather than soldiers or prisoners of war, and they were to be shot on sight. This "No Quarter" policy by the Federal authorities was a turning point with Quantrill and his men. Up until this time they regularly paroled their prisoners, a common practice by

both sides early in the war. After the authorities issued the "No Quarter" order, Quantrill and his men exercised the same policy of no quarter towards their captives, usually killing them on the spot. However, there were numerous exceptions. In hopes of causing the Union Army to soften this policy towards the guerrillas, the Confederate government passed the Partisan Ranger Act. The act legitimized guerrilla bands as rangers acting under the authority of the Confederate Army. The Union Army command ignored the Partisan Ranger Act, but from this time on the men who rode with Quantrill and bands like his considered themselves soldiers in the Confederate Army and the CSA bore the responsibility for their actions.

In June 1862, General Sterling Price sent Colonel Upton Hayes to Jackson County to raise recruits for a cavalry regiment for the Confederate Army. Hayes enlisted Quantrill's help in distracting the Federals while he went about his recruiting business. Quantrill's lieutenant, George Todd and Todd's small band of men went with Hayes to help. Unwittingly, the Federals themselves gave Hayes a tremendous boost. That came on July 22, 1862 when the Union general in Kansas City issued Order No. 19, which required all able-bodied men in Jackson County to enlist in Missouri Union militias and help exterminate the guerrillas. This was at a time when marauding Missouri Federal militia and Kansas Jayhawkers operating as Federal militia, were constantly preying on southern families in Jackson County. The order was tantamount to asking these men to turn against their own families, not to mention the southern cause which many supported. Young men in Jackson and surrounding counties flooded into the camps of Quantrill and Col. Hayes. This was when 17-year-old James Simeon Whitsett joined Quantrill as part of George Todd's company. Several old guerrilla's, including Sim, stated that they served under Upton Hayes. Actually, Hayes only commanded them during this period when he was engaged in recruiting in Jackson County. This claim alone does not prove the guerrillas' service in the regular Confederate Army. Although they enlisted under Hayes, many fought only with Quantrill's group.

### *Battle of Independence, Missouri*

Shortly after Sim Whitsett joined Quantrill, another Confederate Colonel, John T. Hughes, entered Jackson County to raise enough men to attack Independence, Missouri. Union forces under Lt. Colonel James T. Buel held Independence, located a few miles east of Kansas City. Colonel Hughes believed that if he could capture the town and its 300-man garrison it would help gain recruits for the Confederate Army and give southerners a much-needed victory in Missouri. Hughes raised a large Confederate Stars and Bars battle flag near Lee's Summit, well within sight of Independence. The Union Army he hoped to alarm and the men Hughes hoped to draw into camp largely ignored it. He was successful in gaining only 75 men for his efforts. Lacking the troops he needed, Hughes sent a request to Col. Upton Hayes and Quantrill to join him in attacking Independence. On August 10, 1862 Col. Hayes and

Quantrill with 300 largely untrained recruits and twenty-five of Quantrill's veterans joined Hughes at Lee's Summit. Colonel Hughes now had a force of 400, large enough to attack the town.

The Union commander Lt. Col. Buel was an arrogant man and believed that if the rebels dared attack Independence his trained soldiers could easily repel them. He even refused to believe a lady named Mrs. Wilson who tried to warn him of the large Confederate force preparing to attack the town. He would soon pay for his arrogance with his career and was very lucky not to have paid for it with his life.

Buel failed to prepare for the battle. He spread his troops around town in vulnerable positions. Most of the soldiers were in an open tent camp half a mile from the town center. Buel made his quarters in a large brick building in the middle of town and he put his Headquarters Guard Company in a building across the street. Another squad of men was located in the city jail building. Buel went to bed on the night of August 10 without alerting his troops to a possible attack, completely ignoring the warnings of wise Mrs. Wilson, dismissing her as a hysterical woman. The captain of the guard company was a little brighter than Buel and ordered his men to keep their weapons beside their bunks when they went to bed.

The day before the attack Colonel Hughes was unaware of Buel's stupidity. He asked Quantrill to send spies into town to scout out the situation. Cole Younger was one of those spies, dressed as an old woman selling apples. Cole was able to bluff his way into town but on his way out a sentry challenged him. Younger rode on as if he had not heard the order to halt. The sentry attempted to grab the reins as Younger spurred his horse and Cole drew his revolver and shot the sentry dead. He galloped headlong down the street with several Yankees after him but he escaped. This story first appeared in author John Edward's account of the battle, but some historians claim it is a fiction concocted by Younger years later during his days with a Wild West show. Whether the story is true or not, it dates from no later than 1877 when Edward's account of the battle was published in "Noted Guerillas." If this event actually happened, it did nothing to persuade Buel that anything was afoot.

Col. Hughes instructed Quantrill and his men to spearhead the attack and cut Buel off from his troops. Quantrill wanted very much to capture and kill Buel and he agreed to the plan. Hughes told Quantrill that the main force would be right behind Quantrill's men. While Quantrill kept Buel bottled up down town, Hughes' troops would attack the tent camp just outside of town.

Early in the morning of August 11, 1862 just before the sun rose, Quantrill and his men galloped into Independence with Hughes' 400 men right behind him. Quantrill and his band took the Federal guards on the street completely by surprise and killed them all. The rudely awakened soldiers in the barracks grabbed their weapons and started firing from the second story windows. Quantrill's men, dressed in Union blue, as they often did, shouted for the guards to stop firing, they were shooting at their own men. Deceived, the captain of the guards led his men outside to see what was causing the commotion. This was a bad mistake. After his men were out of their barracks,

the captain recognized one of the guerrillas and ordered his men to recommence firing. Bullets smashing through his bedroom windows had awakened Buel. Seeing his guards in the street, he shouted at them to cease firing and take shelter in the bank building. They did so, but now they were trapped in the brick bank building surrounded by bloodthirsty guerrillas with no avenue of escape. Quantrill's men pelted the building with constant pistol fire. They shot out the windows and into any spot that appeared vulnerable. Quantrill's men had completely cut off Buel from his main force, allowing him no way to communicate with his soldiers outside of town.

Meanwhile, George Todd took his squad, including Sim Whitsett, up the street to the city jail. The soldiers in the jail fired one volley at the approaching guerrillas and then ran for their lives. Todd broke open the doors of the jail and let out all of the prisoners. He discovered that one of the incarcerated men was town marshal Jim Knowles who was in jail on suspicion of killing a town drunk in an unfair gunfight. Todd hated Knowles. He had been a part of a group that had ambushed Todd and two friends earlier that year, killing the two friends. Todd murdered Knowles in cold blood, emptying his revolvers into the man. Then Todd's men found in the hotel the Union officer responsible for the setting the ambush for Todd. The guerrillas shot the officer, mutilated the body and kicked it down the hotel stairs. During his short life of violence, George Todd never let the chance for revenge to escape him.

After a gunfight of more than an hour, Quantrill was getting impatient with Buel. Unable to take the building Quantrill's men set fire to an adjoining structure and then told Buel to surrender or burn to death. Buel immediately produced a white flag. He offered to surrender to Colonel Gideon Thompson, the Confederate officer in charge of Quantrill's group, if he and his men would be treated as prisoners of war and paroled. The Confederate officer agreed and promised not to turn Buel and his soldiers over to Quantrill, who would have certainly killed them all. A few weeks later the Union Army mustered out Buel and his soldiers, but not before Buel faced withering criticism by his peers and superiors, some of who wanted him court-martialed.

About a half mile from town, Colonel Hughes was fighting the main body of Union soldiers. They had taken up defensive positions behind a stone wall and were impossible to dislodge. John McCorkle in his memoirs stated that he and his brother Jabez, both Quantrill men, were part of the force that attacked the tent camp, which confuses the issue of how Hughes actually employed Quantrill's men during the battle. It was not until after word of Buel's surrender reached them did the Union men give up. The captured Union troops were all paroled and left Independence within a few days. The Union Army mustered them out under the terms of their parole. For the first time Independence was in the hands of the Confederates. This was a stunning blow to the Union Army in Missouri. Fear spread like wildfire. If a guerrilla force could capture a town as large as Independence, who in western Missouri was safe from them? Once again, Quantrill's reputation grew, even though he played only a small part in the winning of the battle. His capture of Buel

helped make him a legend among the suffering southerners of western Missouri.

According to Edwards, among the guerrillas who distinguished themselves at Independence were Harrison Trow, William Gregg, Cole Younger, Sim Whitsett, Fletch Taylor, George Maddox, Press Webb, Dan Vaughn and a host of others.

### *Confederate Soldiers*

After the battle, Quantrill and his men separated from the main force of the Confederate army and moved to a farm a few miles from the town of Lone Jack. There, on August 15, 1862 Colonel Gideon Thompson officially swore Quantrill's men into the Confederate Army. Sim Whitsett gave his date of enlistment as August 12, 1862 in Company E of Shelby's 2<sup>nd</sup> Missouri Cavalry commanded by Upton Hayes. However, the official date was August 15, the day of this swearing in ceremony rather than the day after the Battle of Independence. Had he given a date a few days before the battle, I would say that he was one of Upton Hayes' regular recruits before he became a guerrilla. Because he gave a date of enlistment after the Battle of Independence, I am certain that he joined Quantrill rather than the regular Confederate Army in August 1862.

After the War, many of Quantrill's Raiders gave their dates of enlistment as between August 11 and 15. Most claimed to be members of a Missouri Cavalry unit under General Jo Shelby. There are no surviving records to substantiate most of these claims. This is probably because General Shelby destroyed most of his records at the end of the war to prevent retribution by Union authorities against the Missouri men who rode with him. It is very likely that he was especially sensitive to the records of former guerrillas. A similar claim of Confederate service by Cole Younger is controversial with some historians who insist, because of the lack of records, that he was never a Confederate soldier. We must be careful about giving too much weight to the latter argument. I personally believe that these men were officially sworn in to the Confederate army and probably were given a designation as a unit of cavalry. From August 1862 until the War's end, the Confederate Army was technically responsible for the actions of Quantrill and his men. Confederate soldiers or not, the regular Confederate military soon found that it had little or no control over Quantrill and his band.

As was the custom of the Confederate Army during the early part of the Civil War, Quantrill's men elected their officers soon after their swearing in ceremony. They elected William Quantrill as Captain, William Hallar as First Lieutenant (Hallar soon left the band), George Todd as Second Lieutenant and William Gregg as Third Lieutenant.

## *The Battle of Lone Jack*

On August 16, 1862 Quantrill took a group of his men back to Independence to grab as much loot and supplies as they could carry off. He left strict orders for Hallar to keep Todd and the rest of the men in camp while he was gone. This seems a strange order because Quantrill knew that a battle at nearby Lone Jack was about to begin. Some historians believe that Quantrill felt overshadowed by all of the high brass and had no desire to take orders as a mere captain with little or no power to act on his own. The need to secure the supplies left at Independence offered him an excuse to make himself absent.

Later that day Col. Hayes, Col. Thompson and two other recently arrived Confederate regiments consisting of about 1,400 men attacked 800 Missouri Union Militia troops under the command of Major Emory Foster behind fortifications at Lone Jack. It was a bloody, vicious battle. For a while, it seemed that the Union troops were winning. In desperation, Colonel Hayes sent a courier to Quantrill's camp ordering Quantrill to reinforce the Confederate units. Hallar, unwilling to disobey Quantrill, refused to go. Hayes sent a second urgent demand for help and finally William Gregg convinced Hallar to act. Quantrill's group moved to join the battle. Cole Younger and several others, including Sim Whitsett, made it to the battlefield just in time to participate in the fighting. The armies fought mostly on foot along a skirmish line and neither side was able to advance. As the Confederates began to run out of ammunition Cole Younger rode his horse along the front line, under heavy fire, minnie balls whizzing by his head, distributing ammo to the embattled Confederate soldiers. He slung a basket over one arm, held his reins in his other and tossed ammunition to the soldiers on the front line as he rode by. Colonel Hayes finally ordered Cole to dismount or the Colonel himself would shoot the horse out from under him. When Cole dismounted, the Federal troops raised a rousing cheer for him showing their admiration for his bravery. If Cole Younger had been a soldier in the regular Union Army he probably would have won a medal, perhaps even the Medal of Honor. Even the enemy documented his brave act and years later it was testified to by former Union officers in regards to outlaw Cole Younger's character.

Finally, the Rebels captured Major Foster, the Federals retreated and the Confederates won the battle. As the captured Foster lay wounded on his cot, a guerrilla entered the tent and threatened to shoot him. Younger entered the tent, grabbed the guerrilla and threw him out. Major Foster so trusted Younger that he asked Cole to take the \$700 he had on him and deliver it to his mother in Warrensburg, Missouri. Cole kept his promise and years later Foster was one of Younger's most ardent supporters during Cole's effort to gain a

parole and pardon from prison. One wonders what happened to this honesty after Cole took up with the James brothers after the War.

### *Help for an old Man*

Edwards tells the story of a man of about sixty-years-old who came to Quantrill shortly after the battle of Lone Jack. He appeared in camp one day to beg for Quantrill's help to rescue his son, just turned eighteen, who was being held in Independence by the Federal Militia. The old man's wife and daughter were dead and Jayhawkers had run off all of his stock. His son was his only source of support. Quantrill flatly refused the man's plea. He had no prisoners to trade for the boy; and, even if he did, he would not trade a soldier for a civilian. Besides, why wasn't the young man in the Army?

A guerrilla named Fernando Scott took pity on the old man and promised to get his son back. Quantrill apparently said nothing. Many of the guerrillas who rode with Quantrill were fiercely independent and not fond of authority, one of the reasons many were with Quantrill and not the regular army. Quantrill's control of the guerrillas was always by his reputation, and that control was often tenuous at best. He probably decided, wisely, not to test their loyalty by overruling their desire to help an old man. Cole Younger, Sim Whitsett, Dave Poole and Will Hallar volunteered to join Scott for the good-will mission.

By this time Independence was again under the control of the Federals. On the Blue Springs road was a picket station manned by four Federal militia soldiers. Near by was a camp of sixteen men in reserve. The group of five guerrillas rode up quietly on the outpost at dusk on an August evening. They maneuvered to place themselves between the outpost and the camp of the reserves. Scott called a halt and spoke low to his men.

"Thank you men for coming," Scott said. "If you ask me why the old man's tale stirred me to do this, I could not tell you for my life. May be it is fate. You know what fate is? The other day at Lone Jack we charged a cannon, under Hallar's command. Around the guns it was hell, wasn't it Bill? I had four revolvers and no shots left. A Federal at the corner of a house not twenty yards away fired at me six times and missed me every time. That was fate."

"That was damned poor shooting," replied Dave Poole. Scott continued, "They won't trade the boy for less than two, perhaps less than four men. Even their commanders do not set much store by the men in the militias. We must take the outpost intact if possible."

Suddenly Cole Younger heard horses coming up behind them. They quickly left the road and faded into the bushes. What at first they thought was the relief for the pickets was a column of Federal Cavalry of at least one hundred men riding their horses at a walk. Once the rear of the column had passed and was nearly out of sight the guerrillas fell in behind them. The four pickets at the outpost assumed that Scott's men were part of the column that had just passed and raised no alarm. Suddenly, Cole Younger, Will Hallar, Sim

Whitsett and Dave Poole each had a gun to the head of a soldier. The militia were quickly disarmed and dismounted. Scott asked who of the five would take the prisoners back to Quantrill.

No one wanted to go. They decided to draw lots. Sim Whitsett held the hat and Will Hallar put five pieces of paper into it. Each drew a slip. Dave Poole pulled the slip with the word "guard" on it. Poole ordered the captured militia to fall in and started the march back to Quantrill's camp.

Scott, realizing the reserves for the outpost were still unaware of the capture of the pickets, decided to attack the rest of the militia in their camp. The outpost and the camp were about five hundred yards apart and a stream with high banks separated them. The two positions were cut-off from each other, and there were no guards between the two. The four remaining guerrillas rode up to the camp undetected. As they approached the camp a sergeant challenged them. It was too late. The guerrillas drew their guns and opened fire. Scott shot the sergeant in the forehead at such a close range the muzzle blast singed the eyebrows of the unfortunate man. Caught by such surprise, the soldiers, some mounted, ran in all directions in an attempt to flee. When the shooting stopped, seven militiamen lay dead by the campfire and several wounded hid in the bushes.

The road to Independence was now completely unguarded. The four guerrillas made it into town and successfully bargained for the release of the old man's son, using the captured militia as collateral. They returned to Quantrill's camp with the boy and no further incidents.

That was the story pretty much as John Edwards tells it in "*Noted Guerrillas*." There are some things about the tale that bother me. If the guerrillas were truly intent on their mission of mercy, why would they risk it by attacking a superior force? Win or lose the skirmish would certainly cause an alarm with Federal troops in Independence. It seems to me strange that four of Quantrill's men could have simply rode into Independence after shooting up an outpost, contacted the proper person to secure the release of the boy and safely ride out again. Under the best of circumstances the guerrillas would have been a prize catch for the Federals who were desperate to find Quantrill. It is as if only half of this story was told.

### *Olathe, Kansas*

Quantrill discovered that Perry Hoy, a former friend and raider, had been hung at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas by the Union Army. To revenge the death of his friend Quantrill ordered three Union prisoners be shot. One of these men was a hated federal militia officer who had murdered and terrorized many of the families of Quantrill's men and other southern families. These men wanted to execute the militiaman as soon as he came into their hands; however, Quantrill hoped to exchange the prisoner for Hoy's release. On

September 11, 1862 after reading of Hoy's death, the officer was executed and Quantrill started his men on a raid to Olathe, Kansas.

Exclaimed Quantrill, "We are going to Kansas and kill ten more men for poor Perry!" Even before reaching Olathe the guerrillas killed ten men in Kansas. When they arrived at the town on the evening of September 12, they found it defended by a line of 125 militiamen, outnumbering Quantrill's band two to one. The raiders casually rode into town as if they were a group of farmers or peaceful citizens and tied their horses to fence rails. The maneuver confused the militia long enough for Quantrill's men to form a line abreast and draw their revolvers, one in each hand. Several guerrillas carried two or three other revolvers in their waistbands. Although they outnumbered the guerrillas, the militiamen with their single shot muskets were badly out-gunned. Quantrill ordered the militiamen to surrender. Faced with such a fearsome group, all but one did. That man died for his bravery, or because of his foolishness. The guerrillas paroled the remaining militiamen. The Quantrill's men had killed fourteen men in revenge for the death of Perry Hoy.

Quantrill and his gang spent the rest of the night sacking and looting Olathe. They stole horses, clothes, money, jewelry and anything else they fancied. They entered private homes as well as the hotel and the stores of Olathe. The town was completely terrorized that night but no one else died.

Col. John Burris of the Union Fourth Kansas Cavalry was furious at the sack of Olathe and immediately took out after Quantrill's Raiders. He caught up with them near Columbus, Missouri in northern Johnson County and chased them through four counties for ten days without inflicting any harm on them. In the pursuit, the Yankees burned several farmhouses belonging to suspected southern sympathizers and liberated a large group of slaves. The raiders were running for their lives and had to abandoned much of the loot stolen from Olathe.

### *Hot Pursuit*

Quantrill and his men were chased relentlessly by Burris during the early fall of 1862. Major Hubbard of the Missouri 6th Federal Cavalry came up from Clinton County to help Burris and engaged Quantrill's men in several hard fought skirmishes. Ahead of his pursuers by only an hour, Quantrill and his men came to Crenshaw's bridge on the Little Blue guarded by twenty-three militia. Cole Younger and Sim Whitsett lead the charge on the bridge. The militia guarding the bridge were appalled by the rush of the guerrillas and after firing one volley broke in all directions without attempting to reload. Two men were allowed to escape unscathed. One was a youth who had done Sim a favor once and Whitsett saved him. Another had once cured a valuable horse for Cole Younger and Younger returned the favor by giving the man his life.

After Quantrill and his men crossed the Blue they destroyed Crenshaw's bridge. This gave the guerrillas some time for rest, but soon the militia were

on their tail again. The pursuit went through Johnson and Lafayette counties with skirmishes here and there. Six miles out of Lexington the guerrillas had gained enough of a lead to take a much needed six hour bivouac. As day was breaking some citizens came into camp and warned Quantrill of a detachment of seventy-five cavalry militia in Wellington. They were not part of the pursuing columns, were unacquainted with the country and seemed to be aimless with no particular objective. At this time the guerrillas in Quantrill's Raiders numbered about fifty.

Quantrill attacked the rear of the detachment as it left Wellington for Lexington. For three miles the guerrillas engaged the militiamen in a torrent of lead and vicious fighting. Edwards reported that of the seventy-five only ten Union men escaped the onslaught uninjured. The score of dead and wounded by Edwards' account was: six shot by Quantrill; five by Andrew Blunt; four by Will Hallar; four by Cole Younger; three each by Dave Poole, George Shepard and Fletch Taylor; two each by George Todd, William Gregg, Sim Whitsett, John Koger, Hicks George and Fernando Scott. Six or eight others whose names Edwards did not list accounted for the remaining casualties in the Union ranks. It was victories like this in 1861 and 1862 that made Quantrill's Raiders into a legend. At first glance one would think the guerrillas were badly outnumbered in a battle of fifty against seventy-five cavalry. In reality, the Raiders were excellent horsemen on superb horses, probably much better mounted than the run-of-the-mill militiaman; and, in firepower the guerrillas were far ahead of the game. Quantrill's guerrillas were usually armed with as many as five revolvers against the single firearm usually carried by the Federals. Even the newest of Quantrill's men in the short time since Independence were battle-hardened veterans and all were excellent marksmen. The Federals were badly outgunned. Nether-the-less, the courage of these guerrilla fighters was unmatched in battle.

Soon the pursuing columns of Federals were again pressing hard on Quantrill and his men. For five days and nights the Raiders were once more on the run. They were pushed back over the Sni. By this time twenty-two of Quantrill's men were injured, some badly. Finally, the Raiders were hemmed in between Big Creek and the Sni with Federals on two sides. A ridge separated the guerrillas from the nearest Union force of about (according to Edwards) five hundred Federals under the command of Lt. Col. John T. Burris. There was only one way out, and that was straight through the middle of the militia on the other side of the ridge. Quantrill's men topped the crest of the ridge at a walk and then broke into a full run at the first sight of the Union troops below them. At the front of the charge, abreast of one another were William Quantrill, William Gregg, George Todd, Cole Younger, Tom Talley, Dave Poole, Hicks George, Sim Whitsett, Will Hallar, Charley "Ki" Harrison and John Koger. The Raiders slashed through the Federal lines and as night approached made it to the heavy timber along Big Creek. Now there was scarcely an unwounded man in the company and one man named Scriviner had been killed. The guerrillas did what only guerrillas can do when badly hurt and in need of rest.

The guerrillas disbanded and faded away into the night by twos and threes. By morning, there was no one left for the Federals to chase.

On October 17, Quantrill decided to attack Shawneetown, Kansas in hopes of recouping some of the plunder lost during the pursuit by Burris' militia. Before reaching Shawneetown they came across a group of about thirty Union soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail escorting a supply wagon train. The Union soldiers were taking a break and had no guards posted. Quantrill's men attacked and in a few minutes, half the soldiers were dead with the rest on the run. The raiders then rode into Shawneetown and sacked it much as they had Olathe, but this time they killed a number of civilians. The guerrillas put the town to the torch and left it a ruin. For the second time in a few weeks Quantrill's Raiders had invaded and sacked a Kansas border town and the citizens of eastern Kansas were in a panic. Many fled to the interior of the state while others left Kansas altogether.

### *Quantrill's March to Arkansas*

On November 3, 1862, Quantrill ordered his men to assemble on the banks of the Little Blue River for the march south for the winter. With winter setting in, the trees and bushes had lost their cover and the guerrillas were dangerously exposed. Some sources say that about 150 men gathered; John McCorkle gave the number of guerrillas as 140. According to Edwards there were just seventy-eight men in the march to Arkansas, but he also stated that they started the march south on October 23. It might be that others joined along the way before the group finally came completely together on the banks of the Blue on November 3, the date most historians give for the beginning of the move south. Whatever the number, Quantrill's band must have gained many new recruits just prior to the rendezvous for the trek south. A few of Quantrill's regulars decided to return to their homes for the winter and hope for the best. Among the latter was Cole Younger.

Shortly after they began the long march south, Quantrill's Raiders ran into a Union wagon train escorted by twenty-one cavalry soldiers. Quantrill ordered William Gregg and a group of forty guerrillas to attack the wagon train. In minutes, four soldiers and six teamsters were dead. The remainder escaped, were captured or wounded. Quantrill's men paroled the captured and wounded soldiers. John Edwards "Noted Guerrillas" tells a slightly different account of the battle.

"That old road running between Harrisonville and Warrensburg was always to the Guerrillas a road of fire, and here again on their march toward Arkansas, and eight miles east of Harrisonville, did Todd in advance strike a Federal scout of thirty militia cavalymen. They were Missourians and led by a Lieutenant Satterlee. To say Todd is to say Charge. To associate him with something that will illustrate him is to put torch and powder magazine

together. It was the old, old story. On one side a furious rush, on the other panic and imbecile flight. After a four-mile race it ended with this for a score: [killed by] Todd, six; Boon Schull, five; Fletch Taylor, three; George Shepherd, two; John Coger [Koger], one; Sim Whitsett, one; James Little, one; George Maddox, one; total, twenty killed, wounded, Even in leaving, what sinister farewells these Guerrillas were taking!"

It seems to me that Edwards was describing the Shawneetown battle. Edwards' book was based on stories told to him by former guerrillas (among them probably Simeon Whitsett). He was not an eyewitness to any of the events. I believe Edwards' source may have confused this battle with the fight at the wagon train at Shawneetown a few days earlier. The facts he states above agree more with that battle than they do with the fight on the march south. Most historians base their account of that fight on the Harrisonville road on the unpublished memoirs of William Gregg. Gregg was generally a reliable witness. John McCorkle supported most of Gregg's version.

### *The Fight at Lamar, Missouri*

During the march south, Quantrill's men engaged in an attack on Lamar in southern Missouri. The town was in the hands of a Union regiment. A Confederate officer that Quantrill's men met on the road asked Quantrill to attack the Federals. He promised that his troops would support them. The securely fortified Union soldiers were in the brick courthouse and the raiders were unable to dislodge them. The fighting went on for thirty minutes with no progress. Quantrill became disgusted because the regular Confederate troops never showed and he called a halt to the fighting. One raider was killed in the fighting. In frustration, Quantrill ordered his men to set the southern town aflame, burning even southern homes. Quantrill did more damage to Lamar in one afternoon than the Yankees did during their entire occupation.

Quantrill and his men continued south through Indian Territory and into Fort Smith, Arkansas. They remained in Fort Smith for ten days resting and replenishing their supplies. They crossed the Arkansas River by ferry at Van Buren and joined Colonels (later Generals) John S. Marmaduke and Joseph O. Shelby in camp at Dripping Springs, about eight miles northwest of Van Buren. By now, it was the middle of November 1862. Quantrill's men were attached to Major Benjamin Elliot's battalion of Missouri Cavalry, under the command of Jo Shelby. All were part of the army of Major General Thomas C. Hindman. Regardless of their status in Missouri, during the winter of 1862-63 Sim Whitsett and other guerrillas who stayed in Arkansas that winter were part of the Confederate army.

## *Dripping Springs, Arkansas*

The arrival of Quantrill and his men in camp in Dripping Springs caused quite a stir. Many high-ranking officers sought to meet the famous William Clarke Quantrill. Quantrill, always driven to find personal glory, let this go to his head. If he alone had kept the Federals at bay in western Missouri, surely he deserved to be more than a lowly Captain of Partisan Rangers. How could Jefferson Davis refuse to give him a colonel's commission and his own regiment? Surely, he would be as idolized in the capital of the Confederacy as he was in the west. With his head full of ideas of glory, Quantrill left his men in Arkansas in late November and went to Richmond, where he lingered for months, never meeting Jeff Davis or receiving his commission. The Confederacy was suspicious of the wild man from the west and was not about to turn him loose with his own regiment.

Many of the guerrillas were unhappy with the discipline of the Army. Most were unwilling to fight as regular soldiers. They argued that if caught they would be shot as guerrillas regardless, an argument that the Confederate officers acknowledged. With Quantrill gone, some of the men, including George Todd, decided to return to Missouri. Sim Whitsett and John McCorkle stayed. William Gregg also stayed and took command of the remainder of Quantrill's Raiders, which probably numbered no more than 50 or 60 men. Quantrill himself was out of the picture for the rest of the winter of 1862 until the spring of 1863. Through the winter of 1862-63, the action that Sim Whitsett experienced was as a part of Shelby's regiment.

## *Defeat at Cane Hill*

About a week after arriving in Dripping Springs, the Confederates moved north to Cane Hill, Arkansas. There, on November 28, 1862 a large force of Union troops under the command of General James Blunt attacked the encampment. Just at sunup, the Federals fired their cannons into the middle of the camp. Surprised and outnumbered, the rebels fled into the Boston Mountains. Quantrill's men and Elliot's Battalion fought to keep the Federals in check while the retreating Confederate army got its wagons over the mountains. John McCorkle described the fight in his memoirs, "*THREE YEARS WITH QUANTRILL*," written by O. S. Barton and originally published in 1914. McCorkle used the ranks of "Colonel" Elliot and "General" Shelby in his narrative. These Confederate officers attained those ranks later in the war. If you are concerned about accuracy, you should substitute their correct ranks at the time of the engagement, which was major and colonel.

McCorkle wrote, "I was detailed on the watch. I saw the enemy coming up the creek and, at once, reported to Gregg and Colonel Elliott. Returning to my post, I saw that they were advancing very rapidly and immediately returned

to Elliott and Gregg and told them if we stayed there a few minutes longer we would be cut off and would have to cut a hole through the enemy to get out. Colonel Elliott, as soon as he saw our perilous position, ordered a retreat, and, as we crossed the creek, about fifty yards ahead of them, the enemy poured a heavy volley of grape, canister and minnie balls at us, and nothing but the poor shooting of the Yankees saved us all from being killed, but only two of Elliott's men were slightly wounded. We kept us a constant firing as we went up the mountains. During this running fight, one of our company, Dick Turpin, became separated from us, and, riding up to where General Shelby was, the general asked him what command he belonged to. He replied 'Quantrill's.' Shelby replied, 'I thought those boys always stayed in their places.' To which Turpin replied, 'I can go any place you can: come on.' The general started to follow, when his horse was killed under him. Turpin turned in his saddle and saw Shelby getting up and said, 'General, what in the hell are you stopping there for? Why don't you come on?' Going up the mountain, General Shelby had three horses killed under him. After getting over the mountain, we started down Cole [Cove] Creek, the baggage train being ahead of us. The Federals closed up and made a saber charge on our rear guard. Captain Gregg then told me to go down the creek and find a place to form, as he wanted to check that charge. I started and took Dave Poole with me and, just past the spur of the mountain, I found a place about large enough for forty men to form on. Leaving Poole there, I rode back and notified Gregg. The boys came on down on the double quick, about half of them forming and the remainder forming in the rear. About that time, Captain John Jarrett, who had formerly been with Quantrill, but who was then in command of a company of cavalry under Shelby, came up and asked me what we were going to do. I told him we were going to check that charge and to get in the rear. Before we had time really to re-form the Federals came to within about thirty yards of us and Captain Gregg gave the command to charge. We rushed forward, yelling and shooting and, at the first volley, we unhorsed thirty-seven of them, among them being a Major Hubbard. The Federals immediately turned and went back up the mountain at a more rapid pace than they had come down, we following them about a quarter of a mile, wounding and killing a good many more. When one of the men came up to where Captain Hubbard was lying wounded, he dismounted and took his belt, revolver and sword and a fine, new overcoat that Hubbard was wearing and told him he was going to kill him. Just then General Shelby came along and asked what he was going to do with that man, and being told he was going to kill him, Shelby very sternly, said, 'No, you are not. Return that man his belt, sword, revolver and overcoat,' which was very promptly done. In about an hour from this time, the Federals came down with a flag of truce and took up their dead and wounded."

The engagement on Cove Creek probably occurred just off present day Country Road 285 near either Strickler or Floss, Arkansas. Once the Confederates were in the mountains, Blunt ordered his troops back to Cane Hill rather than pursue the retreating rebels through the treacherous winter weather in the hills and forests of the Boston Mountains. The Confederates

made their way south to Van Buren where they camped for several days. Then they returned to camp at Dripping Springs.

### *The Battle of Prairie Grove*

In early December Confederate General Hindman ordered his army back to Cane Hill to attack Blunt, drive him out of Arkansas and launch an invasion of Missouri. Hindman had reinforced his army with every available Confederate unit from Arkansas, Texas and Missouri. He also had gathered many conscripts in Arkansas. This time he was rumored to have an army of between 16,000 and 20,000 far out numbering Blunt's divisions. In reality, he had a force of about 10,000 ready for battle.

Blunt, learning of Hindman's plans, sent couriers back to Springfield, Missouri with orders for Major General Francis Herron to bring his divisions south to reinforce Blunt's command. Herron's army must march 125 miles and their chances of reaching Blunt before Hindman must have seemed remote. Herron put his men on a forced march, traveling twenty-five miles in twenty-four hours. They ate as they marched and drank coffee from cans they picked up along the road because they carried no knapsacks to slow them down. By December 5 they reached Pea Ridge and by midnight on December 6 the first of Herron's infantry was in Fayetteville.

Hindman ordered Colonel Jo Shelby's regiment to lead the advance against Blunt using Quantrill's men as he saw fit. Shelby and his men started their march in the early morning hours of December 3, 1862, the day after Herron set out from Springfield. The day started with cold rain that turned to snow. At four o'clock that afternoon, Shelby called a halt for the day. The following day was bitter cold but clear. About three o'clock that afternoon Shelby's men captured twenty-two Federals from a Union scouting party. Shelby interrogated the prisoners, paroled them and sent them back to the Union lines. Shelby hoped that the soldiers would report their capture by a group of Rebel guerrillas rather than by an advanced force of a large army, but Blunt was not fooled.

On December 5 the Confederate force was within eight miles of Cane Hill while Herron's main force was still fifty miles away. However, advance detachments of Union cavalry were arriving at Cane Hill every few hours. Hindman knew that by the next day most of Herron's army would be in Fayetteville. At midnight on December 6, Hindman called his top officers to a conference at a farmhouse near Cane Hill. He outlined his plan go around Cane Hill to strike Herron's exhausted army before they reached Blunt and then return to Cane Hill to finish off Blunt's army. Hindman ordered that campfires be left burning along Blunt's front to give the impression that the Confederates were preparing to attack Blunt in the morning. Colonel James Monroe was to maintain the illusion and hold Blunt's attention by continuous skirmishes along Blunt's front line. When the moon set, all but a skeleton force of Hindman's

army would slip around Blunt's flank and then march east along the Fayetteville road to meet Herron, wherever he might be.

At four o'clock in the morning of December 7 Shelby ordered Major David Shanks to start for Fayetteville with detachments from two regiments, one detachment would be Quantrill's Bushwhackers. Shelby would follow with a second force a short time later. In the vanguard of Shanks' detachments were Quantrill's men, including Frank James and Sim Whitsett.

Dave Poole and William Gregg led the bushwhackers. Most of Quantrill's men were dressed in their usual stolen federal blue uniforms. They went around Blunt's army undetected and raced down to the Fayetteville road. After reaching the road, they soon encountered a convoy of twenty-one commissary wagons headed for Blunt's lines. The escorts with the wagons were confused by the attack of blue clad soldiers. Then panic set in and the Yankees turned and ran back towards Fayetteville with Poole, Gregg and their Bushwhackers hard on their tails. Unknown to the raiders they had missed a detachment of Union cavalry that had passed just ahead of the wagon train.

Shelby's force arrived a few minutes later and took possession of the abandoned wagons. The advance detachment of Union cavalry, hearing the shots from the first attack, turned and caught Shelby by surprise. Completely surrounded and overwhelmed, the Yankee cavalry officer ordered Shelby to surrender. Shelby's career as a brilliant Confederate general might have ended before it started if Poole and Gregg had not given up the chase of the panicked wagon train escort. Quantrill's men returned to the wagons in time to stop Shelby's surrender and turn the tale again to the rebels' favor. McCorkle later claimed that they captured 400 Union soldiers during this encounter. This was an exaggeration but still they captured a sizable number of prisoners and sent them back to the Confederate lines. It is reasonable to say that Quantrill's men saved the career of Jo Shelby. From that time on Shelby felt he owed Quantrill's Raiders a debt of gratitude.

Herron was now warned of the Confederate advance by the wagon train escort when they returned to Fayetteville. Herron's men were exhausted by the long march from Springfield. If General Hindman had pressed his advantage and attacked Herron in Fayetteville he might well have defeated Herron before Blunt knew what had happened. The Battle of Prairie Grove might never have occurred. Instead, General Hindman lost his nerve and stopped his advance when he reached the Prairie Grove meetinghouse on a ridge overlooking Illinois Creek between Fayetteville and Cane Hill. Below him to the east lay cornfields outlined with rail fences that made a zigzag pattern between the fields. Hindman placed eight thousand of his men along a two-mile front line and waited for Herron to come to him. At the time, it seemed the Confederates had all of the advantages. They held the high ground with eight thousand men against six thousand of Herron's footsore soldiers while Blunt's eight thousand men were eight miles away still expecting the attack at Cane Hill.

Herron's weary troops reached the battlefield in tight formation. When the Federals' big artillery pieces reached the Illinois Creek, the Confederate artillery opened fire. With one battery pinned down on the banks of the creek,

Herron searched for another way across. His engineers quickly cut a road through the woods and the remaining Federal batteries crossed half a mile above the first. Immediately, eighteen Union guns began pounding the Confederate ridge. Hindman turned some of his artillery on the new batteries, dispersing the shelling over two fronts. The Federals at the first crossing took advantage of the slack in the bombardment and Union soldiers poured over the creek, extending their line along the Confederate front below the ridge. The bombardment continued for two hours before the Yankees attempted an advance. Hindman decided that a smashing blow now might bring victory and ordered a counter attack. To his dismay he learned that one entire Arkansas regiment of conscripts had deserted. Most of the conscripts were loyal to the Union and the others had little desire to fight. All of the poorly trained conscripts realized that they were little more than cannon fodder and morale among them must have been little better than men lined up against a wall to be executed. Under the circumstances, Hindman cancelled his orders to counter attack and decided to hold his line. The Federals attempted two more charges but were repulsed each time. Meanwhile, Union General Herron must have asked himself, "Where is Blunt?"

Blissfully unaware of the true situation General Blunt continued to wait through the morning for the attack to come against him at Cane Hill. By eleven o'clock Blunt was obviously frustrated. No dispatch from Herron had arrived at Cane Hill, which could only mean that the Rebels had blocked the Fayetteville Road. It was then that Blunt heard the distant rumble of the artillery battle eight miles away. Immediately, Blunt realized he had been duped and started his force on the road towards Fayetteville, but the battlefield was more than a march of two hours away.

When he finally arrived at the Prairie Groove battlefield, Blunt hurriedly placed his artillery and fired two rounds. Unfortunately, because Blunt was yet unfamiliar with the battlefield, the shells landed among Union skirmishers. General Herron at first believed that the shots were from Confederate reinforcements, but Hindman knew at once that Blunt had arrived. The Confederate general hoped to demoralize the newcomers with a charge before the Union soldiers had a chance to form their line. However, another Arkansas regiment of conscripts refused to advance towards the enemy. Angry, Hindman ordered General Marmaduke's cavalry to drive the Arkansans into action. Goaded from behind with the tip of cavalry sabers, the Arkansas regiment advanced reluctantly but of course the charge failed. Blunt was able to form his line and now the Federals had forty-two guns to spray the Confederates with grapeshot and cannon shells. The battle raged the rest of the day with neither side gaining nor losing ground.

A fresh Federal division from Fayetteville was to join Blunt and Herron in the morning and contingents of Herron's army continued to arrive at the battlefield swelling the Union ranks. After the battle, Hindman claimed victory because his men held their original position on the ridge when the firing ceased as darkness fell. However, it was soon obvious to all that the Confederates were defeated. Hindman retreated secretly after dark by wrapping blankets

around the wheels of his cannon to muffle the sound as they left the battlefield.

In the morning, General Hindman sent out a white flag asking for a twelve-hour truce to tend the wounded and bury the dead, but in reality to give his troops a twelve-hour head start on their retreat. General Blunt, again deceived, granted the truce. Men from both sides carried off the dead and wounded in stretchers and women came on horseback and in wagons to help both Yankee and Rebel. The real horror of the battle became apparent as these good Samaritans carried out their duties. They found many of Herron's Union soldiers dead without a wound on their bodies. The soldiers had died of exposure and exhaustion during the cold winter night. During the battle, many of the wounded and exhausted Yankees crawled into haystacks for warmth and fell asleep. The shelling caused many of these to catch fire. The flames roasted alive the wounded and tired soldiers as they slept in their shelters. In the morning, around the charred haystacks pigs, attracted by the smell of burnt flesh were devouring the remains of the dead, horribly mutilating the bodies, dragging heads and limbs about the fields. In the Confederate ranks, many of the Arkansas conscripts, forced to charge the Union line, were found lying close together and the ground was muddy from the blood. Most of them had bitten the bullets off from the cartridges and had fired only blanks at the Union ranks. They died this way rather than fire on their nation's flag. They died for their country wearing the uniform of their enemy. Estimates of the dead from the battle are about 2,400 to 2,600 men with each side suffering similar numbers of losses.

The Confederates once again retreated to Van Buren through the Boston Mountains. John McCorkle had his fill of regular army life and was tired of fighting losing battles. Shortly after returning to Van Buren he and a friend decided to return to Missouri. A few others of Quantrill's original band also decided to leave, but Sim Whitsett remained with William Gregg in charge. Quantrill continued to dally in Richmond. What remained of Quantrill's band went back into camp at Dripping Springs with a newly arrived contingent of Texas cavalry.

### *The Battle of Dripping Springs and Van Buren*

On December 27, 1862, after resting for three weeks in their newly established camps at Fayetteville and Prairie Grove, the Federals started south for Dripping Springs. Blunt desired to break up the camp at Dripping Springs and capture the Rebel supplies in Van Buren. He also wanted to capture several steamboats coming up the Arkansas River with supplies for Hindman's army, which was camped around Fort Smith.

The Federals followed Cove Creek through the Boston Mountains that day and spent a few hours that night sleeping on its banks. The next morning they

crossed Lee's Creek about twenty miles north of Van Buren and soon after ran into Confederate pickets. The Yankees chased down the pickets to prevent word from getting to Dripping Springs of the impending attack. The Federal cavalry struck the camp at about nine o'clock in the morning catching the Rebels completely by surprise. It was a rout and the Confederate soldiers fled in the direction of Van Buren leaving all of their equipment behind them. For decades after the war the people of Crawford County, Arkansas were still finding artifacts from the Confederate camp at Dripping Springs.

Blunt's troops chased the Confederates into Van Buren and the town had no chance to put up a defense. It was soon in Federal hands and Blunt's army destroyed the steamboats at the wharf and those attempting escape down the river. For several hours, the Rebels, from their positions on the Fort Smith side of the River, and the Yankees from atop Mount Vista in Van Buren, fought an artillery battle. The distance between the two was so great that neither side inflicted much damage on the other. Those most hurt were the citizens of Van Buren whose town was on the receiving end of cannon fire from their own army. Fearful that Blunt would attempt to attack Fort Smith, most of Hindman's divisions, including Shelby's, retreated to Little Rock and Lewisburg, near Little Rock. Blunt, however, had stretched his supply line to the limit and thought it unwise to attempt a major offensive against the entrenched Confederates around Fort Smith.

The following day, December 29, 1862, Blunt left Van Buren and returned to camp at Fayetteville leaving Fort Smith in Confederate hands. However, all of northwest Arkansas north of the Arkansas River was now under Federal control.

Soon after Blunt returned to Fayetteville, Shelby and Marmaduke began planning an expedition into Missouri hopefully to keep Blunt busy and out of mischief in Arkansas. Quantrill's men again were a part of these plans as an attachment to Shelby's brigade. Still Quantrill lobbied in Richmond for his commission while his men fought on in the west without him. It is ironic that had Quantrill stayed with his men during the winter of 1862-63, he may well have gotten his colonel's commission the way Shelby, Price and others had earned their promotions, by showing that they had what it took when the going got tough. He may also have kept the loyalty of his men, which he was rapidly losing after the campaigns of that winter. Eventually that loss of loyalty led to his downfall.

### *Springfield, Missouri*

John N. Edwards described the Confederate campaign into Missouri in January 1863 in his book, "Shelby and His Men: or, The War in the West." Although he does not mention Quantrill's men, other sources state that they were a part of the campaign. The fact that Edwards never mentions Quantrill in

"Shelby and His Men" indicates that he knew little about the guerrillas until years after the war. One source specifically states that Sim Whitsett was at these battles.

General Hindman ordered General Marmaduke to take Shelby and Porter's Missouri brigades, cut Blunt's main lines of communication around Springfield, Missouri, and hold it until Blunt was forced to let go of his grip on the Arkansas River. Hindman also hoped to prevent Blunt from attacking Little Rock, which seemed to be Blunt's next objective. On the last day of the year 1862, Shelby broke camp at Lewisburg, a few miles north of Little Rock, and moved northward. They entered Missouri in Taney County, crossed the White River at Forsythe, and marched to Ozark, Missouri just south of Springfield. Porter's brigade was to take a separate route and join up with Shelby's brigade before they reached Springfield, but for some reason Porter was a day behind in his march.

Quantrill's men were still with Major Ben Elliott and were again the advance for Shelby's brigade. As Edwards described them, the type of men in these advance units were always those whose courage and ability were proven. They could not panic and were never to surrender if they encountered the enemy. They had to hold the enemy in check or slow their advance to give the main units behind them time to prepare for battle. Also, Quantrill's men refused to fight as regular foot soldiers. Since the Yankees considered them outlaws and gave them no quarter when attacked, the guerrillas insisted they be allowed to ride as cavalry and scouts. If worse came to worse and the infantry was forced to surrender, the guerrillas could slip away as they did on the Kansas, Missouri border. Their courage was not in doubt but the only way Shelby could use them was in these advance units and as scouts.

Shelby ordered Elliot to take Quantrill's unit along with other scouts, detour around the fort at Ozark and cut off its garrison from Springfield. However, the Yankees learned of Shelby's approach and hastily retreated to Springfield before Elliot could accomplish his goal. The hope of a surprise attack on Springfield was now gone. Shelby's men took all of the supplies the Yankees left behind at Ozark and set fire to the fort.

They reached Springfield by early morning on January 8, 1863. The Federals had stationed two or more militiamen at every house along the road. Quantrill's men picked them up and dragged them from warm beds ahead of Shelby's advancing regiments. As usual, the guerrillas donned the Federal uniforms. They also captured large numbers of wagons, horses, slaves and clothing.

Two miles from Springfield in a strip of timber, General Marmaduke and his command dismounted and moved up to the attack, driving ahead of him a large body of Union cavalry on reconnaissance patrols. The Confederate line formed in open prairie. Heavy artillery fire erupted from the Union guns guarding Springfield. Skirmishes began early and continued while the Rebels reconnoitered the enemy's defenses. In the center of the city was a large earthwork fortress flanked by rifle-pits and long deep trenches for infantry. Guarding the town from its southern approach, within range of the guns in the

fortress was a strongly built stockade inclosing a large brick building, once a female academy, being used as a military prison. As the Confederates watched, they saw regiment after regiment marching up from their barracks and disappearing into the rifle-pits and trenches. The earthwork fortress was a sea of blue and glittering steel.

Union General Brown with a large escort boldly rode out to view the ranks of the Rebels. He and his men rode along the entire front unharmed until Elliot's men caught sight of him. They chased him back to the gates of Springfield, severely wounding him before he reached safety with his escort.

Shelby charged ahead of his regiments by several yards, his hat off and long hair streaming behind him. Everything went down before them. Shelby's men almost annihilated the regiment in front of the stockade, the garrison within killed or dispersed. They reached the first line of rifle-pits, and drove the panic stricken Union soldiers beyond the stockade with the brick prison and into a large cemetery. Just beyond the graveyard was one piece of Union artillery that swept the streets with fearful precision. Twenty Rebels broke off from the main force, rushed the cannon and captured it. They dragged it to the rear and used it against its former owners.

Falling back from the advancing Confederates the Federals set fire to all the buildings containing supplies to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy. A stiff breeze fanned the fire and the flames added to the horror of the battle. Heavy artillery from the earthworks in the center of the city swept the streets as the Rebels advanced and a steady stream of rifle bullets raked the ranks of the unsheltered Missourians of Shelby's regiments. The battle was now house-to-house, block-by-block. A column of Union cavalry swept down on the advancing Confederates and for a moment was able to halt their progress. The Rebel soldiers then rallied around the captured stockade and held their own.

By now General Marmaduke was convinced that the town could not be taken by assault. He wished the fighting to continue until darkness fell so that he could withdraw successfully. The Confederates had badly underestimated the strength of the fortifications around Springfield and the number of defenders in the town. They were outnumbered five to one and faced with twenty pieces of artillery. Even against these odds the battle to this point had gone well. Shelby had captured the stockade, a line of rifle-pits and one piece of artillery. His men had also captured about two hundred Union soldiers, but their losses were heavy. About midnight Shelby's brigade withdrew by regiments. They left behind them a strong line of mounted skirmishers who were to remain until dawn.

As soon as the sun rose and they discovered the withdrawal of Shelby's brigade, the Federal cavalry swarmed out of their city after the Rebels. General Marmaduke had lingered in the rear without his escort and had to make a run for it. He reached Elliot's ranks that were able to halt the Federal charge.

Shelby with a brigade of eighteen hundred men with an auxiliary force of two hundred more had made a successful fight for six hours. Although he was

unable to capture Springfield, Marmaduke realized his main mission was to harass Blunt's supply lines and Springfield was just one piece of that objective. The Union garrison at Springfield made no further effort to confront the Confederates and they marched at leisure down the Rolla road, destroying everything in their path. They intercepted a heavy wagon train of supplies headed for Blunt in Arkansas. Federal scouts watched the Confederates on their march but were unable to do anything to interfere with their advance. At Sand Springs, Porter's brigade finally reached Missouri from Little Rock and now Marmaduke had a firm hold on Blunt's supply line. The Rebels cut all communications between Rolla and Springfield. Down south in Arkansas Blunt was forced to give up any plans of attacking Little Rock and marched north to free his supply line.

### *Hartville, Missouri*

When Blunt was within a day's march of Springfield, Marmaduke turned his army south back towards Arkansas. Shelby wanted to take his brigade north to the Missouri River and deliver several more blows at the Yankees in the state but Marmaduke refused. The season was late and the weather was getting worse. When the Confederates reached Hartville on January 11, 1863 they found three regiments of infantry and three of cavalry and six pieces of artillery defending the town. The infantry concealed themselves in a deep, dry ditch, directly behind a huge, ten-rail fence. The cavalry was on both flanks protected by heavy timber and the artillery battery was on a high hill in the rear.

For some reason Shelby dismounted his entire brigade and marched boldly to attack in front. Porter's brigade was to advance by the road and charge the left flank after Shelby attacked. Artillery covered Shelby's advance as the line marched up to the rail fence. As the men grabbed the top rails the concealed Union infantry opened fire. Shelby's regiments were enveloped in a curtain of flame and all but four of Shelby's captains fell dead or wounded at the fence line. Shelby and Marmaduke broke through the fence and yelled "charge!" Several of Shelby's units swept up the hill and forced the Yankees to drag away their artillery pieces to keep them from being captured. Shelby lost two horses and was hit in the head. The glittering cavalry badge on his hat saved his life, but he reeled in his saddle like a broken reed. Marmaduke's horse fell in the melee and his jacket was riddled with bullet holes but the General was unhurt. Porter led his brigade up the hill at a charge and fell mortally wounded. The whole head of his column melted away before the withering fire of the Yankee muskets.

Lieutenant Colonel Frank Gordon rallied his shattered regiment and swept down upon the Yankees' right. Thompson and Shanks units leaped the fence together on the left and attacked quickly. The brigade dashed up to and over the ditch driving the Union soldiers before them. The Union cavalry fled

through the infantry in a frantic effort to escape; the Union artillery battery left its caissons and wagons on the field in their panic. The battle ended at dark when Elliott with Quantrill's men pursued the retreating Federals far enough to turn the flight into a rout. Along the way, they captured wagons full of Union wounded and many prisoners besides. Finally, Shelby and his men had a clear-cut and badly needed victory in their possession, but at a terrible price in lives.

Slowly the Rebels gathered the dead and wounded from the field of battle. Towards two o'clock in the morning, the brigade started southward. Many of the badly wounded died on the march and graves dotted the line of march south to Arkansas. Many of the less badly wounded struggled to keep up rather than be left behind. One by one, most of these dropped out. On the night of January 18, 1863, a heavy snowstorm hit the retreating army. It lasted ten hours and covered the ground to a depth of two feet. The brigade struggled on towards Batesville, Arkansas eluding a large force set out after them under the command of Union General Davidson. The feet of many of the Rebel soldiers were badly frostbitten and in some cases had to be amputated on the march. More often than not, under the primitive conditions they endured, the amputees died of shock and exposure.

### *Quantrill Returns to Missouri, 1863*

Shelby's battered brigade reached Batesville, Arkansas where a train from Lewisburg was to meet them. However, the train was trapped in the mountains in the deep snow and was unable to move forward or backward. This added to the suffering because Shelby's troops had no tents or the resources for a winter camp. The people of Batesville came to the aid of the frozen soldiers and Shelby's brigade spent the remainder of the winter months in Batesville cared for by the loyal Southern citizens of the town.

In January, Quantrill returned from Richmond. He was shocked at how small his band had become. Todd, McCorkle and many others had returned to Missouri rather than put up with regular army life. What was left was certainly no regiment suitable for a colonel. Quantrill sulked and complained to Generals Hindman and Marmaduke about his rejection in Richmond and the defection of his troops. Both officers tried to convince Quantrill to join with them in the regular army and in due time he would earn the accolades he so desired. Quantrill took the proposal to what remained of his band but they would have nothing to do with it. The old argument about being captured and shot was raised, but the main reason probably was that most were tired of fighting losing battles over which they had little or no control. Most of Quantrill's men had had enough and were ready to leave. Quantrill took what remained of his outfit and left for Texas to spend the rest of the winter.

One source says that Sim Whitsett was with Shelby at Cape Girardeau, Missouri and Helena, Arkansas in the spring of 1863. I cannot dispute that with solid evidence, but the timing of those battles makes it seem very unlikely to me. Edwards reported that Sim was back in Missouri with Todd in July 1863. The battle of Helena occurred on July 4, 1863. I believe it more likely that Sim went to Texas with Quantrill and his remaining men in January or February. The guerrillas returned to Jackson County in March 1863.

Probably immediately after his return to Jackson County Sim learned of the death of Jephtha Crawford. Jephtha was the father of Mrs. Susan Vandever, formerly Mrs. Susan Whitsett, widow of Sim's late cousin William. Jephtha was also the father of Laura Crawford Whitsett, the wife of Stewart Whitsett. William, who died before the war, and Stewart were the sons of Isaac and Cynthia (Noland) Whitsett of Lee's Summit. Federal militia came to the farm of the elderly Jephtha in January that year while Simeon was with Shelby during the raid on Springfield. The militia hung Jephtha as being a southern sympathizer and guerrilla supporter. They made Mrs. Crawford and Jephtha's young children watch the old man as he strangled to death on a tree in the front yard. The militiamen then took what they wanted from the home and set it to the torch, leaving the family homeless in the dead of winter. After Quantrill's return to Jackson County in April, Mrs. Crawford took her youngest son, fifteen-year-old Riley, to Quantrill and asked him to make a soldier of the boy to avenge the death of his father. Riley, the youngest member of Quantrill's raiders, not only became a "soldier" but also one of the most vicious and bloodthirsty of Quantrill's Raiders, rivaling even the reputation of Bloody Bill Anderson. However, young Riley did not live to see his seventeenth birthday.

In the spring and early summer of 1863, the guerrillas operated in small independent bands. Quantrill perhaps discouraged by his failure in Richmond and knowing that he had lost the respect of most of his men during his absence that winter, stayed in the background. He was usually kept informed of the activities of these groups led by George Todd, William Gregg, Dave Poole, Bloody Bill Anderson, Cole Younger and a few others. Quantrill rarely helped plan or participate in their raids. Even so, the authorities and news media blamed every guerrilla raid in Jackson and Cass County on Quantrill. Quantrill spent most of his time with his new found lover, Kate King. He and Kate were secretly married at the cabin of a backwoods preacher against the wishes of her parents who had forbid her to see Quantrill. During the summer, he was also planning a project dear to his heart but he needed a catalyst to bring it together. He was planning a raid on Lawrence, Kansas.

By the end of May the guerrilla groups operating under Todd, Gregg, Poole, Jarrett and Anderson ensured that the authorities knew Quantrill's Raiders were back in town. Sometime in July, John Jarrett and William Gregg took with them five men apiece and crossed into Kansas near Westport. The twelve waited until dark and set up an ambush along the main road between Leavenworth and Kansas City. Their first victims were a sergeant and four men carrying dispatches. The five were killed and the dispatches destroyed. The

next to come along was an ambulance carrying a sutler, a sutler's clerk, two artillerymen who were asleep and a black driver. Jarrett rose up and shouted for the wagon to halt, but the driver realizing what was happening whipped the horses in an attempt to flee. Gregg galloped ahead and shot the lead horse in the traces. The guerrillas killed the sutler, the clerk and the black driver. The artillerymen were spared because they were regular army and Irishmen. The guerrillas held them until dark and then let them go without asking for a pledge.

Just down the road about half a mile was a house that also served as a tavern. William Gregg, John Ross and Sim Whitsett rode up to the tavern ahead of the others guerrillas. Gregg called out, "Hello, who keeps the house?" The owner came out and told the group that he did, but he was full for the night. Two guerrillas stayed outside with the horses while the other ten prowled the premises. In the stables three Federals were pulled out of the straw. Another was cornered and captured in the kitchen. The remaining five militiamen were caught undressed in beds in various places in the house. All were rounded up and brought together outside where Jarrett shot them. Then the tavern keeper was killed over a horse he was trying to save. Unfortunately, brutality like this was common on the border and both sides were guilty of it.

After killing the Federals and the tavern keeper, the guerrillas burned the tavern. This was a mistake. The smoke and flames alerted a camp of Union cavalry who came to put out the fire. Jarrett and Gregg and their ten guerrillas were gone but the soldiers hunted for them all night and the next day.

The activities by the guerrillas in the spring and summer of 1863 infuriated Brigadier General Thomas Ewing, the Union commander of the District of the Border. He vowed to keep a thousand men in the saddle until Quantrill and his men were run to the ground. In the middle of July Quantrill brought his group together in Jackson County. The Raiders probably numbered a little more than one hundred men. The guerrilla band rode east towards Blue Springs and Pleasant Hill when they saw a line of Federal cavalry. The guerrillas as usual were dressed in Union blue, which allowed them to move around more easily in an area now saturated with Union troops. Quantrill sent George Todd and James Little ahead. Two Federals rode out to meet them and halted fifty yards from Todd and Little.

"Who are you?" asked Todd. The answer was Major Ransom with four hundred men and two pieces of artillery.

"What is your business?" asked Todd.

"Looking for that damned scoundrel Quantrill and his cut-throats," replied the Federal.

Little quickly rode back to Quantrill to report on the situation. He asked for twenty men to skirmish with the enemy. Quantrill complied sending under the command of Cole Younger, Frank and Jesse James, George and Richard Maddox, George Wiggington, Sim Whitsett, Tom Talley and twelve others. Todd led the charge against an outlying column. The Federals, completely surprised by the assault were cut to pieces before they could retreat to the main body of cavalry. Sim Whitsett was seen to shoot three and the James brothers also

three each. Todd is said to have killed four. The casualties on the Union side were claimed to be fifteen killed and a dozen wounded with no injuries to the guerrillas.

Ransom opened fire on the twenty guerrillas with his artillery. The raiders fell back and Quantrill retreated west in the direction they had just come. Quantrill sent couriers to Dave Poole, Andrew Blunt and William Gregg who were behind the main group of guerrillas. They and their men were ordered to hide themselves at a crossing on the Sni and to hold it. Ransom slowly and steadily followed Quantrill using his artillery at every opportunity. Quantrill crossed the Sni and formed a battle line on ground beyond the crossing. When Ransom's troops began to cross, Poole and the group laying in ambush opened fire. At the same time Quantrill ordered a charge. Again caught off guard, Ransom's men broke and ran. Major Ransom was forced to retreat to Independence. Ransom reported that his casualties numbered fifty-eight.

After this battle Quantrill's men again broke into individual groups and continued their harassment of the Federals. Quantrill again withdrew from the activities of the guerrillas and worked on his plan to raid Lawrence, Kansas.

We can only guess at Quantrill's motives for wanting to raid Lawrence. It was deep in Kansas and the border was crawling with Federal militia units whose main mission was to keep Quantrill out of Kansas. Perhaps he saw a raid on Lawrence as a slap at Confederate leaders back east who were facing dismal prospects in the west. He also held a grudge against Lawrence, whose citizens regarded him as a petty thief and loafer. The sheriff of Lawrence had practically chased him out of the city in 1860, the reason Quantrill had led the infamous raid on the Morgan Walker farm. Now he wanted to return to show Lawrence that he had become someone the Jayhawkers in Lawrence should fear. Lawrence was the home of Senator Jim Lane and the hot bed of Jayhawker activities. Many of the atrocities against southern families in Jackson and Cass Counties had originated with bands of Jayhawkers operating out of Lawrence. If he could pull it off, it would also show his own men that he was still a man they should respect. However, he needed something that would inspire the guerrillas to follow him on such a dangerous mission. The Federal authorities in Kansas City gave him just what he needed in August 1863.

### *Lawrence, Kansas*

During the summer of 1863, Federal militia units arrested women suspected of spying for or helping feed and cloth the guerrillas. Susan (Whitsett) Vandever and her sister Mrs. Armenia Selvey, daughters of Jephtha Crawford and sisters of guerrilla Riley Crawford, were arrested while buying flour and supplies in Kansas City. The Federals also arrested three sisters of Bloody Bill Anderson, the sister of guerrilla John McCorkle, Charity McCorkle Kerr, and John McCorkle's sister-in-law Nan Harris McCorkle and several other women. Union General Thomas Ewing commander of the army in Missouri had

seventeen of these women held in a three-story brick building on Grand Avenue in Kansas City until the authorities could expel them from Missouri. The building was not a jail but was used as a storehouse by merchants who rented space on the ground floor from the building's owner, painter George Caleb Bingham. The southern women were held on the second floor while the basement was used to jail prostitutes. Adjoined to the building was a barracks for Union soldiers and guards for the makeshift prison. The building was very unsafe. Someone had cut away several supporting beams in the basement and in spots the foundation appeared to be undermined. A concerned citizen reported the condition of the building to General Ewing. He inspected it but decided it was safe.

On the morning of August 14, 1863, a sudden gust of wind hit the building and it collapsed on its inmates, killing Susan Vandever, her sister Armenia Selvey, one of the Anderson girls and both McCorkle women. Another of Anderson's sisters was so severely injured she was crippled for the rest of her life. Immediately, the rumor spread that the Federals had deliberately undermined the building with the intent of killing all of the southern women. Years later a lawsuit brought against the government by Bingham revealed that the building was actually one of the sturdier buildings on Grand Avenue. However, soldiers and the prostitutes had cut away portions of supporting timbers to make an easy entryway for soldiers into the den of the prostitutes from their barracks next door. For several days before the collapse, plaster had begun to fall from the ceilings as the weakened building began to sag. Some merchants, afraid that the building would collapse had removed their goods from the bottom floor the day before. This action fed the rumors that the Federals planned the collapse of the building. Planned or not, Ewing and his officers were clearly negligent in keeping any prisoners in the building. Ewing knew the outrage that would erupt if any deliberate harm came to these southern women under his care. The idea that he ordered the building destroyed with the women inside now appears ridiculous. At the time, the people of Kansas City and Jackson County believed the worst of the rumors. Even decades later the guerrillas believed the collapse was deliberate and the raid on Lawrence was the direct result of the outrage they felt.

The incident in Kansas City was just what Quantrill needed. A few days earlier, he had sent a spy to Lawrence to learn how the city was defended. This fact is proof that he had been planning the raid long before the collapse of the Kansas City jail. His spy reported that a small militia unit and a company of black Union soldiers in camp just outside of town were all that defended Lawrence. Quantrill used this fact and the outrage felt by the people of Jackson County to convince his men that the raid on Lawrence was worth the risk and might even achieve success. Such was the sentiment of the people that more than 350 men and boys joined with Quantrill to raid Lawrence, Kansas. Also joining the expedition was Colonel John Holt who was in Jackson County recruiting for the Confederacy. He brought with him about one hundred raw recruits. With about 450 men, this was the largest group that Quantrill would ever command.

Quantrill managed to get this small army into Kansas almost undetected. When the alarm did go out, he had enough lead-time to get to Lawrence and accomplish his goals. Quantrill ordered his guerrillas to kill every man or boy old enough to hold a gun and loot and burn the homes of Jayhawkers selected from a list provided by Quantrill. Quantrill wanted the town burned to the ground. There have been volumes written about the massacre at Lawrence on August 21, 1863 and I do not intend to rehash it here. The best reliable estimates are that the raiders killed either in cold blood or accidentally, 185 men and teenage boys. Some sources cited the outlandish number of one thousand. The women of Lawrence were the real heroes of the Lawrence massacre and defied the guerrillas at every chance, even while the guerrillas burned their homes and slaughtered their husbands and sons. Amidst the gore and violence, the guerrillas maintained their sacred honor not to harm women and children. After the war some of the ex-guerrillas gave the names of the men who did the majority of the killing in Lawrence. They were Bill Anderson, George Todd, John Jarrette, John Little, Andy McGuire, Bill McGuire, Peyton Long, Richard Kenney, Allen Palmer, Frank James, Arch Clements, Ol Shepherd, Otto Hinton, Andy Blunt, and Harrison Trow. Other sources also name Cole Younger, Larkin Skaggs and a few others. No source mentions Sim Whitsett.

Quantrill's retreat back to Missouri was a desperate fight. Some of the Federal soldiers had marched more than thirty hours in a failed attempt to catch Quantrill before he hit Lawrence. They arrived in time to chase him back to Missouri. The companies of William Gregg and George Todd fought a rear guard action against the exhausted federal troops and the raiders were able to make it back to Missouri with few loses, except for much of the loot they were forced to jettison to stay ahead of the pursuing Federal troops. Until word of the nature of the atrocities committed at Lawrence began to surface, Quantrill was once again a hero of the southern cause. And, as usual, he let it go to his head. He now began signing his dispatches "Colonel Quantrill."

John Edwards claims that after the raid Quantrill named scores of men who were especially brave and determined fighters. This list gives us an idea who of Quantrill's regulars were at Lawrence. Sim Whitsett is in the list. This is Quantrill's list as reported by Edwards:

William Anderson	Tuck Hill	Dick Maddox	Frank Shepherd
William Basham	Woot Hill	George Maddox	George Shepherd
Dick Berry	Dave Hilton	John Maupin	Fletch Taylor
Ike Berry	James Hinds (Hinde)	Tom Maupin	George Todd
Andrew Blunt	Richard Hotie	Andy McGuire	William Tolar
Ben Broomfield	William Hulse	William McGuire	Harrison Trow
Dick Burnes	Frank James	Ben Morrow	Daniel Vaughn
Arch Clements	Jesse James	Wade Morton	Andy Walker
William Chiles	John Jarrett	Henry Noland	George Webb
Sid Creek	Oliver "Ol" Johnson	William Noland	Press Webb
Ike Flannery	Payne Jones	Allen Palmer (Parmer)	Sim Whitsett
William Greenwood	Dick Kinney	Mike Parr	James Wilkinson
William Gregg	John Koger	John Poole	William Woodward
Abe Haller	Albert Lee	Hence Privin	Cave Wyatt
John Hill	James Little	Lafe Privin (Privan)	Dick Yager
Tom Hill	Peyton Long	John Ross	Cole Younger

After reaching the comparative safety of Jackson County, Quantrill disbanded his command and the raiders once again melted into the landscape. For weeks, Federal militia combed the areas of Jackson and Cass Counties looking for guerrillas. When they found them, or those suspected of being guerrillas, they killed them on the spot. They were none too careful about determining a man's guilt or innocence. In fact, Quantrill's band was hardly touched. Many others, some even loyal Union men, paid the price of the Yankee anger over Lawrence. A small group of men riding together on a back road was evidence enough to convict and execute the suspects. Two or three men around a campfire were likewise condemned. If reports of the federal militia commanders were to be believed, they had exterminated the guerrillas responsible for Lawrence by the end of August.

### *General Order Number 11*

General Order Number 11 had been in the making for some time before the Lawrence raid. It directed the depopulation of Jackson, Cass, Bates and parts of Vernon Counties. Its goal was to eliminate the support and shelter the guerrillas found in these counties. The order made no difference between southerner and loyal Union citizen except that those who swore a loyalty oath and could prove their loyalty could relocate within the limits of certain areas securely under Union control. All other citizens must leave their homes with only what they could carry in a single conveyance, if they had one, and remove themselves to southern states or well away from the border with Kansas. Everything, crops, livestock, homes and household goods left behind would be destroyed. Those failing to obey would be arrested and executed as being Confederate spies or guerrillas.

General Order Number 11 was the harshest measure ever taken by the U.S. Government against its citizens. The order originated back east but

General Thomas Ewing was responsible for carrying it out. Ewing issued the order after the Lawrence massacre because he felt he had no other choice. Senator James Lane of Lawrence (who had escaped the massacre in his nightshirt) threatened to have Ewing court-martialed if he failed to issue the order. Ewing was the Union commander responsible for the security of Kansas and as Lane and the citizens of Kansas saw it, he had failed miserably in his duty. Lane was also rabble-rousing for a raid by Kansas militia to wipe out every farm and home in Missouri along the Kansas border. Ewing felt that the order would help defuse this dangerous situation. Many people, even many northerners, severely criticized Ewing for the order but he refused to rescind it. Years later, backlash from this cruel measure helped defeat Ewing's bid to become governor of Ohio.

Simeon's parents, John and Eliza Whitsett, lived about a mile north of Hickman's Mill. Ironically, Hickman's Mill and an area of one mile surrounding it was one of the few areas in Jackson County that was exempt from the order. Perhaps John and Eliza escaped the devastation that befell most of Jackson County. Isaac and Cynthia Whitsett at Lee's Summit certainly did not, nor did Sim's cousin Stewart Whitsett and his family. Evidence indicates that they moved from Lee's Summit to Lafayette County where several Whitsett families lived. Some of the Lafayette County Whitsetts were cousins and the ties may have been close enough for one or more of these families to take them in.

The order brought almost unbearable hardship on the hardworking families of the affected counties but had almost no effect on the guerrillas. In fact, they benefited. Livestock running loose was easily captured for the food, many stores survived the fires and abandoned buildings made for excellent shelter. Although Jackson County swarmed with Federal militia and bands of Jayhawkers, the guerrillas knew the area like the back of their hands and easily eluded patrols looking for them. For the most part, Federal patrols kept to main roads rather than risk ambush from expert Bushwhackers. If they dared venture far from main thoroughfares, they usually paid with their lives. General Order Number 11 was a disaster of major proportions and it failed to accomplish its prime objective.

In the fall of 1863 with the whole of the Federal forces in Missouri after the guerrillas, skirmishes and fights between the Federals and small groups of the guerrillas were constant. Among those mentioned in Edwards' *"Noted Guerrillas"* was a fight at Wellington, in Lafayette County. There, Richard Kenney, John Jarrette, Jesse James and Sim Whitsett attacked a picket post of eight men about a mile from town and annihilated it, cutting them off from town and running them in a "contrary" direction. Not a man escaped.

A company of Federals under the command of a "Dutch" colonel found some of the guerrillas camped along the Independence and Harrisonville road near the P. N. Grinter farm in Jackson County. When the Federals came in sight, the guerrillas mounted their horses and charged the militia. When the smoke cleared, only two Federals remained alive. The two Union soldiers were a couple hundred yards away sitting on their horses cursing the guerrillas and calling them "damned secesh" and daring them to come on. Harrison Trow said

to Sim Whitsett, "Let's give them a little chase. They seem to be so brave." Trow and Whitsett took after them but they would not stand. They broke and ran followed by Trow and Whitsett for about a quarter of a mile down the big road. One was shot and fell off his horse dead, the other one jumped off his horse and ran to the Grinter house. Mrs. Sarah Grinter was in the yard. The militiaman ran to her and pleaded, "Hide me." She put him under a bee gum tree. Sim and Harrison searched but could not find the man and the woman would not tell them where he was (her husband was a sergeant in the Union militia). Trow claimed that Sim bore a grudge against the Grinter name the rest of his life. Sim took a big gold earring worn by the German colonel and later gave it to a girl on Texas Prairie, Missouri.

At some time in 1863, Edwards claimed that Sim Whitsett was wounded while carrying a dispatch from Quantrill to Thomas C. Reynolds, the Confederate Governor of Missouri in exile in Arkansas. Edwards' narrative is often disorganized which make it hard to place events in their proper time frame or context.

Ten men, one of whom was Whitsett, were each carrying a different report. Under the command of George Maddox, they were charged by Quantrill to get these important reports on the military conditions in western Missouri to Governor Reynolds. By the time the men reached Henry County, Missouri the ten were down to eight after two were wounded in encounters with the enemy. Then, the guerrillas ambushed twenty Union troops. Ambushing a superior force seems to me to be a foolhardy move if your mission is to get important messages through enemy lines. Quantrill's men succeeded in routing the Federals but lost one man killed and another seriously wounded and unable to continue. Sim Whitsett was also shot and was only able to ride far enough to find a place of safety. Edwards says, "Whitsett was all nerve, and dash, and rugged endurance but he was human. He closed his lips tightly and gripped his horse with his knees and managed to make five miles painfully before he found a sure asylum; but the five [remaining men] could not tarry. Maddox took his comrade's precious dispatch, blessed him, and bade him good bye..."

### *Baxter Springs Massacre*

About the first of October 1863, Quantrill again called together his troops for the annual march south for the winter. This time, thanks to the Lawrence raid, the raiders were nearly four hundred strong. On October 6, 1863, after traveling several days, they discovered a newly built Yankee fort at Baxter Springs, Kansas directly in their path. Quantrill split his men into two groups with William Gregg and Dave Poole leading one group to attack the fort from one side. Quantrill led the rest of his band around the fort intending to attack it from the opposite side. Gregg and Poole caught the soldiers at the

fort by surprise and several Federals were killed but most were able to make it into the fortress and hold off the attackers.

Quantrill found his own surprise. As he led the rest of his band around the fort, he spotted a Federal column of wagons with a cavalry escort of about 100 soldiers. They appeared to be forming a battle line and Quantrill ordered his men to do the same. Actually, the Union troops were assembling into a review formation. The Union soldiers were the escort for General James Blunt. The General was on his way from western Kansas to take command in Fort Smith, which the Union Army had captured a few weeks earlier. Blunt at first thought the guerrillas, dressed in their usual Union blue, were a welcoming committee from the fort at Baxter Springs, and this was the reason Blunt ordered his men to form in ceremonial ranks. He was unable to hear the sound of the fighting going on at that moment because a ridge stood between him and the fort. Blunt soon became suspicious of the guerrillas. They were not acting like well trained and disciplined cavalry troops. He sent a scout towards the guerrillas who returned in short order with the news that the welcoming committee was in fact guerrillas.

When the nearly four hundred guerrillas charged, Blunt's troops panicked, broke ranks and fled. In one of the wagons were musicians who were part of Blunt's military band. In another wagon was a woman traveling with Blunt's troops to rejoin her sick husband in Arkansas. Blunt put the woman astride a horse, told her to hold on for her life. He grabbed her reins and the pair galloped away as hard as they could. Several guerrillas chased them but their horses were not as fast as the good cavalry mounts Blunt and the woman were riding and the guerrillas were unable to catch them. The guerrillas would not shoot at Blunt for fear of hitting the woman and the pair made their escape. The musicians and cavalry escort were not as fortunate. The bandwagon lost a wheel as the band members tried to make their escape. The guerrillas shot them all, even the twelve-year-old drummer boy. They piled the bodies on top of the wagon and set them a fire. The guerrillas ran down most of the cavalry and shot the soldiers when they tried to surrender. Eighty-five of the one hundred died, most by multiple gunshot wounds. Quantrill was beside himself with glee. He had done what Marmaduke and Shelby were unable to do. He had defeated and nearly captured General Blunt, the man responsible for the Union victories at Cane Hill, Prairie Grove and Van Buren - the man who had taken northwestern Arkansas from the Confederates.

After the massacre was finished, Riley Crawford picked up a Union saber. He hit the flat of the blade across the back of one of the dead cavalrymen, shouting, "Get up, you Yankee s.o.b." To everyone's surprise, the soldier, assuming Riley had discovered his deception, jumped to his feet. Sixteen-year-old Riley shot him point-blank without a word.

Among the spoils, the raiders found Blunt's ceremonial flag, his new uniform with new cavalry boots and his cavalry sword. Even more rewarding for the guerrillas was the whiskey in the canteens of the dead Union soldiers. The guerrillas quickly proceeded to get drunk. Even Quantrill, who rarely drank and had never before been seen intoxicated in front of his men, got drunk.

A week later Quantrill wrote the only official report he ever made and sent it to General Sterling Price at his headquarters at Camp Bragg, Arkansas. He gave a vague description of the fight at Baxter Springs and greatly exaggerated other small skirmishes with Federal militia and Indians during the march south. With his report, he sent along General Blunt's saber, flag and official papers captured at Baxter Springs. Quantrill claimed that Blunt was among those dead, a fact he knew to be untrue. Later, Price wrote to Quantrill urging him to write a report about all of his fighting during the summer of 1863, particularly Lawrence, Kansas. The General was hoping to put to rest the ugly rumors that were circulating about the massacre there and at Baxter Springs. Quantrill never replied.

### *Sherman, Texas*

Late in October 1863 Quantrill's Raiders established their winter camp near Sherman, Texas. Sometime thereafter, Sim visited distant cousin Joseph Haden "Hade" Whitsett near Bonham, Texas. The connection between Sim and Hade Whitsett is vague. If they were related, the connection went back five or more generations. It may be that Sim learned of the Whitsetts living near Bonham after the raiders reached Texas, and paid them a visit to see if there was a family connection. It is also possible that Sim's parents and Hade's parents knew each other when they all lived in Kentucky before the 1830's. One source indicates that Sim's grandfather James Whitsett and Hade's grandfather William Whitsett, both living in Kentucky at the time, served together during the War of 1812. There seems to be evidence to support this claim. It is also possible that Sim did know they were related through a great-great-grandfather. Some families then as well as today know because of family traditions of relationships going back many generations.

Quantrill brought to Sherman 400 undisciplined young men, many hardened by two years of bloody guerrilla war. Unlike regular army troops who can be kept busy with drills and army chores, there was little for the guerrillas to do in Texas. General Ben McCulloch of the Northern District of Texas at Bonham was officially in charge of Quantrill's partisan rangers. McCulloch had no idea what to do with this bunch. McCulloch's commanding officer suggested that he use them to clean up the Bushwhacker problem in McCulloch's district. The problem Bushwhackers were Confederate deserters or outlaws who preyed on the civilian populace along the northern border. At first, it must have seemed a brilliant idea, set Bushwhackers to catch Bushwhackers. Quantrill sent 100 men after a group of the Bushwhackers near McKinney, Texas. They captured 43 of them and immediately hung them on the town square. Soon after, they ambushed and killed 30 more. McCulloch was horrified at the brutal approach Quantrill used in his new job. Quantrill did not take kindly to criticism and abruptly lost interest in solving McCulloch's problems with Bushwhackers

Meanwhile, the guerrillas with little else to do began raising their own hell around Sherman. They engaged in rough and wild horse races and gambling. They got drunk almost every day and occasionally shot up the town. Quantrill may have been an expert at leading guerrillas in war but he was no disciplinarian and it was evident that he had lost what little control he had over his men. Rivalries between factions in Quantrill's camp soon grew into bitter feuds. Worst of all, Quantrill's followers began to fall away like leaves from a dying tree. Bill Anderson left Quantrill's outfit with 65 of the most violent of the guerrillas. William Gregg left to join the regular army after George Todd and two of Todd's men threatened his life. Others left because they became disillusioned with Quantrill and his motives, or because of shame and guilt over the Lawrence raid. Even Cole Younger left for New Mexico and California. This was the last time Cole Younger rode with Quantrill or actively participated in the Civil War. Other guerrillas left the camp in Texas and returned to Missouri.

Before long, robbery and murder was on the increase around Sherman and Quantrill's band was suspected in much of the foul play. Things got so bad that General McCulloch ordered Quantrill arrested but Quantrill managed to escape.

According to Edwards, on the 10th of March 1864, Quantrill and his few remaining guerrillas, comprised of his old guard, broke camp in Texas and returned to Missouri (some sources say it was April, 1864). Rain had dogged Quantrill and his men all the way from Texas and into Johnson County, Missouri. The road was muddy and many of the horses of the guerrillas were worn out. Six miles south of Warrensburg the guerrillas came upon the camp of the Second Colorado Cavalry, two hundred strong. Engaging these Union troops with his weary band would have been suicide. Quantrill ordered any guerrilla riding an unserviceable or "indifferent" horse to hide in the bushes. With his best-mounted and able men Quantrill intended to strike the first force he encountered. Then make a wide and unmistakable trail for the cavalry to follow, away from the others so they could make their way safely back to the rendezvous point in Jackson County. With Quantrill were George Todd, Jesse James, Dick Kinney, George Shepherd, John Barker, James Little, William McGuire, John Jackson, William Hulse, John Ross, George Maddox and Sim Whitsett.

As usual, Quantrill and his men were in Union blue. Skirting Warrensburg, the guerrillas encountered a small body of soldiers hurrying towards Warrensburg. Each group halted within speaking distance. Quantrill spoke first, "We are Colorado troops going west on special duty, and you?"

"Missouri militia under Lieutenant Nash in route to Warrensburg," replied the lieutenant. One of the militia troops implored his leader to stay back because he suspected Quantrill and his men to be guerrillas. Nash ignored the warning and seven approached the guerrilla. He immediately paid for his mistake with his life. Six others died at the hands of Jesse James, Hulse, Maddox, Shepherd and Ross. The cautious man who kept his distance escaped on his horse over a hill.

The real Colorado cavalry were soon after Quantrill. The road was muddy but off the road was worse. Quantrill and his small group managed to stay ahead and skirmished with the pursuing cavalry at every chance. At sunset the guerrillas found themselves trapped between an infantry unit waiting in ambush for them and the cavalry on their rear. Quantrill and his men turned and charged at the cavalry, the only choice open to them. Just as the guerrillas were turning into some timber the girth strap on William McGuire's saddle broke and he was thrown headfirst into a tree. McGuire staggered to his feet while the guerrillas held off the cavalry. The guerrillas escaped but only Quantrill and Todd came through uninjured. This is the second account that contradicts the source that said that Sim came through the war without a scratch.

At some point during this time George Todd forced Quantrill to admit in front of his men that he was afraid of Todd. This loss of face and lack of courage was unacceptable to these fearless guerrillas. From that time on Todd became the real leader of Quantrill's remaining old guard. Quantrill remained in camp only because Todd tolerated him. He never again could command the loyalty of his guerrillas. His days as a leader in the fight on the western border were over.

Guerrilla activity resumed with a vengeance in the ravaged counties of western Missouri, but now it was lead entirely by men like Bloody Bill Anderson, George Todd, Dave Poole and a few others. Quantrill was no longer a factor. With Quantrill deposed, his former lieutenants acted for the most part independent of each other. When the guerrillas returned to Missouri they found that General Ewing had been replaced and that many of the people of Jackson and Cass counties had returned to their homes. Now, however, few people were willing to hide or help them. Having lost everything when Jackson and Cass counties were depopulated, the people in the border counties were in no position to supply the guerrillas even if they wanted. Bloody Bill Anderson took his group north of the Missouri River while Todd and the other guerrilla groups moved their activities further east.

Bloody Bill Anderson earned his nickname and reputation during the summer of 1864. If he had not clearly displayed the tendency before that summer, it was now apparent he was a pathological serial killer. Most of the men who followed him seemed to be of the same evil temperament. They killed without mercy and "paroled" their prisoners by sending them to their graves. Anderson's group terrorized the counties north of the Missouri River. They also began taking the scalps of their victims and decorated their bridals and saddles with the grizzly souvenirs. Some have explained Anderson's behavior as revenge for the deaths of his sisters. I think this theory is held by Anderson's apologists who refuse to accept his true nature.

In the middle of September Todd and his command crossed into Clay County north of the river near Liberty. On September 16, 1864 Todd was well into Ray County. A citizen informed Todd that a company of forty-five militia was stationed at Shaw's blacksmith shop in the northeastern part of the county. Todd selected Dick Kinney, John Jackson, Andy Walker, Dan Vaughn, Andy

McGuire, Frank and Jesse James, Sim Whitsett, Ol Shepherd, Ben Morrow, Hence Privin, Harrison Trow and Silas "Cy" Gordon as an advance unit and placed the under the command of John Thraikill. The advance party was to make seven miles an hour and stay half-a-mile ahead of Todd's group.

Within two hours the advance group was within a mile of the militia camp. The Federals were camped in a black oak grove with a cornfield on one side and a meadow on the other. A wide lane ran between the two fields. Todd's entire guerrilla band emerged into the open and entered the lane at a walk. The militia mistook them for friends and let them advance unchallenged to within two hundred yards of the camp. Someone let out a rebel yell and the guerrillas charged. In the front rank George Todd, John Thraikill, Andy Walker, John Jackson and Dick Kinney rode abreast. In the second rank came Sim Whitsett, Hi George, Ol and Frank Shepherd, and Ben Morrow. In the third came one of the Hudspeth brothers, John Koger and Andy McGuire, followed by James Hendricks, William Gregg, Cy Gordon, Frank and Jesse James, Hugh and William Archie, and William Hulse. Ten of the militia were killed immediately in the camp, the others running into the cornfield. The guerrillas hunted them down like game animals and killed them as they flushed them from their cover. Frank and Jesse James with John Jackson and Dick Kinney flushed four out at once and thinking they had killed them all rode on. However, one was very much alive and rose up and shot Jackson in the back with a one-ounce ball from a Belgium musket. As Jackson fell from his horse Jesse James killed the militiaman with two shots to the head. Jackson died soon after the battle. According to Edwards, thirty-eight Federals were killed with only the one loss to the guerrillas. By the fall of 1864 these guerrillas had become completely merciless and killing was routine. They killed men with no more thought given to it than to killing wild game.

### *Fayette, Missouri*

Todd and Anderson wanted to attack the federal garrison at Fayette. Quantrill was against the plan because the town was heavily defended and the attack would cost too many lives. Anderson told Quantrill that they were going to attack Fayette no matter what and Quantrill could come along or he could hide in the woods like a coward. Quantrill agreed to go but would take no part in leading the raid.

On September 24, the raiders rode into Fayette dressed in federal uniforms. Their disguise was effective until one of the raiders saw a black Union soldier and fired at him. Then all hell broke loose. The guerrillas charged the blockhouse on the northern edge of town.

Frank James recalled the fight. "We charged up against a blockhouse made of railroad ties filled with port holes and then charged back again. The blockhouse was filled with federal troops and it was like charging a stone wall only this stone wall belched forth lead."

During the assault, Ol Johnson was hit and fatally wounded and his body lay on a rise a short distance from the blockhouse. Todd asked for someone to go get the body and drag it to safety. Sim Whitsett, Dick Kinney and Frank James volunteered. The three men made it to the rise but were pinned down by the heavy gunfire coming from the blockhouse.

"We were in plain view of the federals and they simply peppered us with bullets. We got as close to the ground as we could. I was mightily scared. It was the worst fight I ever had. I knew if we raised up we would expose ourselves to the fire of the Yankees and we couldn't stay still."

Somehow, they were able to wrap the body in a blanket and pull it out of the maelstrom of lead. "I tell you," Frank said, "pride makes most of us do many things we wouldn't do otherwise. Many men would run away in a battle if the army wasn't watching them."

Finally, Todd and Anderson realized the futility of the fight and the guerrillas withdrew. Quantrill again left with his few loyal followers and went north of the Missouri River. Fayette was the most costly fight the guerrillas had ever suffered. Eighteen raiders were killed and more than forty were wounded.

### *The Centralia Massacre*

Early on September 27, 1864 Anderson and his guerrillas rode into Centralia, Missouri dressed in federal uniforms. The town consisted of a dozen or so homes, a few stores and two hotels. All morning Anderson's guerrillas looted the houses and stores in town and what plunder they could not carry or had no use for, they destroyed. They also got roaring drunk. At eleven o'clock a stagecoach arrived in town. The guerrillas immediately robbed the passengers of their valuables. A short time later, a westbound train arrived in town. Anderson's men threw railroad ties on the tracks and forced the train to stop. They then swarmed through the cars robbing the passengers and the baggage car. Young Jesse James was with Anderson at Centralia and received his first lesson in train robbery.

Among the passengers were twenty-five unarmed Union soldiers on furlough because of wounds or illness. Anderson's men forced the soldiers off the train and ordered them to remove their uniforms. They took one sergeant prisoner in hopes of exchanging him later for one of Anderson's men held by the federals. Then, they murdered the rest. Finally, they set fire to the train station and the train. After the carnage was finished, Anderson led his men out of Centralia to the camp of George Todd a short distance from town. Sim Whitsett and Frank James were in Todd's camp and did not participate in the massacre in Centralia.

About a half hour after Anderson left Centralia, Major A.V.E. Johnson rode into town leading 147 raw recruits of the 39<sup>th</sup> Missouri State Militia. None of the men were trained soldiers and they rode commandeered farm horses and were armed with old muzzle loading Enfield muskets. Johnson was outraged

when he learned of the murdered Union soldiers. He was determined to track down the Bushwhackers. Leaving his better judgment and thirty-five of his men in town to help restore order, the militia rode out with 112 farm boys to do battle with Anderson's seasoned, war hardened guerrillas.

Scouts for the guerrilla bands spotted the advancing Union troops and rode into camp to warn Anderson and Todd. Anderson sent out several men to act as decoys. These men were to retreat as soon as the Federals saw them, and lure the Federals back into the main body of the guerrillas. The guerrillas, some two hundred strong, formed an arc a quarter of a mile wide at the base of a sloping hill where the Union troops could not see them until they reached the top of the hill.

When Major Johnson and his recruits reached the crest of the hill, Johnson ordered the troops to dismount. In a by-the-book maneuver every fourth man remained in the rear to hold the horses while the rest formed a tight battle line no more than twenty yards wide. The guerrillas were dumbfounded by what they saw.

"The fools are going to fight us on foot!" one of the guerrillas exclaimed. "God help them."

Anderson shouted, "When we charge, break through the line and keep straight on for their horses." Then, 200 guerrillas charged up the hill.

"I can see them now yonder on that ridge," Frank James told a reporter years later.

The guerrillas laid low over their horses' necks. The first and only volley the federal soldiers were able to fire went mostly over the heads of the charging Bushwhackers. Only three guerrillas were hit, two of them were riding on either side of Frank James. Also riding along side of Frank James was Sim Whitsett.

In a second or two the guerrillas were on the federals. Many of the federal soldiers were at fix bayonets while others were biting off their cartridges preparing to reload their muskets. The charging guerrillas shot every man in head. Then they charged on after the men with the horses, who mounted and ran for town. The 35 soldiers in town joined the survivors of the battle and the guerrillas chased them for five more miles to the town of Sturgeon before they broke off the pursuit.

One hundred and fifty-five Union soldiers lay dead. Anderson's men beheaded several and scalped others. Anderson's guerrillas mutilated most of the bodies. It was the bloodiest day for the guerrillas since Lawrence and Baxter Springs.

### *Attack On the Bordello*

It is difficult to accurately place these events in an appropriate time frame. Edwards seems to indicate that they occurred shortly after the Centralia massacre, which does not seem possible. According to the story it

was very cold and icy when one of the guerrilla leaders ordered Press Webb to take with him Sim Whitsett, George Maddox, Harrison Trow and Noah Webster and scout in the vicinity of Kansas City. Webb and his men were to learn of the comings and goings of the Federal troops in and around Kansas City. If this event really occurred it must have happened very early in the spring of 1864 shortly after their return from Texas, or very late in the fall of 1864 before the guerrillas again returned to Sherman, Texas.

The weather was very cold. Some snow had fallen the week before and melted, and the ground was frozen and glazed with ice making traveling difficult. The Federal cavalry remained comparatively inactive but the guerrillas kept up their almost daily raids.

As Webb and his men were on their way to Kansas City, they overtook two Kansas infantrymen five miles west of Independence. The two soldiers were returning from a successful foraging expedition. One had a goose, two turkeys, a sack of dried apples, some yarn socks, a basket full of eggs and the half of a cheese; while the other was carrying a huge bag filled with butter, sausages, roasted and unroasted coffee, the head of a recently killed hog, some half-cooked biscuits, more cheese and a peck of green apples. As Webb and his four men rode up the foragers halted and set their loads on the ground to rest.

The tale and the dialog Edwards used to tell this story was typical of his florid style. I suspect that the conversations were mostly fabrications and typical of his "reporting." I take this entire account with a large grain of salt. This is the story as told in *"Noted Guerrillas."*

Webb remarked that the soldiers were not armed and asked why they ventured so far from camp without guns.

"There is no need of a gun," was the reply, "because the fighting rebels are all out of the country and the stay-at-homes are all subjugated. What we want we take, and we generally want a good deal."

"A blind man might see that," Webb replied, "but suppose some of Quantrill's cut-throats were to ride up to you as we have done, stop to talk with you as we have done, draw out a pistol as I am doing this minute, cover you thus, and bid you surrender now as I do, you infernal thief and son of a thief, what would you say then?"

"Say!" - a look of surprise yet cool indifference came over the Jayhawker's face, "what could I say but that you are the cut-throat and I am the victim? Caught fairly, I can understand the balance. Be quick."

The Jayhawker rose to his feet, lifted his hat and faced without a tremor the pistol that covered him.

"I cannot kill you so," Webb faltered, "nor do I know whether I can kill you at all. We must take a vote first. To shoot an unarmed man, and a brave man at that, is awful."

There amid the spoils five men sat down in judgment upon the two soldiers. Whitsett held the hat and Webster fashioned the ballots. No arguments were had. The five self-appointed jurors were five among Quantrill's best and bravest. They had always been ready to fight to the death and they

had done their share of killing. One by one the guerrillas put into Whitsett's hat a piece of paper with his vote. Then, Harrison Trow drew the ballots one by one and read the verdict. After four ballots the vote was two for death and two for life.

Whitsett cried out, "One more ballot to be opened. Let it tell the tale, Trow, and make an end to this thing."

Trow drew the ballot and read, "Life!"

The younger Jayhawker fell upon his knees and the elder exclaimed, "Thank God, how glad my wife will be."

Webb breathed a sigh of relief and put his revolver back in its scabbard. The verdict surprised him, but the two men, Jayhawkers though they were and loaded with spoils from plundered farmhouses, were free to go.

As they rode away, the guerrillas did not discuss the virtue of the parole. At the two extremes of their warfare, there was either life or death. Having chosen deliberately between the two, they knew no middle ground.

The guerrillas approached within sight of Kansas City from the old Independence road and made a complete circle around it. They entered Westport even though there was a Federal garrison there. They learned of the plans and number of the Federal forces on the border. They then passed down between the Kansas River and West Kansas City. They killed three foragers and captured two six-mule wagons near the site of the gas works. They gathered up five head of excellent horses, and concealed themselves for two days in the Blue Bottom, watching a notorious bawdy house frequented by Federal soldiers.

Normally, eleven women belonged to the bordello but this night there were five additional women there from another house. There were twenty males in the house, including two lieutenants, a sergeant major and other soldiers from an Iowa regiment, and four civilians. Webb's attacking column, not much longer than a yardstick, was composed of the original detail of five men.

The night was dark. The nearest timber to the house was over two hundred yards from the house. There was ice on everything. The horses' iron shod feet tramping over the frozen ground reverberated like artillery wheels. At the timberline, the men dismounted and tied the horses. Maddox suggested that one man be left in charge of the horses, but Webb overruled him.

As they crept up to the house in single file, a huge dog attacked Harrison Trow. His barking and growling was so loud that a man and woman came to the door of the house and ordered the dog to devour the intruder. The dog leaped at Trow's throat and Trow shot him dead.

In a moment, the house emptied itself of its male occupants who explored the darkness. They found the dog with the bullet through its head and searched everywhere for the shooter but saw no one. Finally, they returned to the house.

As for the guerrillas, as soon as Trow shot the dog, they rushed back to their horses, mounted them and waited. A pistol shot, unless explained, is

always sinister to soldiers. No one can ignore it. Fighting men never fire at nothing. A pistol shot says in so many words, "Look out, something is about!"

The Federals heard this one for sure, but they failed to interpret its significance and they paid for it.

Webb waited an hour in the cold, listening. No one approached their position and no one from the house searched any further than where the light from the windows shone. Since no alarm was raised, he dismounted with his men and again approached the house.

The house, a rickety frame building, was two stories high, with two windows on the north and two on the south. George Maddox looked in one of these windows and counted fourteen men, some very drunk and some sober and confidential with the women. None were vigilant. Six of the men were upstairs.

At first the guerrillas had trouble coming up with a plan of action. All the Federals were armed, and twenty armed men holding a house against five are generally apt, whatever else may happen, to get the best of the fighting.

"We cannot fire through the windows," said Webb, "women are in the way."

"Certainly," replied Whitsett, "we do not war upon women."

"We cannot get the drop on them," added Trow, "because we cannot get to them."

Replied Maddox, "I have an idea which will simplify matters. On the south there is a stable half full of plunder. It will burn like pitch pine. The wind is from the north and it will blow away from the house, otherwise I would be against it. Not even a badger should be turned out of its hole tonight, much less a lot of women."

The guerrillas agreed to the plan and put a match to the hay and bundles of fodder. Before the fire had increased perceptibly, the five men warmed their hands and laughed. They were getting the frost out of their fingers to shoot well, they said. A delicate trigger touch is necessary to a dead shot. All of a sudden, there was a great flare of flames. "Fire!" a shriek from the women and a shout from the men. The north wind drove full head upon the stable. The fire roared like some wild beast in pain.

The Federals rushed to the rescue. Not all caught up their arms as they hurried out - not all were even dressed.

The women looked from the doors and windows of the dwelling, thus made certain the killing that followed. Beyond the glare of the burning outhouse, and massed behind a fence fifty paces to the right of the burning stable, the guerrillas fired five deadly volleys into the surprised and terrified men. The soldiers scattered, panic-stricken and cut to pieces. Those left alive regained the shelter of the house.

Eight were killed where they stood about the fire and two were mortally wounded and died afterwards. One was wounded and disabled and later quit the service. Five were severely or slightly wounded and recovered. Four were unhurt. The soldiers reported that night in Kansas City that Quantrill had attacked them with two hundred men, and was driven off, hurt and badly

beaten, after three-quarters of an hour's fight. Actually, Press Webb and his four men did what work was done in less than five minutes.

Somewhere in this story is probably a grain of truth. Probably there was a reconnaissance mission to Kansas City. It is reasonable to assume that is true, and also the attack on the bawdy house. There is at least one other report of a similar incident. The story about the Jayhawkers is hard for me to believe. I think it was one of Edwards' attempts to portray the guerrillas as gallant heroes; however, the account seems out of character for the guerrillas, especially at this point in the war.

### *The Arrow Rock Fight*

This account is placed in Edwards' book immediately after the Press Webb story. Its actual time frame is not known. Edwards also mistakenly labeled this fight as the "Arrock" fight.

Todd and Dave Poole went east through Fayette County to Saline County and then to Arrow Rock, with one hundred and twenty men to avenge the death of three guerrillas who were captured by the Federals commanded by a Captain Sims. The men who captured the guerrillas made them dig their own graves and shot them and rolled them into them. Todd and his men caught Sims and his men playing marbles in the street, unaware of any danger. Todd's men rode slowly into town in Federal uniforms, Sim Whitsett in advance.

"Boys," Sim said, referring to the marbles, "I will knock the middle man out for you."

Whitsett fired the first shot, which was followed by a furious shoot-out. The Federals surrendered in a very few minutes. According to Edwards, the guerrillas killed twenty-five men, wounded thirty-five and had only one man, Dick Yager, wounded. Ben Morrow and Harrison Trow captured Captain Sims in an upstairs bedroom of a hotel. He died with a bullet through his head. Edwards claimed the guerrillas captured one hundred and fifty men and swore them out of service.

### *The Beginning of The End*

Late in September 1864 General Sterling Price invaded Missouri in the last Confederate raid of the war into Missouri. He sent orders to the guerrillas to disrupt communications, destroy railroad lines and bridges, and generally keep the Federals busy. Significantly, the order was sent directly to George Todd, not Quantrill. For most of the summer Quantrill had taken no part in guerrilla activities. However, with the news of Price's invasion Quantrill reunited with Todd and Anderson.

Shortly after the massacre at Centralia the guerrillas under Todd and Anderson linked up with Sterling Price's army. Whitsett was once again part of General Jo Shelby's brigade. Price ordered Todd and Anderson to cross the Missouri River and disrupt major lines of communications and transportation. This they failed to do.

On October 22, 1864 the guerrillas, Sim Whitsett among them, participated in the battle of Westport against Kansas militia commanded by the old Jayhawker Jennison. The battle ended in the defeat of Shelby's troops. This was the last major action that Sim saw fighting as a Confederate soldier, although he continued to participate in minor skirmishes.

On October 24, two days after the battle of Westport George Todd was shot by a Union sniper. He died a few hours later. Whitsett then joined the small group of guerrillas operating under the command of Daniel Vaughn. Five days after that Bloody Bill Anderson was killed in an ambush. After photographing his corpse and parading it through Richmond, Missouri, the federal militiamen beheaded Anderson and placed his head atop a telegraph pole in retaliation for the atrocities at Centralia. Later, Anderson's head and body were buried in an unmarked grave. One hundred years later, a headstone was obtained for Bloody Bill under a program by the U.S. government to provide grave markers for all U.S. military personnel, including those who fought for the Confederacy.

Price's army was once again defeated and he and Shelby were pushed back out of Missouri. In November Quantrill and a small group of guerrillas including Frank James left Missouri for Kentucky. Some believe that Quantrill planned to go to Virginia and was formulating a plan to assassinate Lincoln. Quantrill's men disguised themselves as federal militia and successfully crossed the Mississippi into Kentucky where they were involved in small guerrilla raids. In May 1865, Quantrill was severely wounded when he and his men were trapped in a barn. Quantrill was paralyzed with a bullet in his spine. He died from his wounds a month later in a hospital in Louisville, Kentucky.

In November 1864 many of the guerrillas who did not go to Kentucky returned to their winter quarters near Sherman, Texas. Among them was Jesse James who had decided against following his older brother to Kentucky with Quantrill. Sim Whitsett was also with those who went back to Texas. William E. Whitsett, brother of Hade Whitsett, many years later in a letter to Hade stated that he met Sim Whitsitt (sic) when General Shelby discharged his men after the defeat in Missouri and many of the guerrillas were getting ready to return to Missouri. Even though William Whitsett was writing to his younger brother Hade (many years after the fact), it is likely that it was Hade who introduced Sim to his older brother, since Hade and Sim apparently met the first time the winter before.

In the spring of 1865 the guerrillas returned to their old stomping grounds in Missouri. Now things were much different. The state crawled with federal troops and the guerrillas could no longer rely on support from friendly civilians. Many southerners had suffered greatly because of their support earlier in the war. The draconian measures the federals had taken in western

Missouri against southern supporters had left most destitute. Jayhawkers had destroyed their homes, crops and livestock and the land was scorched. The counties of western Missouri became known as the burnt district. Most civilians were unwilling or unable to provide even minor aid to the Bushwhackers.

General Robert E. Lee surrendered in April 1865 but the guerrillas continued to operate for a period of several weeks. In May 1865, small groups of the guerrillas began to inquire of the federal authorities of the possibility of surrender. The terms they were given required the guerrillas to surrender their arms, swear an oath of allegiance and return to peaceful pursuits. The penalty for not surrendering was death. Any guerrillas caught bearing arms after the terms of surrender were published were to be shot on sight.

### *Post War Years*

Sim Whitsett surrendered at Lexington on May 23, 1865 and took the amnesty oath. Many unionists believed that the guerrillas should be punished, not forgiven. Many were harassed, threatened and some were killed after taking the amnesty oath. Many guerrillas left Missouri and went to Texas. Apparently, Sim went back to Texas immediately after the war. A little later he went to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and worked as a teamster crossing the plains to as far as Fort Laramie, Wyoming. A year or two of that he returned home in Missouri, which still showed the scars of the war.

Back in Jackson County Sim married Martha M. Hall on January 6, 1870. He joined the church of his parents in Lee's Summit where he made his home. He and Martha had a daughter Mary who died in 1872 when she was about a year and a half old. Daughters Helen (born April 7, 1873) and Annie E. Whitsett followed. Martha died in 1878 and on February 26, 1880 Simeon remarried, to Margaret Angelina (Lena) Arnold in Cass County, Missouri. They had three children, Minnie, born in 1882, Mary, born in 1884 and John Lee, born in 1886.

Bob Ford killed Jesse James in St. Joseph, Missouri on April 4, 1882. Harrison Trow in his memoirs (the only part that appears authentic) states that the governor of Missouri asked him to come to St. Joseph to identify the body. He gathered several other former guerrillas and they traveled to St. Joseph. One source states that Sim Whitsett was the person who actually identified the body of Jesse James. Likely, it was this group of old Bushwhackers together that performed that duty.

In August 1885 Sim attended a reunion of Shelby's brigade at Higginsville, Missouri. He listed his rank as Private and his unit as Company E, 2<sup>nd</sup> Missouri Cavalry and his hometown of Lee's Summit. Simeon was part of Co. E either during his time in Arkansas during the winter of 1862-63, or when he was with Shelby near the end of the war.

The first reunion of Quantrill's Raiders was held at Blue Springs, Missouri on May 11, 1888. Simeon was one of fourteen men attending the reunion. Reunions were held regularly from then until the 1920's and Simeon was a

faithful attendant. Pictures were usually taken of the old guerrillas at the reunions so it is likely there are several unidentified photos of Simeon in addition to the one we know about (above).

According to obituaries for the Younger brothers, Simeon was a pallbearer at the funeral of Bob Younger in Lee's Summit on September 20, 1890 and Jim Younger's funeral in Lee's Summit in 1902. Bob had died in a Minnesota prison of tuberculosis and Jim had committed suicide in Minnesota after he was paroled from prison. It is apparent that Simeon was close to the Younger family. One source states that Simeon was a pallbearer for Jesse James' re-interment in 1902. I'm hoping to find hard evidence of this fact. In about 1905 Sim and his family left Missouri for the panhandle of Texas, "because Missouri was becoming too crowded." When the 1910 U.S. Census was taken, Sim owned a home on the farm of his son, John Lee Whitsett in Hereford, Deaf Smith County, Texas. About 1925 Sim moved further west to Rosebud, New Mexico which today is Amistad. James Simeon Whitsett died in Lee's Summit, Missouri on May 22, 1928 at the age of eighty-three, probably at the home of his daughter Helen. He is buried in Kansas City, Missouri in the Forest Hill Cemetery on Troost Street, Block 21, Lot 101, space B, which was purchased by his daughter Helen Sweeny (or Swaney). Sim's second wife Lena, who suffered from palsy, apparently stayed in Texas when Sim moved to New Mexico. She deeded her son John land about seventeen miles north of Hereford and then lived out her life with him. She died on August 26, 1926 and is buried at West Park Cemetery in Hereford, Texas.

Sim's daughter Minnie May was born on February 27, 1882 on the family farm in Jackson County, Missouri north of Lee's Summit. She trained at Warrensburg Normal School and taught school in southern Jackson County until Sim moved the family to Texas. Her future husband Ernest B. Pearce remained in Missouri and their courtship continued by mail until they were married in Hereford, Texas. The couple returned to Missouri and built a home in Pleasant Hill. They lived there until failing health forced them to give up housekeeping in 1964. Minnie died on February 7, 1968. Ernest died on June 14, 1965. They are buried in the family plot in Pleasant Hill Cemetery.

Daughter Mary Louise was born at Hickman's Mill, Missouri on September 21, 1884. She married Henry Lee Goats and the couple lived on their ranch in Hayden, New Mexico. She was also a teacher and a hand crafter of embroidery. She died on December 11, 1948 in Tucumcari, New Mexico. Henry who was born on November 29, 1863 near Brownwood, Texas died at his ranch home in Hayden on February 9, 1941. The couple is buried at Clayton, Union County, New Mexico.

Son John Lee Whitsett was born on February 27, 1886 in Jackson County, Missouri. After his father took the family to Texas John farmed land near Hereford. The family still owns three sections of land near Vega, Texas that are today farmed by the Strafuss family. John lived in Wichita Falls, Texas and died there on January 23, 1980. His wife Lena died in 1965. They are buried in Arlington in the Moore Cemetery.

## *Postscript*

After I completed this manuscript, a couple of sources were brought to my attention. The first is, "Jesse James, The Man And The Myth" by Marley Brant (copyright 1998). The other is "The Rise and Fall of Jesse James" by Robertus Love (copyright 1925). Both of these books have clear details of how Sim Whitsett was a very close friend of the James family and how he was a pallbearer at Jesse James funeral as well as a couple of the Younger brothers.

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Connelley, William E., *Quantrill and the Border Wars*," Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1910 (Pageant Book Company, New York, 1956). *I believe Connelley's book was the first to give a mostly unbiased, factual history of Quantrill. Some of Connelley's points may be controversial, but the book is highly regarded even today. A few of the old guerrillas were still alive when Connelley wrote "Border Wars." Connelley did not mention Sim Whitsett, but when the book was republished in 1956 the new edition contained a photograph of the 1920 Quantrill reunion and the caption under the picture identifies Sim Whitsett (see photo above) as the man sitting behind Jesse E. James, Jr.*

Barton, O. S., *"Three Years With Quantrill A true Story Told by His Scout John McCorkle,"* Armstrong Herald Print, Armstrong, MO, 1914, (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, OK). *This book is based on McCorkle's memoirs. McCorkle was considered an honest and reliable source of information about Quantrill's Raiders. It was written many years after the fact and many of the details do not always fit neatly with Edwards' accounts in "Noted Guerrillas."*

Burch, John P., *"Charles W. Quantrell A True History of His Guerrilla Warfare on The Missouri and Kansas Border During the Civil War of 1861 to 1865, As Told By Captain Harrison Trow"* (1923). *This book is the embodiment of the word "plagiarism." Whole sections of this book were copied verbatim from John N. Edwards, "Noted Guerrillas" and then presented as the personal memories of Harrison Trow as told to Burch. Burch's book has nothing about Sim Whitsett that was not copied from "Noted Guerrillas." I list the book here only because it was the first one I discovered that mentioned Sim Whitsett. It amuses me that Burch even copied Edwards' mistake about Quantrill's name, calling him Charles W. Quantrell, rather than William Clarke Quantrill. When Burch's book was published in 1923 there was no longer much confusion about Quantrill's given name. The spelling "Quantrell" is sometimes accepted (but wrong) even today; however, he was never known as Charles William Quantrell, except maybe as an occasional alias in his pre-war years and in dime novels of the time.*

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Helen Eller, descendant of James S. Whitsett, multiple correspondences between April 2005 and June 2007. Helen also shared with me material she had collected.