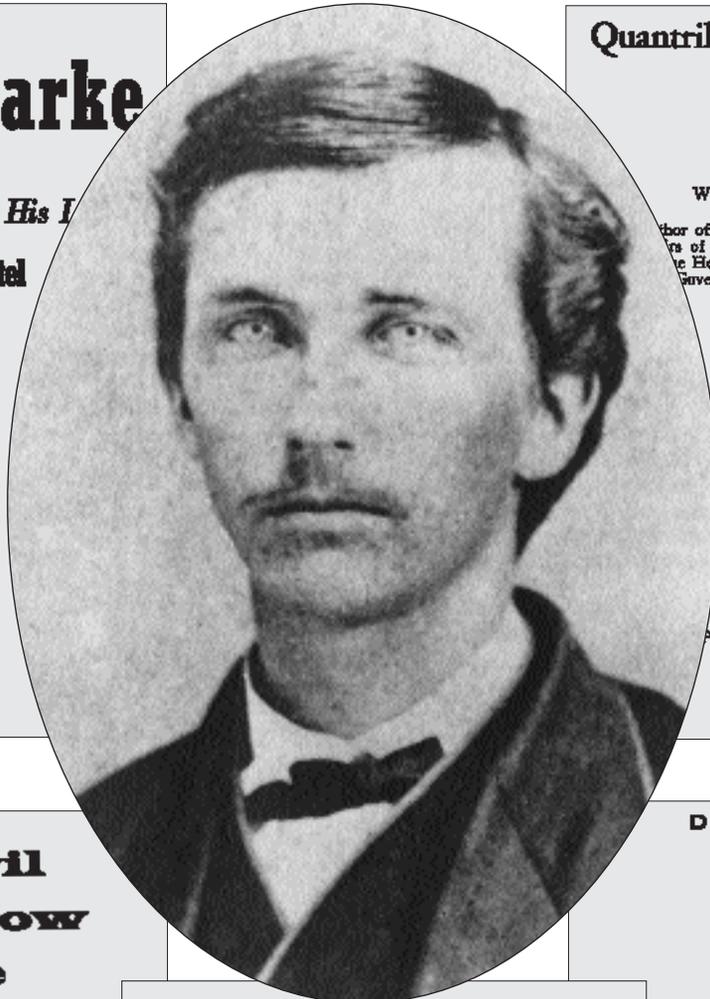


William Clarke Quantrill:

*His Life
and Times by Albert Castel*

Frederick Fell, Inc., Publishers



Quantrill and the Border Wars

By
WILLIAM ELSEY CONNELLEY

Author of "Doniphan's Expedition, Mexican War,"
"Adventures of John James Ingalls," "Wyandott Folk-Lore,"
"The Hockewelder Narrative," "The Provisional
Government of Nebraska Territory," etc.

Introduction
by
HOMER CROY

PAGEANT BOOK COMPANY
NEW YORK
1956

The Devil Knows How to Ride

*The True Story of
William Clarke Quantrill and His
Confederate Raiders*

Edward E. Leslie


Random House
New York

NOTED GUERRILLAS,

OR THE

WARFARE OF THE BORDER.

BEING A HISTORY OF THE LIVES AND ADVENTURES OF

QUANTRILL, BILL ANDERSON, GEORGE TODD, DAVE FOOTE,
ELSPETH TAYLOR, PETERSON LEWIS, OLL SHEPHERD,
ARCE CLEMENTE, JOHN MASTEN, STICK AND
WOLF HILL, W. G. GIBSON, THOMAS MAIL-
ER, THE JAMES BROTHERS, THE
YOUNGER BROTHERS,
ARRENE MOODY,

AND NUMEROUS OTHERS WELL KNOWN

GUERRILLAS OF THE WEST.

BY

JOHN E. EDWARDS,

Author of "Gibby and His Men," "Gibby's Expedition to Mexico," etc.

ILLUSTRATED

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BRYAN, BRAND & COMPANY.
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1877.

DUANE SCHULTZ



QUANTRILL'S WAR

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
WILLIAM CLARKE QUANTRILL
1837-1865


ST. MARTIN'S PRESS NEW YORK

A “Fiend in Human Shape”?

William Clarke Quantrill and His Biographers

by Barry A. Crouch

On Friday morning, August 21, 1863, a band of 440 men, comprising William C. Quantrill’s 150 man contingent, 40 men under William T. “Bloody Bill” Anderson, Andy Blunt with 100, another 100 or so recruits commanded by Confederate Colonel John Holt, and 50 locals from Bates and Cass Counties (Missouri), entered Lawrence, Kansas. This group, the “largest such force ever assembled under one command during the entire Civil War” according to Albert Castel, demolished Lawrence, a town of three thousand to four thousand residents (second in size to Leavenworth). Edward E. Leslie estimates 200 killed, which left behind 85 widows, 250 orphans, and two million dollars worth of destroyed property, including 182 buildings and 100 residences.¹

The leader of the raid, William Clarke Quantrill, has been the scourge of writers on Kansas–Missouri history and has fascinated a whole host of historians. A tantalizing and elusive character, Quantrill has hypnotized investigators for the past century or so. Born in 1837 as Andrew Jackson left the presidency and dead shortly

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The author expresses his thanks to his son “Bear” for his editorial expertise and to the reviewers of *Kansas History* for their timely comments.

1. Albert Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill: His Life and Times* (New York: Frederick Fell, 1962), 124–25; Edward L. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride: The True Story of William Clarke Quantrill and His Confederate Raiders* (New York: Random House, 1996), 199–200, 237. The most complete and thorough account of the Lawrence raid is Thomas Goodrich, *Bloody Dawn: The Story of the Lawrence Massacre* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1991); see also Goodrich, *Black Flag: Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861–1865* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). Richard S. Brownlee, *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy: Guerrilla Warfare in the West, 1861–1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1958), 121, 124, confirmed the death and property statistics of Goodrich and Leslie but claimed that Holt had 104 recruits and “took no part in the massacre and protected several men.” Most writers agree with this assertion. See also William Elsey Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars* (1910; reprint, New York: Pageant Book Co., 1956), 308–95; Burton J. Williams, “Quantrill’s Raid on Lawrence: A Question of Complicity,” *Kansas Historical Quarterly* 34 (Summer 1968), 143–49; Duane Schultz, *Quantrill’s War: The Life and Times of William Clarke Quantrill, 1837–1865* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996), 144–213; Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 25–26, 206–7. The folklore surrounding this event is dealt with in Thomas D. Isern and Mark D. Weeks, “‘Quantrill’s Raid on Lawrence:’ From Disaster Song to Outlaw Ballad,” *Mid-America Folklore* 14 (Fall 1986): 1–14. For sources on Anderson see Elmer L. Pigg, “Belated Funeral of ‘Bloody Bill’ Anderson,” *Frontier Times* 30 (January 1953): 48–49; Pigg, “Bloody Bill, Noted Guerrilla of the Civil War,” *Trail Guide* 1 (December 1956): 17–28; Castel, “They Called Him ‘Bloody Bill,’” *Journal of the West* 3 (April 1964): 233–42; Donald R. Hale, *They Called Him Bloody Bill: The Life of William Anderson, Missouri Guerrilla* (N.P.: privately printed, 1998). The Hale publication has gone through various editions and titles and generally is only available from the author. The most recent study on Anderson is Castel and Goodrich, *Bloody Bill Anderson: The Short, Savage Life of a Civil War Guerrilla* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1998), who do not cite any of the current Quantrill secondary material but have based the book upon new primary sources. It probably is as close to a definitive biography as we are likely to find of this notorious guerrilla. Quantrill and Anderson intensely disliked each other.

after Lincoln's assassination in 1865, Quantrill blazed a trail across the inner section of the nation, causing death, destitution, and depression. Many amateurs and professionals have written about Quantrill from a variety of circumstances, opinions, and perspectives, all controversial. The appearance of two relatively new biographies provides an opportunity to reassess the role of this most famous of American guerrillas.²

Five major biographies focus upon William Clarke Quantrill. John N. Edwards published the first in 1877 followed by William Elsey Connelley (1910, 1956), Albert Castel (1962, 1992, 1999), Duane Schultz (1996), and Edward E. Leslie (1996).³ In addition, Quantrill figures prominently in writings about the Lawrence raid, guerrilla warfare, and those individuals who associated with him by such writers as Richard S. Brownlee, Michael Fellman, Carl W. Breihan, Donald R. Hale, and Thomas Goodrich. Moreover, accounts are written by (or for) guerrillas who served under Quantrill. Also, a plethora of articles and essays has been published in various state and local historical journals and in popular magazines concerning his exploits.⁴

The first major chronicler of the Quantrill phenomenon was Virginia-born journalist John N. Edwards, who later moved to Missouri. Edwards became the "best known newspaperman west of the Mississippi." During the Civil War Edwards

2. Virgil C. Jones, "The Problem of Writing About the Guerrillas," *Military Affairs* 21 (Spring 1957): 21–25; see also Jones, "William Clarke Quantrill," in *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, ed. Patricia L. Faust (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), 606.

3. John N. Edwards, *Noted Guerrillas, or the Warfare of the Border* (1877; reprint, Dayton, Ohio: Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1976), with a foreword by Castel. See also Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*; Shultz, *Quantrill's War*; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*. Castel's biography was reprinted in 1992 by General's Books and in 1999 was issued in paperback format by University of Oklahoma Press, with a new preface by the author.

4. Carl W. Breihan, *Quantrill and His Civil War Guerrillas* (New York: Promontory Press, 1959), and *The Killer Legions of Quantrill* (Seattle: Hangman Press/Superior Publishing Co., 1971), are popular accounts and add little, if anything, new about Quantrill. For Quantrill followers, see Marley Brant, *The Youngers* (Los Angeles: Dragon Books, 1990), which delineates the blood relationships among the guerrillas; Donald R. Hale, *We Rode with Quantrill: Quantrill and the Guerrilla War as Told by the Men and Women Who Were with Him, and A True Sketch of Quantrill's Life* (Independence, Mo.: Two Trails Publishing, 1998). This work has various editions. See also Hale and Joanne C. Eakin, comps., *Branded as Rebels* (Independence, Mo.: Wee Print, 1993); B. James George, *Captain William Henry Gregg, Confederate and Quantrillian* (n.p.: 1973). Unreliable sources are Kit Dalton, *Under the Black Flag* (Memphis: Lockard Publishing Co. [1914]), and O. S. Barton, *Three Years With Quantrill: A True Story Told By His Scout John McCorkle* (1914; reprint, 1966; reprint, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), with commentary by Herman Hattaway and notes by Albert Castel. The Hattaway and Castel addition to the 1992 edition is well done and provides excellent information on Quantrill, Barton, and McCorkle. It is interesting to note that both Dalton and McCorkle misspelled Quantrill's last name "Quantrell." Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 121, states that "Many of the men who fought on the border before and during the war displayed a marked tendency in their later years to exaggerate their own importance." Three local journals, the *Jackson County Historical Society Journal*, *Westport Historical Quarterly*, and *Quarterly of the National Association for Outlaw and Lawman History*, have considerable information about individuals involved with Quantrill and the guerrilla war in Missouri.

5. Edwards, *Noted Guerrillas*, foreword. For information on Edwards's life, see Jennie Edwards, comp., *John N. Edwards, Biography, Memoirs, Reminiscences, and Recollections* (Kansas City, Mo.: 1889); Marley Brant, "Jesse James Defender: John Newman Edwards," *Wild West* 11 (December 1998): 34–40; see also Edwards, *Noted Guerrillas*, 31. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 32–33, declared that "steeped in classical mythology and the novels of Alexandre Dumas and Sir Walter Scott, mixing fact with considerable fancy," Edwards "depicted Quantrill and his men as blood-drenched heroes, gallant as musketeers and as implacably violent as Ulysses and Achilles." Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 41, 214, concluded that "there are few books on the Civil War more exciting than [Edwards]—or less reliable." Edwards had earlier published *Shelby and His Men: or, The War in the West* (Cincinnati: Miami Printing and Publishing Co., 1867) and *Shelby's Expedition to Mexico* (Kansas City, Mo.: Kansas City Times Steam Book and Job Printing House, 1872). For information on Shelby, see David O'Flaherty, *General Jo Shelby: Undefeated Rebel* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954). Quantrill was Edwards's "ultimate hero." See Fellman, *Inside War*, 249–52.

served as adjutant to General Joseph (Jo) O. Shelby and knew personally many of the guerrillas whose lives he chronicled. In *Noted Guerrillas, or the Warfare of the Border*, he has Quantrill's name, birth date, and place of birth wrong, and exaggerates Quantrill's feats in a way that demonstrates how brilliantly and fearlessly he performed individually. His work often is factually inaccurate and rampantly biased, but, according to Castel, Edwards's Hugo-like style and Dumas-like felicity popularized his writings.⁵

Thirty-five years later, in 1910, William Elsey Connelley portrayed Quantrill as the exact opposite of the Edwards legend. Connelley was Kentucky born but eventually became secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society where he acquired much Quantrill material from William W. Scott, a Quantrill schoolmate. Although Connelley was more careful than Edwards in using primary evidence and sorting out the conflicting stories, he nonetheless was avidly pro-Union, pro-Kansan, and brought a moralistic fervor to his interpretation that made his objectivity

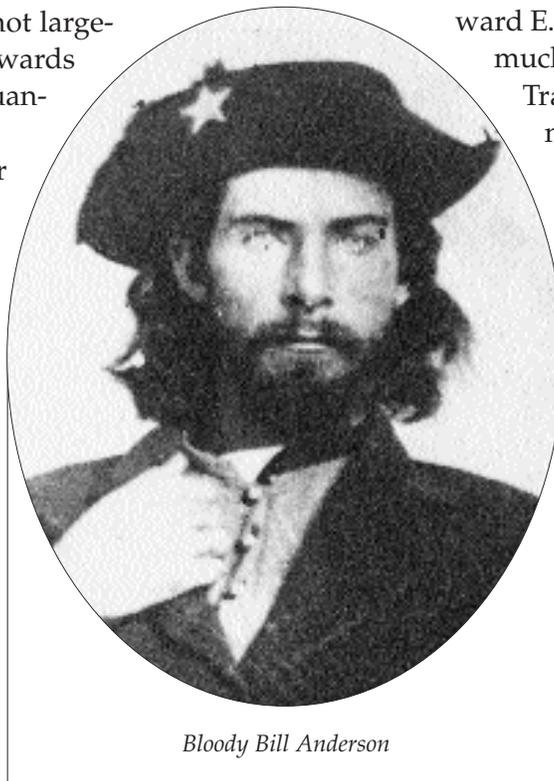
about Quantrill questionable, if not largely distorted. Connelley and Edwards are at polar extremes where Quantrill is concerned.

"In cruelty and a thirst for blood," Connelley wrote, Quantrill "towered above the men of his time. Somewhere of old his ancestors ate the sour grapes which set his teeth on edge." Connelley declared that Quantrill "grew into the gory monster whose baleful shadow falls upon all who share the kindred blood." In Connelley's eyes, Quantrill had no redeeming social attributes, being variously described as a degenerate, depraved, motivated by "blood madness," with a lust for plunder and fallen women. Although Connelley's tome contains extensive original sources and long quotations from primary material, his tirade against Quantrill and his family makes no attempt to understand the conditions that brought Quantrill to the fore.⁶

A half-century later Albert Castel published his take on the Quantrill phenomenon. A careful and judicious historian, Castel attempted to be fair and impartial about a highly charged subject, and in some ways his is still the best biography of the well-known Civil War guerrilla. Castel, thoroughly familiar with the literature on the Kansas–Missouri imbroglio, along with his writings on the Kansas conflict, produced a succinct and quite readable biography of the life and times of Quantrill. His discussion of previous writings about the Ohioan provides a benchmark from which to evaluate both the older and newer publications concerning Quantrill and those who became involved with him.

The publication of Quantrill biographies by Duane Schultz, a psychology professor, and Ed-

6. Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 41. For comments on Connelley and his view of Quantrill, see Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 23; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 33–34.



Bloody Bill Anderson

ward E. Leslie, a "professional writer," says much about how historians ignore the Trans-Mississippi West.⁷ Although neither book is properly documented, it is not difficult to determine the genesis of their interpretations. Schultz relies upon secondary sources and follows the Connelley line. Leslie labels his Quantrill effort an "anecdotal history," enlarges upon Castel, and includes much extraneous material, especially about the controversy surrounding Quantrill's bones. Of all Quantrill biographers, Leslie has been the most thorough in his research and attempts to be completely objective, but clearly he is sympathetic to Quantrill.⁸

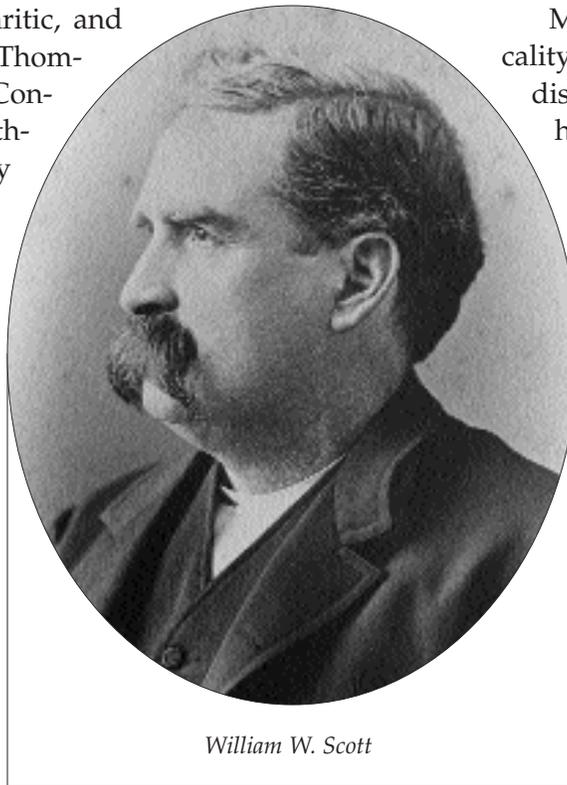
Born in Canal Dover, Ohio, on July 31, 1837, William Clarke Quantrill was one of eight children, four of whom died in infancy. Of those who survived into adulthood their lives were not particularly rewarding or even interesting. A sister, Mary, endured curvature of the spine until her death in 1863. Brother Franklin suffered from swelling in

7. The triple themes of slavery, race, and military operations in the West often are neglected. This has been partially rectified with the appearance of Michael A. Morrison, *Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny and the Coming of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Quintard Taylor, *In Search of the Racial Frontier: African Americans in the American West, 1528–1990* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1998); William C. Davis, *The Cause Lost: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 71–108. A popular account is Alvin M. Josephy Jr., *The Civil War in the American West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

8. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, xxii, 406–40. Schultz's book is marred by innumerable mistakes. His perception of history is that it "is, ultimately and intimately, interpretative and subjective. It does not—indeed, cannot—provide as objective a record of an event as, for example, a photograph. Writing about history is more like offering a painting—an impression, not a reproduction; a likeness, not a replica." See Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 312. For sources on Quantrill's bones, see Edward Knowles, "The Bartered Bones of William Quantrill," *True West* 15 (September–October 1967): 20–21, 48; George Hart, "The Quest for Quantrill's Bones," *Real West* 15 (May 1972): 2–26; Carl W. Breihan, "Quantrill's Bones Are Moving," *Westerner* 5 (January–February 1973): 40–41, 62, 64; Samuel C. Ream and Marian E. Karpisek, "Quantrill's Skull," *Old West* 17 (Summer 1981): 36–38.

one of his knees, probably arthritic, and basically was a cripple. Another, Thomson, was a ne'er-do-well who Connelley described as a "vile, worthless, despicable but petty scoundrel," a "scurvy cur." Today the Quantrill family would be labeled dysfunctional and except for the eldest son's infamy would probably have been forgotten to history.⁹

Some members of the Quantrill family evinced a "dubious character." William's great uncle, Thomas, was a pirate along the Louisiana–Texas coast. Another uncle, Jesse Duncan (originally named William), his father's eldest brother, can only be described as a rogue and a scoundrel. A bigamist (he married and abandoned at least six women), a swindler, and a forger, he served considerable time in prison. Leslie concludes that the Quantrill males were "blessed with manipulative, charming personalities." Connelley found them "deficient in sound moral fiber." Castel writes that "we no longer believe in the hereditary transfer of character traits. But if we did, we could make much out of Quantrill's immediate ancestors."¹⁰



William W. Scott

Most writers agree about the "rascality" of Quantrill's heritage, but they disagree about some of his childhood exploits. Connelley asserts that he "maimed domestic animals for amusement" and Schultz agrees, contending that he was "a monster, as cruel and merciless with animals as he would later be with people, and equally without pity or remorse." Castel is skeptical about such accounts. Leslie insists they came from Harmon V. Beeson, whom Quantrill's father attempted to kill for revealing his embezzlement of school funds, and considers them nonsensical. The boy occasionally may have shot a pig through the tip of the ear to make it squeal but "many an

intelligent, normal farm boy has taken mean delight in making pigs run frantically."¹¹

Quantrill's father was strange. Born in Hagerstown, Maryland, during the War of 1812, Thomas Henry became a tinker and a tinsmith. In 1836 he married Caroline Cornelia Clarke (or Clark) and eventually became principal of Canal Dover Union School. Apparently, father and son did not get along because, according to Leslie, "even as a teenager" the youngster "had often been beaten by his father, sometimes, most humiliatingly, in public." Castel and Connelley agree with this perception, but Schultz makes no comment. The death of Quantrill's father in 1854 left the family in dire financial straits that forced mother Quantrill to convert her home into a boardinghouse and Quantrill's sister to become a seamstress.¹²

9. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 406–7; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 30; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 8; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 23–24. Edwards, *Noted Guerrillas*, 32, has Quantrill born in Hagerstown, Maryland (the birthplace of Quantrill's father), on July 20, 1836. Although not of paramount importance, there is some dispute about Quantrill's middle name, Clarke, which was his mother's maiden moniker. She spelled the name without the "e," but her husband included the additional vowel. Although not illiterate, Caroline Clarke Quantrill was a terrible speller who, according to Leslie, could not even spell "cat" correctly. Sarah "Kate" King, William Quantrill's mistress, included the "e," and Connelley adopted this spelling. Since 1910 writers generally have followed his lead, and the addition of the "e" has become conventional practice in all Quantrill literature. See Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 442; see also the incomprehensible statement by Homer Croy about the name Clarke in his introduction to the 1956 edition of Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, viii. For information on Quantrill's mistress, see Adrienne Tinker Christopher, "Kate King Clarke—Quantrill's Forgotten Girl Bride," *Westport Historical Quarterly* 4 (June 1968): 21–22.

10. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 37; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 18–21, 40; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 6–7; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 23.

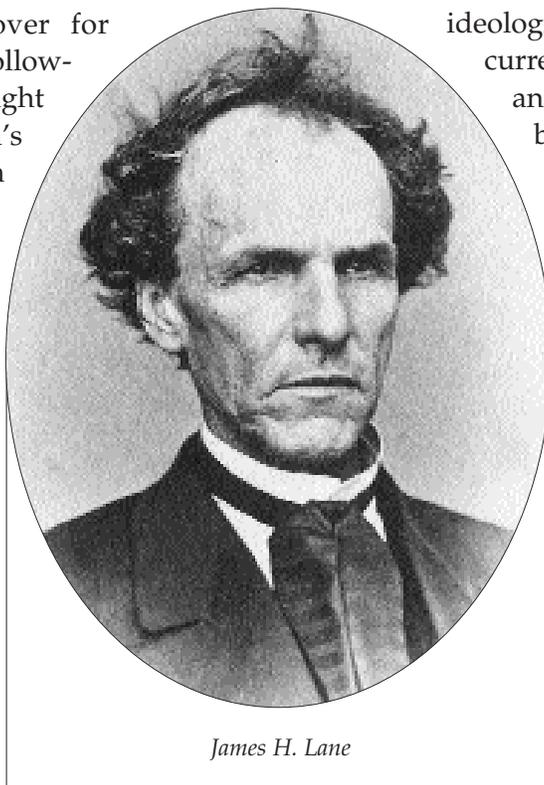
11. Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 41, 44; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 3; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 24; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 43. Connelley remarked that Quantrill "had to be punished often." One classmate observed that when he returned to the schoolroom after a sound whipping, he was "pale, tearless, trembling, and with the look of a demon. There was murder in every gleam of his strange glittering eyes."

12. Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 23–29; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 37–44; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 23–24.

Quantrill left Canal Dover for Mendota, Illinois, the following year, where he taught school, sold his father's "Tinman's Guide," and also worked as a bookkeeper for a lumberyard. Here may have occurred the first major crisis in the young man's life. Castel writes that "according to a totally unsubstantiated historical rumor," Quantrill killed a man who attempted to rob him. Schultz remarked that the story is "a vague one, without substantiation, but enough people told tales of a killing by the Quantrill boy to take it beyond the realm of gossip and rumor." Connelley wrote that "there is nothing positive to be had on the subject, however." Leslie, without any comment, suggested that if he did slay a man it was in self-defense.¹³

Through his mother's efforts, in February 1857 Quantrill accompanied Henry Torrey, Harmon Beeson, and Beeson's son Richard to buy a farm in Kansas. Nineteen years old, Quantrill was five feet nine inches tall, weighed 150–160 pounds, had a "Roman nose" and sandy or yellowish-brown hair. Torrey and Beeson agreed to pay his passage and buy a claim for him if he would work for them until he was twenty-one at which time he would receive the deed. Settling on the banks of the Marais des Cygnes River in Franklin County, Torrey and Beeson contributed \$250 apiece for Quantrill's share when they purchased land from a resident squatter; Quantrill received \$60 to hold the claim for the two men.¹⁴

Before Quantrill and his three companions ventured to Kansas, many of the economic, political, and



James H. Lane

ideological confrontations already had occurred. Organized as a territory in 1854 and soon to be a major battleground between the North and South, Kansas suffered indignities from an inept president, zealous politicians, and a vicious war over slavery and freedom. Along with John Brown and the numerous Missouri slave proponents and extensionists, ambitious and largely unscrupulous individuals attempted to further political, religious, and entrepreneurial careers upon the carnage. When the four Ohioans arrived, Kansas was at peace but retained a significant infestation of an unsavory element interested only in enhancing its wealth.¹⁵

Trouble soon ensued between Quantrill, Torrey, and Beeson. Leslie stated that Quantrill began to "harbor suspicions" whether he would ever receive the promised land even though he worked long hours. Connelley, whom Schultz fol-

15. The older works on the Kansas conflict (before 1990) are all cited in the writings of two historians who have recently begun to investigate anew the controversy. See Gunja SenGupta, "A Model New England State": Northeastern Antislavery in Territorial Kansas, 1854–1860," *Civil War History* 39 (March 1993): 31–46; SenGupta, "Servants for Freedom: Christian Abolitionist in Territorial Kansas, 1854–1858," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 16 (Autumn 1993): 200–13; SenGupta, *For God and Mammon: Evangelicals and Entrepreneurs, Masters and Slaves in Territorial Kansas, 1854–1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996); Bill Cecil-Fronsmann, "'Death to All Yankees and Traitors in Kansas': The Squatter Sovereign and the Defense of Slavery in Kansas," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 16 (Spring 1993): 24–33; "'Advocate the Freedom of White Men, As Well As That of Negroes': The Kansas Free State and Antislavery Westerners in Territorial Kansas," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 20 (Summer 1997): 102–15. An older piece worth consulting is Michael Fellman, "Rehearsal for the Civil War: Antislavery and Proslavery at the Fighting Point in Kansas, 1854–1856," in *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Abolitionists*, ed. Lewis Perry and Fellman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 287–307. On the national scene, the problems that the opening of Kansas engendered are recounted in Albert J. von Frank, *The Trials of Anthony Burns: Freedom and Slavery in Emerson's Boston* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Thomas Goodrich, *War to the Knife: Bleeding Kansas, 1854–1861* (Mechanicsburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1998). Bleeding Kansas has become a hot item for novelists. The latest fiction effort on John Brown is Russell Banks, *Cloudsplitter* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998). For a heroine who battles the proslavery forces, see Jane Smiley, *The All-True Travels and Adventures of Lidie Newton* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998).

13. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 25; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 9; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 51–52; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 46.

14. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 31; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 25–26; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 54–58; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 11–12.

lows in his interpretation, claimed Quantrill was lazy and shirked his duties to build a homestead. Quantrill also came under the influence of a neighbor named John Bennings (Leslie referred to him as a “secret Southern sympathizer”), who convinced him that he had not been properly reimbursed for holding Beeson’s and Torrey’s claim. Castel thought there was some truth to Quantrill’s belief because a “squatter’s court” awarded him an additional sixty-three dollars, to be paid in two installments.¹⁶

Torrey agreed to pay Quantrill because Torrey owed Beeson money. In debt to various other creditors, Torrey missed making the initial payment. Quantrill thought both men ungrateful and stole a yoke of oxen belonging to Beeson and a brace of pistols and blankets from Torrey. He was forced to return everything but the blankets. “The breach between Quantrill and Beeson never healed,” wrote Leslie, but he “remained on good terms with Torrey, who allowed him to stay in his cabin whenever he wished.” Castel’s perspective is somewhat different. He stated that “despite this incident, which is the first authenticated indication of criminal tendencies on Quantrill’s part,” Torrey and Beeson “remained on generally good terms with him.”¹⁷

In the summer of 1857 Beeson returned to Canal Dover and persuaded several others from the town to migrate to Kansas. They settled near Stanton and named it Tuscarora Lake in honor of their home county in Ohio. Quantrill joined this group as several had been school friends. Various items began to disappear from the settlement and “ultimately they caught [Quantrill] in the act,” declared Castel. Connelley first perpetuated this idea but “did not identify the source for these allegations.” Leslie averred that given Connelley’s “lapses of judgement in evaluating the reliability of sources, it is hard to know how seriously to

take this story without being able to evaluate its origins.” Nevertheless, Quantrill left the settlement.¹⁸

Before Quantrill arrived in Kansas nothing in his correspondence or even in other archival records suggests how he felt about the national struggle or the Kansas occurrences. At this point his political stance favored the North although clearly he was no abolitionist. In a rare political outburst, Quantrill wrote his friend W. W. Scott (who was later responsible for collecting much of the archival material on Quantrill) in January 1858 that the Lecompton Constitution was a “swindle,” and he characterized Northern sympathizer James H. Lane “as good a man as we have here.” He labeled the Democrats as the “worst men we have for they are all rascals, for no one can be a democrat here without being one.”¹⁹

In early 1859 Quantrill traveled to Utah and Colorado but returned to Kansas by mid-year, landing in Lawrence. Castel asserted that “all in all,” his letters “convey the impression of a man discontented with his past but unsure about his future—of a man, in short, undergoing a personal crisis and about to make a vital decision.” Michael Fellman commented that Quantrill “expressed a deep longing for purposeful action; he had a political sensibility; and he lacked affirmative emotional contact with nature, with his mother, and with other people in general.” He was different from other young men “in his contemplativeness and his literateness.” Quantrill, in Fellman’s psychological profile, had an “inner deadness” and a desire to do something great.²⁰

By early 1860 his politics radically shifted and his life was about to. He now believed the proslavery party to be in the right and that those who opposed it had been responsible for most of the troubles. Quan-

18. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 27; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 71–74; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 52; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 14–15.

19. The letter is quoted in full in Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 72–74; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 51; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 27–28; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 14–15. For information on Lane, see Castel, “Jim Lane of Kansas,” *Civil War Times Illustrated* 12 (April 1973): 22–29. Quantrill later said that if he had captured Lane in the Lawrence raid, he would have been taken to Missouri and burned at the stake.

20. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 30; Fellman, *Inside War*, 141; see also Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 52–63; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 86–112; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 18–20, 47–50.

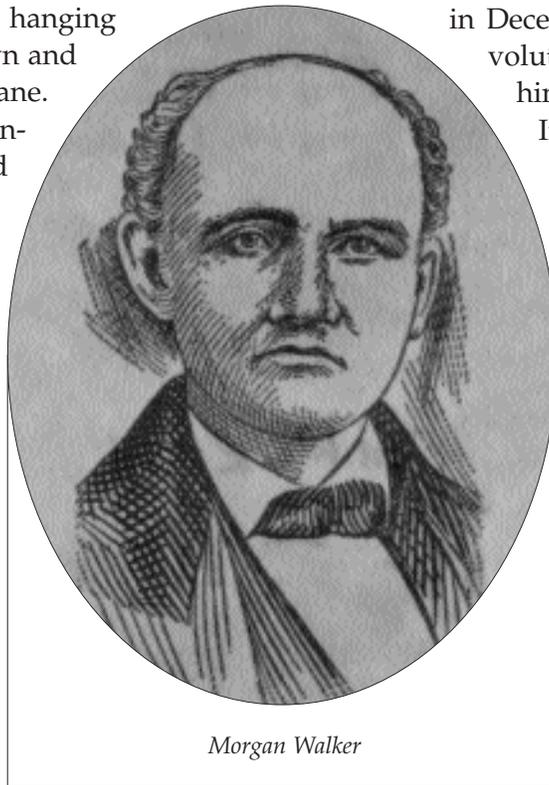
16. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 50–51; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 65–67; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 11–12; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 26.

17. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 51; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 26–27; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 13–14; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 62–72. Leslie disagreed with Castel and asserted that Quantrill maintained an amicable relationship with Torrey, but “Long after Quantrill died, Beeson and his family would continue to disparage him, while Torrey and his family remained among the staunchest defenders of his reputation.”

trill told his mother he thought hanging had been too good for John Brown and now detested such men as Jim Lane. He did not plan to remain in Kansas as the “devil has got unlimited sway over this territory, and will hold it until we have a better set of men and society generally.” Leslie claimed that Quantrill, who regularly called himself Charley Hart, began to associate with “border ruffians—much like the teamsters with whom he had traveled to Utah.”²¹

It is unlikely, Castel contended, that Quantrill’s “political sentiments were ever more than an incidental or supplementary motivation throughout his career.” He began returning escaped slaves to their owners in Missouri for a bounty and rustling cattle and horses from both pro- and antislavery settlers; in short, he did anything that had a dollar in it for Quantrill. “In all likelihood,” Castel observed, “he became a bandit as much out of deliberate choice as accidental circumstance. The life of a freebooter must have appealed to him as a chance to get out of his dreary rut of failure, to experience a life of pleasure and excitement, to obtain big money easily, and above all to *be* somebody.”²²

Quantrill became more duplicitous in his dealings. Joining a group of three abolitionists, he betrayed them when they accompanied him on the raid of Morgan Walker’s farm in Jackson County, Missouri,



Morgan Walker

in December 1860. Quantrill spun a convoluted tale for the Missourians to save himself from being lynched. Jailed in Independence for his own protection, a friend convinced the sheriff to release him. Although Quantrill often has been accused of a particularly cold-blooded execution of a wounded man named Chalkley T. Lipsey in the aftermath of the Walker raid, according to Leslie, Andrew Walker, the son of Morgan, asserted that Quantrill never unholstered his gun.²³

Quantrill, Castel believed, was “essentially just another border outlaw, only perhaps somewhat more vicious, imaginative, and daring than the average.” Leslie admitted that Quantrill behaved unscrupulously before the war, but once the fighting began “he thought of himself as a Confederate soldier” and “adhered strictly and consistently to a personal code of honor”: keeping promises, accepting surrender, granting paroles, even trying to exchange prisoners. He also “made certain that none of his men ever raped or assaulted a woman.” Leslie implied that no other guerrillas followed these principles. After the federal government issued orders outlawing all partisans and executed his followers without a trial, Quantrill adopted “a merciless policy of no quarter.”²⁴

When war came Quantrill traveled to Texas with Marcus Gill, a slaveholder, and drifted into the Cherokee Nation where he learned guerrilla tactics from Joel B. Mayes, a Confederate sympathizer who joined General Benjamin

21. Quantrill to “My Dear Mother,” January 26, February 8, 1860, in Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 89–91, 94–96; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 62; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 29–31; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 18–20, 47–49. Dale E. Watts, “How Bloody Was Bleeding Kansas?: Political Killings in Kansas Territory, 1854–1861,” *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 18 (Summer 1995): 116–29, compiled a list of but fifty-six murders for this seven-year period; see also A. Theodore Brown, *Frontier Community: Kansas to 1870* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1963).

22. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 31–32; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 64–70; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 53–55; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 104–39.

23. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 76–77; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 152–65; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 59; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 39. The latter three authors attested to Quantrill’s guilt.

24. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 43; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 97–98.

McCulloch.²⁵ Edwards wrote of Quantrill's "conspicuous daring" in the battles of Carthage, Wilson's Creek, and Lexington, led by General Sterling Price, but no documentary evidence of this service has been found. Connelley, Castel, and Schultz stated Quantrill deserted from Price's army, but Leslie argued that his "detractors cast him in the worst possible light," as one who "had no stomach for regular army discipline and organized combat." In fact, Leslie said he was a "brave man," no evidence exists he deserted, and Price "encouraged men to go home."²⁶

Quantrill traveled to the Blue Springs area of Jackson County, Missouri. In January 1862, joined by such notables as Cole Younger and the James brothers, the band soon encountered the Union Army.²⁷ Numbering forty men, they harassed the federals and protected the



Cole Younger

area against jayhawkers. After a skirmish with a regiment of Ohio cavalry in Independence, they pillaged and plundered Aubry, Kansas, in March, leaving at least five dead. This incursion was the "most brutal and devastating one to date," stated Castel. On March 13 Major General Henry W. Halleck proclaimed all guerrillas to be outlaws who would be hanged if captured. This edict, wrote Leslie, "radically changed his [Quantrill's] attitude toward the war—and thus his conduct."²⁸

Before Halleck's promulgation, asserted Leslie, Quantrill "had accepted the surrender of Yankees and then paroled them. He believed himself to be a Confederate officer, and he had expected to be treated as a soldier if taken. However, Halleck disabused him of the no-

25. Edwards, *Noted Guerrillas*, 51; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 82; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 64–65; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 67–69; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 196–200. After the war Mayes became principal chief of the Cherokee Nation. A detailed account of this phase of Quantrill's life is LeRoy H. Fischer and Lary C. Rampp, "Quantrill's Civil War Operations in Indian Territory," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 46 (Summer 1968): 155–81; Rampp, "William C. Quantrill's Civil War Activities in Texas, 1861–1863," *Texas Military History* 8 (1970): 221–31. For information on McCulloch, see Thomas W. Cutrer, *Ben McCulloch and the Frontier Military Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993). For background on Missouri, see Hildegard Rose Herklotz, "Jayhawkers in Missouri, 1858–1863," *Missouri Historical Review* 17 (April 1923): 266–84; 17 (July 1923): 505–13; 18 (October 1923): 64–101; Arthur Roy Kirkpatrick, "Missouri in the Early Months of the Civil War," *Missouri Historical Review* 55 (April 1961): 235–66; William E. Parrish, *Turbulent Partnership: Missouri and the Union, 1861–1865* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1963).

26. Edwards, *Noted Guerrillas*, 51; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 94; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 200; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 64–65. Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 69, stated that after the battle of Dry Wood Creek, "Quantrill decided he'd had his fill of soldiering." The Quantrill–Price relationship is probed in Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 58–62. Quantrill definitely did not participate in the battle of Carthage.

27. Contrary to what aficionados, buffs, and professional historians have declared, we still do not have adequate biographies of the Youngers. In fact, we have little reliable information on the Missouri–Kansas guer-

rilla or even the so-called legitimate citizens such as Jim Lane. See Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 99–104; Marley Brant, *The Outlaw Youngers: A Confederate Brotherhood* (Lanham, Md.: Madison Books, 1992); Carl W. Brehan, *Ride the Razor's Edge: The Younger Brothers Story* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Co., 1992). The James brothers have been the subject of some excellent work. Perhaps the best works on Jesse James are William A. Settle Jr., *Jesse James Was His Name: Or, Fact and Fiction Concerning the Careers of the Notorious James Brothers of Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1966); Brant, *Jesse James, the Man and the Myth* (New York: Berkeley Books, 1998). For a source on Frank James, see Gerard S. Petrone, *Judgement At Gallatin: The Trial of Frank James* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1998).

28. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 72; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 112–13; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 220–39; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 86–95. Background and accounts of the activities of the bushwhackers/jayhawkers/guerrillas is provided in Castel, "The Jayhawkers and Copperheads of Kansas," *Civil War History* 5 (September 1959): 283–93; Castel, *A Frontier State at War: Kansas, 1861–1865* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958; reprinted as *Civil War Kansas: Reaping the Whirlwind* [Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997]); Paul W. Burch, "Kansas: Bushwhackers vs. Jayhawkers," *Journal of the West* 14 (January 1975): 83–104; Bonnie Murphy, "Missouri: A State Asunder," *ibid.*, 105–29; Gary L. Cheatham, "'Desperate Characters': The Development and Impact of the Confederate Guerrillas in Kansas," *Kansas History: A Journal of the Central Plains* 14 (Autumn 1991): 144–61; Stephen Z. Starr, *Jennison's Jayhawkers: A Civil War Cavalry Regiment and Its Commander* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973); Fellman, *Inside War*. According to Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 62–53, jayhawking "was not the sole cause of guerrilla war in Missouri; in fact, it perhaps was not even the main cause." The strife between Missouri unionists and secessionists led to "far more killing of Missourians by Missourians than by Kansans."

tion of honorable treatment. Quantrill understood that he would be summarily executed if captured and reacted accordingly." He felt that he had been "forced" into a "no-quarter manner of fighting." Castel's interpretation was similar; he contends that Quantrill was "infuriated" and "savagely altered his approach to the war." In short, the federals had raised the "black flag."²⁹

Castel is closer to the mark in assessing Quantrill's response to Halleck's order than is Leslie, who is somewhat disingenuous. Before Halleck announced his guerrilla policy, Quantrill's band had charged into Aubry, Kansas, on March 7, 1862, shooting everything. Five unarmed men were murdered (Leslie says three; then later five) as they attempted to escape. Both Castel and Leslie agree they plundered all the stores and houses, robbed every male inhabitant, and set fire to one building. Leslie concluded that the "Aubry raid had been particularly shocking because of the cold-blooded murder of civilians, and Unionists on the border were not only outraged but frightened."³⁰



Jesse James

Survivors of Quantrill's raiders later claimed that "prior to Halleck's extermination order they usually took prisoners but that after they did so only rarely." Other evidence, Castel observed, "tends to confirm their contention, as instanced by the Manasseth Gap ambush and the Liberty fight (although it is apparent from the Aubry raid that they were not disposed to show much mercy to Kansans even before March 20)." They collectively denied swearing to an "iron-clad oath" to dispatch all Union soldiers. This is confirmed by Leslie, who stated that on March 18 Quantrill and his men attacked the Union garrison at Liberty, Missouri. They killed one soldier who

refused to disclose information but paroled eight other Yankees whom they captured.³¹

In late March and early April 1862 Quantrill's raiders engaged federal troops at the David Tate, Sam Clark, and Jordan Lowe farms. The "Tate house fight," in Castel's words, "became one of the most famous episodes in bushwhacker annals, increased Quantrill's prestige among the West Missouri guerrillas and strengthened his leadership." Later, in the hardest fight the band ever had, they fought a vicious struggle with the troops of Major James O. Gower near Pleasant Hill, Missouri. They held their own "in an open, stand-up battle against trained and disciplined soldiers, even though heavily outnumbered" but violated a cardinal rule of guerrilla warfare: "never do battle against a superior force on its own terms unless absolutely necessary."³²

29. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 113; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 94; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 236. Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 93–94, contended that "for Quantrill, this new kind of war was a reversion to his earlier life, little different from torturing animals as a child or thieving and killing as Charley Hart in Lawrence. General Halleck's order had given him an excuse. He no longer felt hindered by any rules of war. All restraints were off." Halleck's directive was renewed by Brigadier General John M. Schofield, who also, in General Order No. 19, required all able bodied men in Missouri to enlist in the Union state militia to exterminate the guerrillas. See James L. McDonough, "And All for Nothing—Early Experiences of John M. Schofield in Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* 64 (April 1970): 306–21; McDonough, *John M. Schofield, Union General in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Tallahassee: Florida State University Press, 1972). For another attempted repressive measure, see W. Wayne Smith, "An Experiment in Counterinsurgency: The Assessment of Confederate Sympathizers in Missouri," *Journal of Southern History* 35 (August 1969): 361–80.

30. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 106–8, 112; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 70–71.

31. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 70; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 112–13.

32. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 76, 83–84; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 113–19, 128; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 242–53; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 98–102. Leslie agreed with Castel about the Pleasant Hill encounter, quoting him at length.

In April 1862 the Confederate Congress enacted a law “to organize bands of Partisan Rangers.” Known as the Partisan Ranger Act, the statute permitted President Jefferson Davis to commission officers to organize bands of “partisan rangers.” They would be allowed all the perquisites of Confederate regulars and be “subject to the same regulations.” Leslie asserted that the law provided a “cloak of legitimacy” over the various Confederate guerrilla groups, but the Union refused to recognize them as soldiers. Nowhere, Leslie believed, was this “more true than in the Transmississippi.”³³ Much confusion exists among Quantrill biographers surrounding his status and that of his followers within the Confederate military bureaucracy.

Quantrill certainly wanted to be part of the regular Confederate Army. After the successful raid on Independence, Missouri, in mid-August 1862, where the Union commander Lieutenant Colonel James T. Buell surrendered his entire command, Quantrill’s raiders repaired to the Ingraham farm, six miles west of Lone Jack, Missouri. There, Colonel Gideon W. Thompson officially mustered Quantrill and his men into Confederate service and commissioned Quantrill a captain on General Thomas C. Hindman’s authority under the auspices of the Partisan Ranger Act. Subsequently, wrote Castel, “Quantrill’s band was part of the Confederate military establishment—but the actuality of the matter” was indeed “something quite different.”³⁴

Connelley suggested that after this date the “Confederate government was responsible for all the acts of Quantrill and his men.” They had become “regular Confederate soldiers, properly enrolled, with officers regularly commissioned.” Castel, whom Leslie follows, declared that the “organization set up at the Ingraham farm meant little.” “Lacking true military discipline, serving with boyhood friends in their own neighborhoods, ever-varying in numbers, frequently operating in small parties, and constantly scattering and regrouping, the bushwhackers found it impossible to maintain a regular, rigid military or-

ganization.” The “real leaders were whoever became so by virtue of personality, daring, and ability.”³⁵

Quantrill was not satisfied, even though his own men had elected him captain. (Leslie extensively comments upon this fact of irregular life). During 1862 they had struck the Kansas towns of Aubry, Olathe, and Shawneetown, each blow “more vicious than the previous one.” At Aubry they emphasized plunder; at Olathe they added mass murder; and at Shawneetown they included arson. Quantrill continued to fight the federals, attacked Lamar, Missouri, later in the year, and burned part of the town. Castel summarized the change in deft fashion: in a relatively short time Quantrill “had rocketed from a non-descript Border Ruffian to a captain of partisan rangers in the Confederate Army and the chieftain of the largest, most formidable guerrilla band in Missouri.”³⁶

Quantrill desired more. In December 1862 he traveled to Richmond, Virginia, seeking a colonel’s commission. Edwards, after a wonderful portrayal of a scene where Quantrill confronts the Confederate Secretary of War James A. Seddon, wrote that Quantrill was rejected in his demand for a colonelcy. Of all Quantrill biographers, only Connelley (in what Leslie referred to as a “rare burst of generosity”) believed he received the commission from either General Sterling Price or Missouri Confederate governor Thomas C. Reynolds. The guerrillas followed different officer patterns and continued to elect their officers after the custom had been abandoned in the regular army, but Quantrill only received official Confederate papers that listed him as captain.³⁷

“The question of whether or not Quantrill was ever commissioned a colonel is one of the thorniest and most controversial concerning his life,” stated

35. Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 269; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 92; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 117; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 137–38.

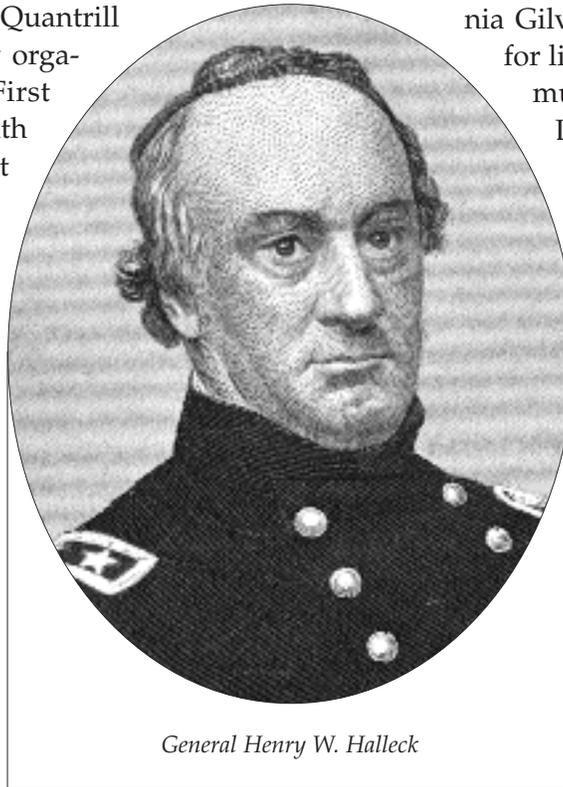
36. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 92, 98, 101–3; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 143–59, 294–95; Edwards, *Noted Guerrillas*, 156–58; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 269–77, 281–82; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 120–26.

37. Edwards, *Noted Guerrillas*, 156–58; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 281–82, 421; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 294–95; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 101–3; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 129–31.

33. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 119–20.

34. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 92.

Leslie. In late 1863, just before Quantrill and his men left for Texas, they organized the First Regiment, First Brigade, Army of the South, with Quantrill as captain. Later that year, Quantrill twice referred to himself as a colonel, but by early 1864 he signed his name as a "captain, commanding partisans." Leslie's theory is that the "bushwhackers" continued to elect their officers. Thus, when the First Regiment was formed, Quantrill was elected a colonel. Confederate officials in Texas informed him "that he was a *captain*," not a colonel. He never again referred to himself as such.³⁸



General Henry W. Halleck

Quantrill's relations with Confederate military officials aside, his famous raid on Lawrence, described previously, had its origins in a multitude of reasons. In mid-1863, because of the guerrillas success in harassing the federals, the District of the Border commander Thomas Ewing Jr. issued General Order No. 10, which ordered the arrest of men and women who were not heads of families if they aided, abetted, or encouraged the insurgents. Union military authorities imprisoned in Kansas City Charity Kerr and Nannie McCorkle, sister and sister-in-law, respectively, of John McCorkle; Susan Vandiver and Armenia Gilvey, cousins of Cole Younger; and Josephine, Mary, and Jennie Anderson, sisters of Bloody Bill Anderson.³⁹

On August 13, 1863, a week before the destruction of Lawrence, the building collapsed killing Josephine Anderson, Susan Vandiver, Charity Kerr, and Arme-

38. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 294–95, 119; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 83; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 106–10; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 254–28. The Partisan Ranger law was in effect until February 1864 when repealed by the Confederate Congress.

39. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 157–99; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 116–21; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 135–43; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 298–307.

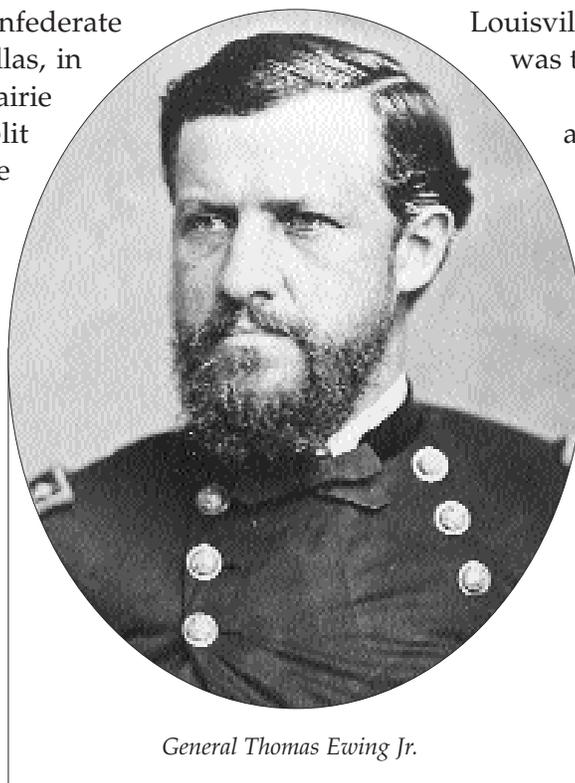
nia Gilvey. Mary Anderson was crippled for life. McCorkle stated that "this foul murder" was the direct cause of the Lawrence raid because of women "foully murdered" by a "set of men to whom the name assassins, murderers and cutthroats would be a compliment." Actually, although the incident may have been partially responsible for the decision to sack Lawrence, the idea grew out of a "festering bitterness" against the Unionists, Quantrill's personal grudge against the town, and a desire to retaliate for the 1861 federal raid on Osceola, Missouri, which left it in ruins.⁴⁰

After the devastation of Lawrence and the subsequent attempt by federal officials to depopulate western Missouri in response to the raid (General Order No. 11), Quantrill and his band killed ninety-eight men of the personal escort and headquarters train of Major General James G. Blunt at Baxter Springs, Kansas, in October 1863. Thus, Lawrence and Baxter Springs became the only major Confederate victories in the West in 1863. The partisans then marched to Texas where numerous problems beset the group, and they became involved in

40. Barton, *Three Years With Quantrill*, 120–23; Hattaway, "Commentary," in *ibid.*, 14–15. Brownlee, *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 118–20, believed Anderson to be a "demonic leader" and "insane because of the injury to his sisters, and his attitude toward all men who supported or served the Union was that of a homicidal maniac." Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 141, observed that "almost all the other available evidence clearly indicates that Quantrill was planning and preparing for the raid not only prior to the tragic prison collapse, but long before Ewing's removal policy was announced." The two events "merely intensified the desire of the bushwhackers to 'get back' at their enemies by raiding Lawrence, and increased their fury and blood lust when they attacked the town." Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 198, stated that "it is sometimes said that the Lawrence raid was in direct retaliation for the supposed intentional murders of the Southern girls. This is not true, but the extraordinary savagery and wholesale destructiveness of the raid may be attributed in part to the bushwhackers' rage and indignation over the tragic event." A comprehensive account of the fate of the incarcerated women is Charles F. Harris, "Catalyst of Terror: The Collapse of the Women's Prison in Kansas City," *Missouri Historical Review* 89 (April 1995): 290–306.

several controversies with Confederate commanders. Quantrill's guerrillas, in the words of Castel, became "prairie freebooters," and Quantrill split with his major lieutenant, George Todd.⁴¹

All modern Quantrill biographers agree that his sojourn in Texas in 1864 was a disaster. Replaced as the guerrillas leader, Quantrill led the few who remained with him back to Missouri where they engaged in a few desultory raids. They left Missouri for Kentucky in early 1865 and performed petty robberies. He also briefly joined forces with Sue Mundy (Marcellus Jerome Clark), but Quantrill's days of glory clearly had passed. Hiding out on a farm in May 1865, he and his men were surprised by federal guerrillas. While attempting to escape, he was shot in the spine. Quantrill lingered for almost a month but died at four o'clock on the afternoon of June 6, 1865, in the



General Thomas Ewing Jr.

Louisville military prison hospital. He was twenty-seven years old.⁴²

Quantrill's character has been assessed through a dual perspective; either a "heroic Confederate knight-errant or a brilliant but brutal psychopath," according to Leslie. Connelley called him a "gory monster" and Schultz said he stood "for no principles" and had no "personal convictions." He loved to kill and fought for "personal vengeance." Castel viewed him as "an incalculable mixture of good and bad, of the admirable and the detestable." Unquestionably, he had "military skill, cool courage, and power to command," but also he was brutal and callous, lacked any scruples, and evinced a "treacherous opportunism." Castel concluded that the latter traits tended to obscure his martial abilities.⁴³

What type of men rode with Quantrill? Paradoxically, observed historian Herman Hattaway, "their experiences during the Civil War seem to have induced them to become more brutal and ferocious personalities than they were either before or after the conflict." They have been characterized as either "murderous thieves, utterly devoid of any social or political ideals, who took advantage of the turmoil of the times to enrich themselves at the expense of their neighbors," or as insurgents who

41. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 267, stated that "ironically, despite all the suffering and economic dislocation Order No. 11 caused, it was negated less than six months after being issued and thus never fulfilled its purpose: to drive the guerrillas permanently from western Missouri." For a dissection of Ewing's order, see Albert Castel, "Order No. 11 and the Civil War on the Border," *Missouri Historical Review* 57 (July 1963): 357-68; Charles R. Mink, "General Orders, No. 11: The Forced Evacuation of Civilians During the Civil War," *Military Affairs* 34 (December 1970): 132-36; Ann Davis Niepman, "General Orders No. 11 and Border Warfare During the Civil War," *Missouri Historical Review* 66 (January 1972): 185-210; Mark E. Neely Jr., "'Unbeknownst' to Lincoln: A Note on Radical Pacification in Missouri During the Civil War," *Civil War History* 44 (September 1998): 212-16. For information on Ewing, see David G. Taylor, "The Business and Political Career of Thomas Ewing Jr.: A Study of Frustrated Ambition" (Ph. D. diss., University of Kansas, 1970). The number of federals killed at Baxter Springs varies somewhat. See Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 280; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 151-54; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 421-34; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 258-62. On the Texas problems, which Edwards conveniently ignored, see Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 280, 284-302; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 152-54, 170-71; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 443-50; Robert L. Kerby, *Kirby Smith's Confederacy: The Trans-Mississippi South, 1863-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972); Richard B. McCaslin, *Tainted Breeze: The Great Hanging at Gainesville, Texas, 1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), 134, 166; Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West*, 164; Fellman, *Inside War*, 102-7.

42. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 201-7, 209, 211, 213; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 460-70, 472-83; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 292-309; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 345-69. For information on Mundy, see Young E. Allison, "Sue Mundy," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 57 (October 1959): 295-316; L. L. Valentine, "Sue Mundy of Kentucky," *ibid.* 62 (July 1964): 175-205; (October 1964): 278-306. The idea that Quantrill was not killed is pursued in T. W. Paterson, "'Quantrill Is Not Dead; I Can Prove It' by John Sharp as reported by T. W. Paterson," *Real West* 9 (July 1966): 10-11, 54-56.

43. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 34; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 41; Schultz, *Quantrill's War*, 4-5; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 215.

“rose in defense of their homes and families as well as in the name of the Southern cause against the savage depredations of an alien, occupying army.” Historian James M. McPherson referred to them as “some of the most psychopathic killers in American history.”⁴⁴

In an often neglected essay, Don R. Bowen sampled 194 of Quantrill’s followers. He discovered that, as a group, those who battled the federals tended to be the “elder offspring of well-to-do, slaveholding farmers in rural Jackson County, Missouri, and very likely had familial and cultural ties in the states which had already joined the Confederacy.” Indeed, “their families were better-off, more likely to be Southerners by origin, and owners of more slaves than either the population of the entire county” or the parents of other young men who did not join them. In short, they experienced “upward mobility” before the war and constituted a “local rural elite” who feared being deprived of everything they had achieved.⁴⁵

Quantrill had a nucleus of tough, dedicated men, ready to sacrifice their lives. They consisted of “hard-riding, fast-shooting Missouri farmboys in their late teens and early twenties,” said Castel. Similar to all



Sue Mundy

successful guerrillas, they seized arms from the enemy and used the tactic of surprise, and they always had a sanctuary in the Sni-A-Bar country along the Jackson–Lafayette County line, a “wild and gloomy region of dense woods, tangled thickets, deep gorges, and narrow, twisting trails which could be defended easily by a few alert sentries.” For firepower, they relied upon handguns, carrying several on their persons. They “were probably the most formidable bunch of ‘revolver fighters’ the West ever knew,” wrote Castel.⁴⁶

Kansas governor Thomas Carney declared that “no fiend in human shape could have acted with more savage barbarity” than did Quantrill. Castel referred to him as the “bloodiest man in American History.” Unquestionably, Connelley and Schultz agreed with these descriptions. Leslie described Quantrill as a “border ruffian, Confederate soldier, blanket thief, partisan ranger, loving son, cold-eyed killer, schoolteacher, and teamster,” but he never quite assesses his personality and/or his role in the conflict that divided a nation. Quantrill’s contribution to the Confederate cause, concluded Castel, “did more harm than good.” Outfits such as his “were inherently incapable of accomplishing much of military value.”⁴⁷

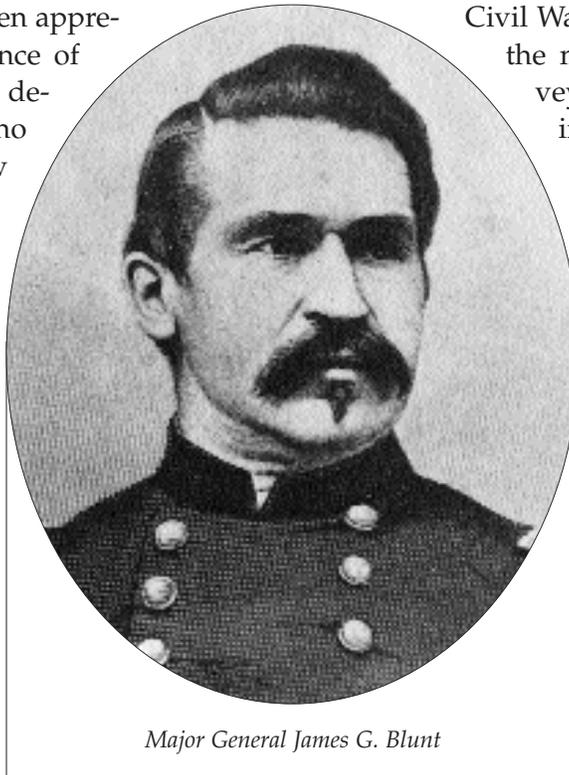
44. Hattaway, “Commentary,” 14; Don R. Bowen, “Guerrilla War in Western Missouri, 1862–1865: Historical Extensions of the Relative Deprivation Hypothesis,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 19 (January 1977): 30–51, quote on 32; Bowen, “Quantrill, James, Younger, et al.: Leadership in a Guerrilla Movement, Missouri, 1861–1865,” *Military Affairs* 41 (February 1977): 42–48, listed twenty-six guerrilla leaders and the fate that befell them; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 785; Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 121.

45. Bowen, “Guerrilla War in Western Missouri,” 49; Bowen, “Counterrevolutionary Guerrilla War: Missouri, 1861–1865,” *Conflict* 8 (1988): 69–78. A list of the known guerrillas of the Quantrill, Anderson, and Todd bands is in Brownlee, *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 253–61. Breihan, *Quantrill and his Civil War Guerrillas*, 166–74, compiled 296 names. Fellman, *Inside War*, missed Bowen’s important essay. See also Mary Eschelbach Gregson, “Population Dynamics in Rural Missouri, 1860–1880,” *Social Science History* 21 (Spring 1997): 85–110.

46. Castel, *William Clarke Quantrill*, 109, 111, 113; Schultz, *Quantrill’s War*, 81, 135; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 149–50, 180–81; Connelley, *Quantrill and the Border Wars*, 296, 309; Lloyd Lewis, “Propaganda and the Kansas–Missouri War,” *Missouri Historical Review* 34 (October 1939): 11; Castel, “Quantrill’s Bushwhackers: A Case Study in Partisan Warfare,” *Civil War History* 13 (March 1967): 41, 43; Michael Fellman, “Inside Wars: The Cultural Crisis of Warfare and the Values of Ordinary People,” *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 10 (December 1991): 1–9. During Reconstruction the United States Army experienced similar difficulties in capturing desperadoes who inhabited regions with dense terrain. See Barry A. Crouch and Donaly E. Brice, *Cullen Montgomery Baker: Reconstruction Desperado* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).

47. Quote in Hattaway, “Commentary,” 6; Jones, “William Clarke Quantrill,” 606; Albert Castel, “The Bloodiest Man in American History,” *American Heritage* 11 (October 1960): 22–24, 97–99; Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride*, 359; Castel, “The Guerrilla War, 1861–1865,” *Civil War Times Illustrated* 13 (October 1974): 50.

Quantrill's image has not been appreciably changed by the appearance of two new biographies, but both deserve consideration. Schultz, who followed Connelley, with no new research, can be ignored as he contributes nothing to what we already know about Quantrill. Leslie's book is extensively researched, often relies on Castel's 1962 interpretative framework, is well written, and has fascinating detail but is overly sympathetic to its subject. And, throughout his exposition of Quantrill's life, Leslie appears to be anti-Union and partial to the Southern cause and Quantrill's method of warfare. Ultimately no definitive interpretation or assessment of the Ohioan emerges. Quantrill remains as elusive as ever.



Major General James G. Blunt

At the close of the twentieth century what is the status of Quantrill historiography? Clearly, his four modern biographers divide into two distinct camps. Connelley and Schultz agree with the characterization of the Kansas governor and classify him as a "fiend," which hampers their efforts to assess his life. Castel and Leslie are more objective. Leslie's book is based upon the most extensive archival research of all the Quantrill biographies, and similar to Castel he weighs the sources carefully before making a judgment. Both Leslie and Castel have few factual mistakes. Overall, Castel has a broader background of the Kansas–Missouri upheaval and the Civil War, thus his interpretations are grounded in a solid historical perspective.

Quantrill, along with other guerrillas, has received much attention from writers who focus upon the

Civil War.⁴⁸ For most, the Ohioan remains the most prominent example or purveyor of this type of warfare. More investigations, however, are required of his influence upon the course of the conflict not only in Missouri but on the war effort in general. It is essential for some historian who has the interpretive skill of Castel and the willingness to undertake the broad research displayed in Leslie's book to combine the two tasks into a solid biography of William Clarke Quantrill. A future life and times will have to sort out the confusing and conflicting issues that plague his reputation and engender so much emotion in those who write about him.



48. Castel, "The Guerrilla War," 50; Kevin H. Siepel, *Rebel: The Life and Times of John Singleton Mosby* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983); William E. Sawyer, "Martin Hart, Civil War Guerrilla," *Texas Military History* 3 (Fall 1963): 146–53; Leo E. Huff, "Guerrillas, Jayhawkers and Bushwhackers in Northern Arkansas During the Civil War," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 24 (Summer 1965): 127–48; William L. Shea, "A Semi-Savage State: The Image of Arkansas in the Civil War," *ibid.* 48 (Winter 1989): 309–28; Daniel E. Sutherland, "Guerrillas: The Real War in Arkansas," *ibid.* 52 (Autumn 1993): 257–85; Stephen S. Michot, "'War Is Still Raging in This Part of the Country': Oath-Taking, Conscriptation, and Guerrilla War in Louisiana's Lafourche Region," *Louisiana History* 38 (Spring 1997): 157–84; Stephen V. Ash, "Sharks in an Angry Sea: Civilian Resistance and Guerrilla Warfare in Occupied Middle Tennessee, 1862–1865," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 45 (Fall 1986): 217–29; Richard P. Gildrie, "Guerrilla Warfare in the Lower Cumberland River Valley, 1862–1865," *ibid.* 49 (Fall 1990): 161–76; Noel C. Fisher, *War at Every Door: Partisan Politics and Guerrilla Violence in East Tennessee, 1860–1869* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Anne J. Bailey, "The Mississippi Marine Brigade: Fighting Rebel Guerrillas on Western Waters," *Military History of the Southwest* 22 (Spring 1992): 31–42; Virgil C. Jones, *Gray Ghosts and Rebel Raiders* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1956); Brownlee, *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy*; Goodrich, *Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border*; Richard E. Beringer et al., *Why the South Lost the Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986); Archer Jones, *Civil War Command and Strategy: The Process of Victory and Defeat* (New York: Free Press, 1992); see also George M. Fredrickson, *Why the Confederacy Did Not Fight a Guerrilla War After the Fall of Richmond: A Comparative View*, "35th Annual Fortenbaugh Memorial Lecture" (Gettysburg, Pa.: Gettysburg College, 1996).